



The Clarion

*The Military Officers Association of America
Heritage Hunt Chapter*



Volume 01, Issue 01

April 2017

Dr. Christopher Vo Entertains Chapter Members at Spring Social

Dr. Christopher Vo entertained chapter members at the Spring Social on April 14, 2017, with a fascinating introduction to and review of the current hot topic of drones.

Dr. Vo was born and raised in Burke, VA, by parents who were fortunate to escape Vietnam. He earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in computer science from George Mason University in Fairfax, VA. He also earned a Doctor of Philosophy in computer science from GMU in 2014.

Dr. Vo says his interest in science and technology really started to grow at the age of seven when he and his friends discovered model rocketry. While his friends used store-bought rockets, his circumstances forced him to build his own rockets relying on household items and supplies – think toilet paper rolls and the like. Before long, his rockets were outperforming the store-bought rockets and the science and technology bug had taken hold.

Along with Timothy Reuter, he's a co-founder of the DC Area Drone Users Group which is dedicated to promoting the positive uses of unmanned aircraft for the benefit of humanity. He's also the Co-Founder and Chief Scientist of Sentien Robotics, Inc., a robotics research and development firm focusing on swarm artificial intelligence for Unmanned Aircraft Systems, as well as the founder of IrixMedia Interactive, a robotics hardware and software development firm.

Dr. Vo provided a fascinating introduction to the earliest aerial photography and robotics and drone history, applications, challenges and issues. In addition to the fascinating presentation, he also provided a static display and dynamic demonstration of drones.

According to Dr. Vo, in the mid-1930s, the Canadian armed forces and the de Havilland aircraft company developed a radio-controlled target aircraft which became known as the Queen Bee. Following his attendance at a live-fire demonstration of the Queen Bee, a US Navy Admiral tasked the Navy's Bureau of Aeronautics to pursue a similar program and LCDR Delmar Fahrney was tasked to lead the project. Soon the term "drone" began appearing in related documents. Apparently, Fahrney himself coined the term drone in recognition of the de Havilland Queen Bee.

While the precise origin of current drone technology is difficult to pinpoint, many agree that one activity in 2007 was instrumental in paving the way. Dr. Vo related that, in that year, Chris Anderson, who at the time was the Editor in Chief of Wired Magazine, added an accelerometer, a gyroscope and television to a model airplane and could demonstrate the feasibility and utility of the integrated technologies. And, as they say, the rest is history.



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The Clarion

**Bernie Ziegler, Editor
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Newsletter, News Briefs, Web Site

Bernie Ziegler recently took over from Mike Weppner as the Chair of the Public Relations Committee. Mike devoted many years to getting the Committee off the ground, establishing lines of communication and creating a chapter web site. Thank you, Mike! Bernie has some big shoes to fill!

At the January Board of Directors meeting, Ziegler was asked to survey the members about their preferred means of being updated. The overwhelming majority of respondents requested a newsletter. Hence, as noted on the front page, we're distributing Issue 01 of Volume 01.

The goal is to distribute "The Clarion" quarterly – the first week in January, April, July and October. You've probably noticed that this first issue is a bit late, but we wanted to include a summary of the Spring Social in this first issue.

The format and content of the newsletter will obviously evolve over time. Because of the topical nature of several articles, this first newsletter is bit longer than would ordinarily be the case. Please give Bernie your comments on format and content as well as any other suggestions you might have. He can be reached at blz007@aol.com or 703-743-2122.

You've probably also noticed that Bernie has begun distributing by e-mail what he calls News Briefs. These will be numbered sequentially in each calendar year and will be used to notify Chapter members of news that is of more urgent concern and can't wait for the Newsletter.

Finally, the web site that Mike created and maintained is no longer up-to-date as the company hosting the site went out of business. As Bernie becomes comfortable with publishing the Newsletter, and with the help of Don Belanus and Juan Fernandez, who have graciously offered, we'll explore getting a new site up and running in the future

Chapter Welcomes New Members

CDR Alan Hemer, USN (Ret.) and **Mary Beth.** CDR Hemer served 23 years in the Navy as an Aerographer (weatherman) and Cryptologist. He's a native of Illinois and the Navy enabled him to "see the world" having served enjoyable tours in the Philippines, London and Rota, Spain, among others. He holds a M.S. in Systems Management from the University of Southern California. Alan enjoys bridge and is an avid trapshooter. He recently returned from the Florida State Trapshooting Tournament and participates in state and other tournaments whenever he can. He shoots locally at the Isaac Walton facility in Centreville. Mary is a retired Civil Servant and served her final "tour" as the Executive Assistant to the Under Secretary for the Department of Homeland Security. They are six-year residents of Heritage Hunt. Welcome, Hemers, to the Heritage Hunt Chapter.

2016 in Review

By Merle Jacobsen

The Heritage Hunt chapter has 104 total members (91 regular, 11 surviving spouses and two honorary).

The chapter made several donations to community organizations in 2016. They included \$250 to the Osborn Park High School JROTC program, \$300 to the Battlefield High School Choral Boosters, \$1,000 to the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors and \$105 to the Serve Our Willing Warriors retreat. The chapter sponsors JROTC programs at four area high schools. In 2016, a graduating senior at each of the four high schools who was planning to enroll in college ROTC at was awarded a \$1,000 scholarship. Members, spouses and guests also donated more than 1,000 toys to the Marine Corps-sponsored Toys for Tots program.

Monthly meetings of board members and committee chairmen are normally held at the Marsh Mansion and are open to all chapter members. Heritage Hunt MOAA holds four social events each year. Some events feature guest speakers with topics ranging from military-related subjects to local history and local organizations. Legislative Committee members meet with lawmakers from the Virginia legislature and the U.S. Congress on items of MOAA interest. The chapter also supports Honor Flights and Heritage Hunt blood drives.

In 2016, the chapter received its fifth consecutive 5-Star Levels of Excellence Award, the highest level, from MOAA National.

Save the Date

Date	Event
Tuesday, May 16, 2017	VCOC Congressional Appreciation Luncheon for Virginia Delegation
Wednesday, July 12, 2017	Summer Social
Thursday, September 14, 2017	Fall Social
Sunday, November 12, 2017	Veteran's Day Happy Hour and Buffet
Friday, December 1, 2017	Christmas Social/Installation of Officers

Certificates of Appreciation Awarded

Dave Mundt presented Certificates of Appreciation to the following members at the Spring Social on April 14, 2017.

- **Bill Baird** – Who has been our membership lead almost since the beginning of the chapter.



- **Anne Moore** - For her calligraphy skills in preparing the JROTC certificates presented to deserving cadets at our 4 JROTC schools.



- **Cy Shearer** – Who has been the program lead almost since the beginning of the chapter and for assisting in the maintenance of our governing documents for the last 8 years.



- **Herb Tuttle** - Who has run the Honor Flight program for HH almost since the beginning of the program.



Member Spotlight – COL James Riffe, US Army, Retired

By Ruth Hill, Heritage Hunt Community Relations Committee, and friend of the Chapter.

Our first member spotlight is on the oldest member of our MOAA Heritage Hunt Chapter – Colonel Jim Riffe. Riffe is approaching his ninety-sixth birthday. Jim is a charter member of the Heritage Hunt Chapter and has been a member of MOAA and its predecessor, The Retired Officers Association, for forty-nine years.

Riffe was born and grew up in the coal fields of McDowell County, WV, during the great depression of the 1930s. In August, 1937, he became an under-age member of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and was assigned to a company that developed the Babcock State Park in West Virginia. In August, 1934, he obtained an early release so that he could return to high school from which he graduated in June, 1941, as valedictorian of his class and the recipient of six athletic scholarships. He selected Davidson college in North Carolina as it allowed him to play both football and basketball.

In February, 1942, Jim registered for the draft. That same month he also received a congressional appointment to the U.S. Naval Academy which he accepted. However, two months later he notified his congressman to cancel his appointment as he decided to join the Army. He was called to active duty on August 8, 1942, and by December he had attained the rank of Staff Sergeant. That same month he received orders to the Infantry Officers Candidate School at Fort Benning, GA, from which he graduated as a Second Lieutenant on March 27, 1943.

His first assignment as an officer was as a student at a four-weeks school for lieutenants and captains at Camp Roberts, CA. Upon graduation officers normally received orders to the Pacific. However, Jim was selected as a member of the staff with duty as an instructor in platoon and company tactics.

After a year with the school, he received orders for the thirteen-week Infantry Officers Advanced Course at Fort Benning, GA. Upon completing the course, he returned to Camp Roberts. In late October, 1944, he received orders to the Pacific.



1/Lt Riffe, Cpt Diaz-1/106 Okinawa 4/45

After almost three weeks at sea, he landed in New Caledonia, a French possession northeast of Australia. He was there for only a short time when he was ordered to board a cargo ship – destination unknown. Nine days later, the ship arrived at Espiritu Santo, an island of the New Hebrides in the South Pacific, with one of the foulest climates on earth – and swarming with mosquitos.

It was there that Jim was assigned as the leader of 1st Platoon, I Company, 106th Infantry Regiment, 27th Infantry Division. He led this unit from April until early May, 1945, during the Battle of Okinawa. During almost five weeks of continuous combat, seven of these brave Americans (18 and 19 years old) gave their lives for our country. Fourteen other were seriously wounded and evacuated. Jim was also wounded, but after having shrapnel removed from his back and dressing applied, he remained with his unit and even captured a sword as shown.

The next three months were hectic with Jim serving as a rifle company commander, the S-2 (Intelligence) and S-3 (Plans and Operations) of his battalion.

Following the war, he received a commission in the Regular Army. During his peacetime Army career, Riffe held numerous command and staff positions including a command of a reinforced infantry battalion during the building of the infamous Berlin Wall (1961 – 1963), command of an airborne brigade and Chief of Staff of the 82nd Airborne Division. He also served as a member of the General Staff, Headquarters, Department of the

Army, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with duty as a member of the U.S. Delegation to the Military Committee of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

His military decorations include four awards of the Legion of Merit, two Bronze Stars for Valor, and a Purple Heart, and the Army Commendation Medal.

He and his wife Bea have lived in Heritage Hunt since December, 2003.

Legislative Affairs of the Chapter

By Cliff Pitts

MOAA is the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. It is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization. This does not mean that we are not politically active. MOAA supports efforts for a stronger military and advocates for all our military personnel, their families, and veterans of the military as well as some other uniformed services.

While our chapter is an organization that holds many events which bring officers together and allows them to share common experiences and renew the comradery of military service, it also supports MOAA objectives at both the national and state levels.

At the national level our chapter interacts with congressional offices to help establish and support the organization's agenda and lobbies for military personnel issues. Specifically, our Legislative Liaison works on these overall issues and coordinates directly with the offices of our Senators and the representative of the 10th Congressional District of Virginia, currently Congresswoman Barbara Comstock.

On the May 16, 2017, our leadership will join the other chapters and host an annual luncheon for Virginia's congressional representatives which allows us to present our concerns and listen to their views.

Currently MOAA is most concerned with issues involving: repealing sequestration; help for military survivors; solutions for wounded, ill and injured veterans; fixing Call Up Orders for guard and reserve personnel; and raising SSIA for widows. The current administration's budget proposal includes veteran support in the 10% increase sought for defense expenditures. There are no specific program amounts or goals associated with the current budget plan. As the new administration continues to develop their budget, MOAA will evaluate those line items. MOAA has continued to oppose sequestration, and hopes to build bipartisan support for a budget plan that will allow the military to pursue long term goals and provide funding for both weapons and personnel.

In Virginia, our chapter is part of the Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) of MOAA. The VCOC in turn is a co-chair for the Joint Leadership Council (JLC) of Veteran's Service Organizations. The JLC represents the veterans associations of the state in supporting their issues. In recent years, the state government has demonstrated bipartisan support for our concerns, evidenced by many new initiatives, including the state funding for a veteran's medical center with full medical staff and 120 beds at Vint Hill, VA.

In future issues of the newsletter we hope to keep you aware of the progress being made and ask for your support. Until then we recommend that you take advantage of the new MOAA home website at MOAA.org to review legislative issues and recommended actions. The TAKE ACTION button on the home page will allow you to review top issues, take recommended actions, and stay current with events in congress. In the legislative action center, you can also sign up for emails through the ACTION E-List. You may also sign up for MEGAVOTE and receive an Email showing your senators' and congresswoman's weekly voting records, along with a short description of bills addressed that week. Please take a little bit of time this week and review all the features of the modified website.

Honor Flights

By Herb Tuttle

This year marks the sixth year that the Heritage Hunt Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, (MOAA), will sponsor The Honor Flight Program. The program flies WWII, Korean and terminally ill Vietnam vets from 41 "hub" airports across the country at no expense to them so that they can visit the memorials built for them. The Program relies on generous donations from the airlines, other corporate sponsors and individuals. For your information, the Honor Flight home page is: www.honorflight.org. Take a few minutes to watch the film clip, "This is Honor Flight."

To date 221 HH MOAA chapter members (many repeat members), and 47 non-members (but HH residents), have greeted 91 Honor Flights and 6,481 veterans. The Honor Flight season runs from April through June and August through October. The Dulles HF volunteer coordinator will publish the schedule of flights in March which will include instructions on how to sign up for the flights. Our chapter will distribute the schedule via email for our members and the Horn for HH residents. Individual flight info is also posted on Facebook under 'Honor Flight at Dulles - Welcoming Our Heroes.' Parking is in the daily lot in front of the terminal and is FREE!

So, please consider joining us and surprise these Vets as they aren't expecting anyone at Dulles. It's a moving experience for the Vets and their greeters so come on out and greet these valiant men and women who sacrificed so much for our freedom.

The HH MOAA POC is LTC Herb Tuttle who can be reached at: (703) 743-5345 afternoons and evenings.

Members Entertained at Spring Social

DRONES from Page 1

Dr. Vo went on describe the explosive growth in drones and their military, commercial, public safety and recreational applications. The audience was already familiar with the military applications of reconnaissance and targeting of terrorist and other threats.



However, it was quite interesting to learn of the use of drones in commercial applications such as precision planning, planting and application of sprays and fertilizers in agriculture, the estimating of coal stockpile tonnage using unique ways of estimating stockpile volume and the monitoring of mines – a modern day replacement for the canary? – and even closed circuit racing. Dr. Vo also indicated that drones have been successfully used in searching for missing persons and in assisting rescue team operations as well as competitive racing.



Dr. Vo went on to discuss the various technical and civil challenges and issues associated with drones. One of the key technical challenges is that of battery power. Drones consume a lot of power and flight time is restricted because of that. Dr. Vo went on to explain that one unique fix to avoiding the loss of a drone because of a battery running out of charge is to have a sensor detect when battery power is at a critical level and command the drone to “go home!” Primary among the civil issues is control. Commercial users of drones are subject to Federal Aviation Agency training and licensing as well as a 400-foot maximum altitude which recreational users are essentially free to operate at will except for designated airspace restricted zones. Other civil issues include airspace incursion, privacy invasion and nuisance/harassment – all of which are

being slowly addressed through regulation, mediation and the courts.

Dr. Vo concluded his presentation by answering numerous audience questions and flying two drones, one of which was smaller than the palm of his hand yet capable of flying 60 miles per hour and transmitting high definition video to its controller held by Dr. Vo.

