

Association For Intelligence Officers

The Tom Smith New Mexico Chapter CHAPTER NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER / DECEMBER 2009

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The holidays are nearly upon us, beginning with Thanksgiving, which—like Veterans' Day—has been largely corrupted by commercial interests to appear as a golden opportunity to “shop ‘til you drop” and be good consumers. Personally, I like to reflect on what holidays like Thanksgiving mean to our military and civilian personnel who are deployed overseas, especially in combat zones. If you're in London, of course, it's all quite civilized, dressing up and clinking glasses of bubbly with our “cousins.” If you're in Afghanistan, or Iraq, or Beirut, or Pakistan, however, it's bit different. I know I don't need to elaborate on that to any of you; I would simply ask you to join me in raising a glass on Thanksgiving Day to those who are doing their duty for this country under difficult circumstances, and to those who have given their lives in defense of our beliefs and principles. Additionally, I ask you to give a thought to those who have returned from the battlefield injured, or maimed, or psychologically distressed. Mr. Shinseki (he'll always be “General” to me) has his work cut out for him at the VA, and communities nationwide should perhaps pay more attention into reintegrating returning service members into our daily lives.

On a different note, recent events reconfirm the extraordinary but often under-appreciated value of Intelligence and Counter-Intelligence to our national well-being. I would like to focus, in the coming year, on various aspects of the Intelligence Community and the “Intelligence Enterprise,” and on how well actionable Intelligence is being disseminated within and among the myriad agencies that may need it. Some questions come to mind: 1) is the IC really a “community?” 2) Does the enterprise actually function as an enterprise, or is it still handicapped by stovepipes and turf wars? 3) Is essential (actionable) Intelligence being disseminated on a timely and appropriate basis, and what roles do the various states' “fusion centers” play? 4) Given the implied span of control of positions like the DNI (Director of National Intelligence) and agencies like DHS (Dept. of Homeland Security) and TSA (Transportation Security Administration), how effective do you believe they are (or can be)? There is no shortage of issues for us to address, and I encourage each of you who has an interest in these or any other Intelligence-related topics to speak out as we move forward. The value of this chapter resides entirely in you all, the members, and whether we are a vibrant or sleepy group depends on your willingness to participate. Happy Thanksgiving, and I'll see you all in December.

DECEMBER MEETING

Our next Chapter luncheon will be **at 11:30 am on Wednesday, 9 December**. We will again meet in the back room of the Calico Cantina/Vernon's Steak House on the west side of 4th Street, about ½ mile north of Osuna.

OUR SPEAKER WILL BE JIM HOFFSIS.

JIM HOFFSIS in LAS VEGAS

Since our last meeting, Jim Hoffsis has provided some highlights of the AFIO National Symposium held in Nevada from 13 – 16 October 2009. Having attended four previous events in the Washington D.C. area, Jim believes the Las Vegas convention was by far the most interesting. He described it as more of a hands-on event that allowed members to visit the Cold War era test sites in and around Nellis Air Force Base. As incredulous as it sounds today, Jim described how in the early 1950's, a guest could walk out of a hotel in Las Vegas and look North to see the mushroom cloud of an above ground atomic test. Those tests were as close as 50 miles to downtown Las Vegas.

In another interesting aside, Hoffsis told of California-style subdivisions built in the desert near the atomic testing so scientists could evaluate the effect of the bombs on these empty houses. Realism was apparently a priority to the scientists of that day as these structures were complete both inside and outside, down to the smallest detail, such as knives, forks and dishes in their appropriate places. Some of these subdivisions even had a plexiglass replica of a paperboy preparing to throw the morning newspaper onto the front porch.

Don't miss this 9 December Chapter meeting, as Jim will provide you a fascinating glimpse into this unique time in American History as well as tell you what today's military is doing in the Nevada region.

QUESTIONS

Here are some questions Jim will be answering at the December Chapter meeting:

- 1) Are unmanned drones unmanned?
- 2) Why have 40 – 60 ground technicians been recently sent to a facility in Alamogordo, NM, that contains pilot consoles, satellite maps and cutting edge cameras?
- 3) What is the legal name for AFIO?
- 4) Is the water contaminated at the Nevada test sites as a result of the atomic explosions?
- 5) Does area 51 really exist?
- 6) What is the length of the world's longest landing strip?
- 7) What USAF aircraft reached speeds of more than 2,700 MPH?

NORMAN CAMPBELL

Chapter member Norman Campbell has received special recognition from the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). Norman was recognized for his work supporting MOAA's New Mexico Council of Chapters' efforts to obtain exemption of military retiree pensions from state taxes. We should also note that in 2007, as editor of the local chapter's newsletter, he won a MOAA Communications Award. And, in 2009, he was the first NCO inducted into MOAA's Albuquerque Chapter Hall of Fame.

REPORT OF CHAPTER MEETING OF 14 OCTOBER 2009

Opening our luncheon meeting promptly at 11:30 am with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, Chapter President Pete Bostwick reported that Ruby Ellen Smith was in rehabilitation following hip surgery. Since the October meeting, Ruby's family told us that she will remain at the Montebello rehabilitation center into the early part of December. Montebello is located near the southeast corner of Academy Road and Eubank Blvd.

Continuing, Pete reported that Dick Callaghan continues to receive dialysis treatment in Santa Fe. Pete said that he has been unable to contact Ron Cuellar, who was receiving specialized medical treatment in Texas. Pete asked members to keep these three individuals in their thoughts.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Judith Mead said that she had just taken delivery of a batch of new AFIO New Mexico Chapter checks from our bank, at a cost of \$48.10. She added that our bank balance stood at \$2,679.11, as of 1 October 2009.

GERRE JONES ON HEALTHCARE REFORM

When the healthcare proposals winding their way through Congress for about six months totaled more than 1,000 pages in early September, long-time Chapter member, Gerre Jones, decided it was time to take a closer look to see if any of these proposals would dilute the benefits now available to the military through the TRI-CARE FOR LIFE PLAN. Gerre briefed the members on his independent research and also passed out a fact sheet.

Gerre's research showed that every key spokesperson working on the new healthcare proposals indicated that TRI-CARE FOR LIFE would absolutely not be affected by any of the healthcare reform proposals.

At the end of the day, Gerre takes the view of the Military Officers Association of America, which advises us to trust but verify everything.

BOOK REPORT

Edna Valverde Fowler recommends a book about Cuba, titled After Fidel, by Brian Latell, and published by Palgrave MacMillan, New York. The book is particularly interesting because it focuses on Raul Castro. To most of us he appears to be a humdrum bureaucrat hovering in the background. Insiders say the Revolution would have collapsed years ago were it not for Raul's organizational skills and his exceptional management of the Cuban Armed Forces. He is a rigidly orthodox Communist who advised his brother to pursue agrarian reform and to nationalize foreign-owned enterprises. Raul also took the initiative to ask the Soviet Union for assistance in training his armed forces. Security experts say that Cuba's military is very capable and in some areas is on a par with the Israeli Defense Forces. Cuba's abilities were certainly proven in the 1970's when the Cuban Army deployed a large force to fight in Africa.

By comparison, Fidel has almost no managerial or organizational abilities. And, unlike Raul, who enjoys excellent rapport with the Cuban Bureaucracy, Fidel stands aloof and confers solely with his brother. Fidel, of course, is a born politician and strategist with exceptional charisma.

CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIPS

Joe Cantergiani reported that he, Pete Bostwick and Joe Yardumian recently met with the University of New Mexico (UNM) ROTC Detachment to update our Memo of Understanding with them.

The Chapter awards yearly scholarships to deserving UNM ROTC cadets representing each service, who are considering a career in the intelligence community. Awards are made in the Spring. Joe Cantergiani noted that this year's candidates should be identified by the end of the year.

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Pete Bostwick - President

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Jerry Monahan – 2nd Vice President, Public Relations

Brendan O'Donovan – Secretary, Newsletter

Judith Mead - Treasurer