



The 2011 Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Twenty-Sixth Annual Virginia Congressional Appreciation Luncheon honoring the **Thirteen-Member Virginia Congressional Delegation** for their efforts in support of our Armed Forces, Veterans, Retired Military and their Families took place on Friday, June 24th, 2011 at the Capitol Hill Club in Washington D.C. Ten of our thirteen Congressional Representatives attended the luncheon; **Congressman Rob Wittman** (1st District), **Congressman Scott Rigell** (2nd District), **Congressman Bobby Scott** (3rd District), **Congressman Randy Forbes** (4th District), **Congressman Robert Hurt** (5th District), **Congressman Bob Goodlatte** (6th District), **Congressman Eric Cantor** (7th District), **Congressman Morgan Griffith** (9th District), **Congressman Frank Wolf** (10th District) and **Congressman Gerry Connolly** (11th District).

At the luncheon, I had the privilege to introduce **Congressman Rob Wittman**. **Congressman Wittman** received the **VCOC MOAA** "Outstanding National Legislator Award," presented by the VCOC President **Sam Wilder**, COL, USA (Ret). The **VCOC MOAA** "Outstanding National Legislator Award" is a plaque with stamps selected to represent his service and interests. VCOC members voted overwhelmingly to approve **Congressman Wittman** for this award based upon the superb nomination prepared and submitted by VIPMOAA President **Frank Duckett**, Maj, USAF (Ret).

Over 120 MOAA Chapter members attended this year's luncheon. Included were seven leaders from our own chapter: **Jim Pauls**, Col, USAF (Ret), *Hampton*; **Ernie Hinojosa**, COL, USA (Ret), *Williamsburg*; **Jay Harper**, LTC, USA (Ret), *Yorktown*; **Charley Burch**, Lt Col, USAF (Ret), *Deltaville*; **Melva Mallison**, Maj, USAF (Ret), *Newport News*; **Frankie Gorrell**, and **Stan Gorrell**, LTC, USA (Ret), *Williamsburg*. These Chapter members had an opportunity to discuss issues with the Congressmen from the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd, Districts and thank each of them for their important contributions to our national defense and for their concern for the welfare of our active duty forces, National Guard & Reserve forces, retirees, veterans and their families.

Among the issues discussed were the 2011-2012 VCOC National Legislative Top Priority Objectives and philosophy:

Objectives:

- Provide a strong base defense budget of at least 5% of the GDP for the foreseeable future and implementing defense policies that will provide for a combat ready total force – active duty, National Guard, and Reserve – that is well trained and equipped, properly resourced, and mission-ready for sustained combat.
- Fully authorize, fund, and permanently increase the end strength of the total Army to 700,000. Do not reduce USAF/Navy strength to increase our land forces.
- Preserve hard gained benefits of the past decades for active, National Guard, Reserve, and retired members of the military community in these tough economic times. Give recognition to the unique service and sacrifice of the military. Included are continued support of the Wounded Warrior program; protection for TRICARE; provider reimbursement rate for Medicare/TRICARE; and long-term viability of Social Security, Medicare, and COLA discipline.

Philosophy:

Our nation is at war, just as significant as the Cold War in the 20th century, and national defense is the first duty of the national government. We are in an "era of persistent conflict" and we need a funded national strategy to defeat violent extremism. The threat of a conventional high intensity war is also a real possibility. We must re-balance our force to meet the full spectrum of potential conflict. Our defense budget must match our strategy; not the reverse.

Stan Gorrell, LTC, USA (Ret), Legislative Chair 757-258-9442