

## **OCS SPACE/TREASURE COAST ALUMNI CHAPTER (PROVISIONAL) ANNUAL UPDATE**

In March 2021, I was asked by Sunshine Chapter Commander, Steve Epkins, to attempt to form a new, east coast of Florida chapter of The U.S. Army Officer Candidate Schools Alumni Association (TUSAOCSAA). On 12 July 2021, we held a Founder's Meeting to establish the new chapter, which we named "Space/Treasure Coast Chapter" (STCC); our area of operations includes include Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin Counties. We subsequently added Volusia County. I was elected chapter Commander and Donn Weaver elected Executive Officer. We received approval to form a provisional chapter on 8 August

### **Chapter Goals:**

- a. Raise Army leadership awareness of the crucial role of the OCS program in producing future leaders.
- b. Help preserve the OCS legacy of service and sacrifice.
- c. Participate in community service and help OCS Alumni/veterans in need.
- d. Foster Camaraderie among OCS Alumni through social interaction.
- e. Identify potential guest speakers of interest to our members.
- f. Sustain present membership and recruit new members, with particular emphasis on recruiting National Guard, USAR, Desert Storm, Iraq and Afghanistan-era OCS graduates.

### **Chapter Activities:**

In May 2021, using a copy of the TUSAOCSAA roster for the State of Florida. I parsed for members within the STCC AO; this initially yielded 59 members. I considered pre-1955 OCS graduates as likely being too old to participate; there were eight members who had graduated as far back as 1947. We subsequently determined that at least six were deceased. I further parsed the roster to identify recent (within the past three years) OCS graduates; I suspected that we would get little participation from those recent graduates, of which there were 21. To date I have yet to receive a single email from any recent graduate.

On 26 April, I sent a group email to all OCSAA members in the AO, identifying myself and the goal of establishing a new chapter. I described the requirement for 10 Founding Members, the need to hold a Founder's meeting, and to elect a temporary Commander and XO. I requested expressions of interest from the email recipients.

By 11 May, I had received nine notifications of invalid email addresses, 32 non-respondents, one not interested, and three interested members. I sent follow-up emails as appropriate. By 31 May, we had identified ten tentative Members, based on late responses to my original email and some respondents contacting friends or former classmates. In a perfect world we would have had several extra Founding Members; as it was we had a tenuous minimum of ten members. We agreed on a date, time and location to hold the Founder's Meeting.

We were very fortunate to induce Phil Kearns to serve as "Special Projects Officer" with his wealth of experience with military alumni organizations. Phil quickly developed a Phase I Action Plan to help us get through the next several months. This included designing business cards, a Chapter logo, applying to TUSAOCSAA to establish a provisional Chapter (approved 08 August), design media - posters, handbills and brochures to help publicize our new Chapter. One important task was to identify possible events or venues where STCC could have an official, visible presence. Accordingly, we joined the Merritt Island Veteran's Memorial Center (VMC) on 12 August; this will give us considerable visibility to the veteran community. We designed and produced a large acrylic plaque with the STCC logo for permanent display in VMC.

Our first event at VMC will be the 9/11 Remembrance, where at least three Founding Members will man a booth.

We had 8 1/2 x 11" handbills printed, explored the use of social media and subsequently created an STCC Facebook page on 22 August. Beginning in mid-August, we identified National Guard and USAR units in the AO, with plans to introduce them to STCC, as appropriate. We had two-sided brochures ("rack cards") and a 20x30" poster printed for display at the VMC's 9/11 Remembrance and their Veteran's Day festivities in November. We also created a template for a periodic STCC newsletter, with target date for publication sometime in late October. Several Commander's Updates were emailed to members to keep them abreast of developments. Based on our experiences to this point, and the efficacy of Phil's Phase I Action Plan, we prepared a primer that could be of use to other areas interested in forming their own chapter. We continued efforts to find new members via follow-up email, referrals from other members and word of mouth; this has resulted in six new STCC members.

Ongoing are efforts to actively seek and recruit National Guard, USAR, Desert Storm, Iraq and Afghanistan-era OCS graduates via direct interaction at various venues. One objective in our Phase I Action Plan was to reach out to American Legion and VFW Posts in the STCC AO to attract OCS graduates who belong to their organizations. In early September we emailed 24 American Legion posts, asking them to share the STCC handbill with their members. We also emailed five of the 20 VFW posts in the AO, and are planning to "snail mail" the remainder as well. To date we have had favorable responses from one VFW and one American Legion post. The STCC handbill has been featured in the Military Officers Association of America Cape Canaveral Chapter (the nation's largest MOAA chapter with over 1,200 members) online newsletter, with three MOAACC members immediately expressing interest in joining STCC.

Digital images of the STCC plaque, handbill (two versions), rack cards and poster are attached.

In sum, since the July Founder's Meeting, we have nearly doubled membership and continue our efforts to identify and recruit more OCS graduates in the STCC AO.

During our 12 July Founders Meeting, we voted to hold our next meeting on 6 November. Our membership in VMC allows us the use of the center's very comfortable library for our meetings. We intend to hold three business meetings per year, the dates to be decided at the 6 November meeting. Spouses will be invited to attend those meetings.

We intend to have guest speakers, when feasible, at our business meetings. We have on tap a former OCS Tac Officer and a senior NASA manager for the Artemis (moon to Mars) program. For the 6 November meeting, we have opted to forego a speakers, instead planning a guided tour of the VMC's very impressive museum.

The agenda for the 6 November meeting is still in very rough draft at the time this report was submitted. I will forward the agenda when we have finalized it.

#### Chapter Membership:

- a. Current Members: 16 members, one associate member, plus three MOAACC recruits (names not available)
- b. Lifetime Members: 8
- c. Annual Members: 4
- d. Unknown: 4

Attachments:

- a. STCC Plaque to be permanently displayed at VMC, Merritt Island.
- b. STCC Handbill (general version)
- c. STCC Handbill (National Guard version)
- d. STCC rack card (2 sides)
- e. STCC Poster