

## SHAPE Officers' Association (SOA) Member of Note

(December 2010)

**This is the first in a series of reviews featuring notable members of SOA.**

For the past several years, the SOA/US Chapter has been hosting its annual reunion – which some have named “Florida Fun Weekend” – in Tampa, FL. Tampa also being the headquarters for the US Central Command and US Special Operations Command, we have been privileged to have distinguished guest speakers address our group and update us about on-going activities. While schedule conflicts have prevented us from meeting with the Commander of CENTCOM, on April 14, 2010 we were honored by the presence of General David H. Petraeus, then the CENTCOM Commander, at our US Chapter luncheon in Washington D.C. Attached below is a transcript of the E-mail exchange we had with General Petraeus, which concludes with his acceptance to be our luncheon guest speaker. General Petraeus is a life member of SOA and our inaugural SOA Member of Note.

**David Howell Petraeus**, United States Army General, currently serves as Commander, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and Commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan (USFOR-A). Other four-star assignments include serving as the 10th Commander, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM) from September 16, 2008, to June 30, 2010, and as Commanding General, Multi-National Force - Iraq (MNF-I) from January 26, 2007, to September 16, 2008. As commander of MNF-I, Petraeus oversaw all coalition forces in Iraq.



General Petraeus has a Bachelor of Science degree from the United States Military Academy from which he graduated in 1974 as a distinguished cadet (top 5% of his class). He was the General George C. Marshall Award winner as the top graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College class of 1983. He subsequently earned an M.P.A. in 1985 and a Ph.D. in International Relations in 1987 from the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. He later served as Assistant Professor of International Relations at the United States Military Academy and also completed a fellowship at Georgetown University.

General Petraeus served at SHAPE from 1987-88 while serving as military assistant to Gen. John Galvin, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe. He is a life member of SOA.

From late 2005 through February 2007, Petraeus served as Commanding General of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, and the U.S. Army Combined Arms Center (CAC) located there. As commander of CAC, Petraeus was responsible for oversight of the Command and General Staff College and seventeen other schools, centers, and training programs as well as for developing the Army's doctrinal manuals, training the Army's officers, and supervising the Army's center for the collection and dissemination of lessons learned.

Petraeus was born in Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY, the son of Miriam (née Howell), a librarian, and Sixtus Petraeus, a sea captain who immigrated to the United States from the Netherlands during the initial phase of World War II. Sixtus settled in Cornwall-on-Hudson, where David Petraeus grew up and graduated from Cornwall Central High School in 1970. Residents called him 'Peaches' in reference to his often-mispronounced last name; the nickname stuck with him as a West Point cadet.

Two months after graduation from West Point Petraeus married Holly Knowlton, a graduate of Dickinson College and daughter of Army General William A. Knowlton, who was superintendent of West Point at the time. Holly, who is multi-lingual, was a National Merit Scholar in high school, and graduated *summa cum laude* from Dickinson College. They have a daughter and a son, Anne and Stephen.

## **The E-mail Trail**

T'was the day before Christmas and the office was very quiet so the adventure began with a series of E-mails:

*8:05 AM - Dear General Petraeus,*

*Please forgive the impertinence and directness of this email. The US Chapter of the SHAPE Officers' Association has been holding an annual reunion and meeting in Tampa for the last three years. One of our greatest desires is to have you participate. We realize that such may be a near impossibility but we have not given up hope. In fact, you may or perhaps already have been approached by Gen. JB Davis a former SHAPE CoS about your availability to address the group at our next reunion on 19-20 Feb. We have been sending all US Chapter SOA members emails on this event and understand that your email in-box probably overflows with much more important subjects.*

*If you cannot participate in Tampa, I'd like to remind you that we will have a formal dinner at the Army-Navy Country Club in Arlington, Va. on 17 April and we would be honored if your travel plans to the DC area would allow you to be our guest speaker.*

*Finally, we will celebrate the 50th SOA Symposium/Reunion at SHAPE from 15-16 October 2010. While doubtful that your schedule will permit your attendance, your availability would draw a huge crowd. Our organization is struggling as many similar with recruiting new and younger members. One can only imagine how many of the SHAPE staff would be energized to join once they knew you were a member and supported our organization.*

*I apologize for the length of this email which I hope you will get to read. If there is any way you can find the time to participate in any of these SOA events, we would be deeply grateful.*

*8:56 AM - Thanks, Jack. Wish I could do one of these; however, we tend to get booked quite a ways out. And, unfortunately, I'm committed to something at Princeton on 19-20 Feb and then here in Tampa on 17 April. My apologies. Don't have the calendar for 15-16 October, but will check and get back to you. Thanks for thinking of me. Best - Dave Petraeus*

*9:04 AM - General,*

*I did not expect such a quick and personal response. Thank you. If your schedule changes, you know we would very much appreciate your attendance. We'll keep fingers crossed for October. Holiday Greetings from the US Chapter of SOA.*

*Jack*

*9:30 AM - My exec reports that I'm booked in October, too, I'm afraid, Jack.*

*Apologies - Dave Petraeus*

*9:57 AM - General,*

*Thank you again. Perhaps if you have a few free hours the next time you come to DC, we can schedule a luncheon. We have over 200 SOA members locally. I'll stop bugging you now, but grateful for the opportunity.*

*Regards,*

*Jack*

*9:58 AM - Let's look to do this, Bill [Col Bill Hickman, XO]. And bill it as "A conversation with...."*

Next, we invited General Petraeus to begin the luncheon "conversation." He delivered a superb speech on current events in Afghanistan that captured the audience. He concluded with a lengthy Q&A session that could have lasted all afternoon.