



MOAA's Auxillary Member Advisory Committee (AMAC) is launching a national project to turn old cell phones into phone cards to help our troops call home. This is being accomplished through an organization called *Cell Phones for Soldiers*, a non-profit charity that recycles old cell phones and in return provides our fighting forces with pre-paid phone cards to call home. AND, there's no cost to anyone! Each turned-in cell phone translates to about 60 minutes of free talk time for our troops and their loved ones on the home front.

Since the program's initiation in 2004, over 60,000,000 (yes, that's million) minutes of free talk time have been generated for our troops.

AMAC has established a goal of donating at least 1,000,000 minutes of talk time. If every MOAA chapter recycled just 40 old phones, the goal would be met.

AMAC tested the concept in the Upper Eastern Shore, MD Chapter in the summer of 2010. In just a few months, the chapter turned in 250 phones by reaching out to their families, friends, and the surrounding community. That's over 15,000 minutes of talk time for our troops and their loved ones!

**Background:** *Cell Phones for Soldiers* was started in 2004 by then-teenagers Robbie and Brittany Bergquist of Norwell, MA, to help raise money for a local soldier stationed in Iraq who racked up an enormous phone bill calling home. The organization is now a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, and holds an impressive 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, and is listed on the official DoD Community Relations website (under America Supports You).

The intermediary in this process is ReCellular, a progressive, compassionate and innovative cell phone recycling company, based in Michigan. The company receives the donated phones and pays *Cell Phones for Soldiers* for each phone. The money is then used to purchase calling cards which are sent to the troops. Postage-paid labels are even provided for mailing the phones to them.

Approximately half of the phones collected by ReCellular will be reused. Functional phones are reconditioned and reprogrammed before being resold to wholesalers in over 40 countries around the world. Phones and components which cannot be refurbished are dismantled and recycled to reclaim materials, including: gold, silver and platinum from circuit boards; copper wiring from phone chargers; nickel, iron, cadmium and lead from battery packs; and plastic from phone cases and accessories. Additional information about ReCellular can be located at [www.ReCellular.com](http://www.ReCellular.com).

**What Can We Do?** The Grand Strand chapter of MOAA <[www.grandstrandmoaa.com](http://www.grandstrandmoaa.com)> initiated our part in this nationwide recycling effort at the chapter meeting on February 8, 2011 – only a few phones were donated.

We are now making a more concerted effort. CAPT John Short has volunteered to collect the phones and forward them to *Cell Phones for Soldiers* (really ReCellular). Chapter members now need to do their part so that John has a job to do! Please check with everyone you can (family, friends, etc.) and bring their unused cell phones to the chapter meeting on September 13, 2011. Batteries, chargers and accessories are not required but are gladly accepted.

Because the drive by MOAA will only last until **September 30, 2011**, we only have one more meeting to collect phones. MOAA will announce the results of the nationwide drive at the annual meeting in San Antonio in October 2011.

For those who cannot attend our monthly meeting or just forget to bring the phones to the meeting, they can take them to a local drop-off point. These can be found online either at *Cell Phones for Soldiers* <http://www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com/locateDropoff.asp> or ReCellular ([http://www.recellular.com/recycling/data\\_eraser/default.asp](http://www.recellular.com/recycling/data_eraser/default.asp)).

In either case you just insert your zip code, and you'll find many locations in the Myrtle Beach area to drop off the phones.

If you are concerned about donating your phone with personal information on it, go to [http://www.recellular.com/recycling/data\\_eraser/default.asp](http://www.recellular.com/recycling/data_eraser/default.asp) and follow these instructions to receive information on how to delete data on your model phone:

Select your cell phone manufacturer

Select your cell phone model

Provide your name and e-mail address.

Click the submit box

The free Data Eraser instructions will be automatically e-mailed to you.

*Note: If you do not receive your email within 5 minutes, please check your spam filter.*

Follow the easy, step-by-step instructions to erase your personal data.