



**MILITARY OFFICERS CALL**  
**Sun City Center Chapter**  
**Military Officers Association of America**  
 P. O. Box 5693, Sun City Center, FL. 33571-5693



**Volume 32 Number 7** **July 2017**



**President's Message**  
**Charles Conover, LTC USA (Ret)**  
 July 2017

Dear Colleagues :

What a great turnout by the community for our annual Memorial Day ceremony held at the Veterans Theater in Kings Point. Our guest speaker Colonel Mike Davis gave a very inspirational talk which was well received by those in attendance.

We also recognized Colonel Fred Hoenniger, USAF (Ret) as our Grand Marshal. A special "Thanks" to all the chapter members who made this one of the best Memorial Day observances that we have had.

Freedom is not free. Please remember the signing of the Declaration of Independence on July 4<sup>th</sup>. I encourage each of you to display the Flag of our Country on the 4<sup>th</sup>.

As you know, we do not have meetings in July or August. Our next meeting will be on September 6<sup>th</sup> and our guest speaker will be Bill Morrow, LTC, USA (Ret) who will talk about Jungle Warfare Training.

I wish everyone a safe summer, wherever you may go and look forward to seeing you on September 6<sup>th</sup>.

Charles Conover

**White House advances Navy secretary, two other DoD picks to Senate**

WASHINGTON — The White House has advanced its nominee for Navy secretary and two other Defense Department officials to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The nominees — Richard Spencer for Navy secretary, Owen West for assistant secretary of defense for special operations and low-intensity conflict, and Charles "Cully" Stimson for Navy general counsel — have been formally referred to the SASC. They are expected to receive a committee hearing and approval vote in committee before the full Senate votes on their nominations.

Charles "Cully" Stimson has been senior legal fellow at The Heritage Foundation since 2007, when he resigned as deputy assistant secretary of defense for detainee affairs over controversial remarks in which he criticized lawyers who represent terrorism suspects.

**NO LUNCHEON (July/August)**

**Caring for those who care – VA Caregiver Support Program values your commitment**



Rehabilitation after a serious injury can be a lengthy and confusing process that may leave Veterans and their family caregivers feeling isolated and adrift in an uncertain sea. The Department of Veterans Affairs' Caregiver Program can be a life raft during the transition

period. The program aims to support caregivers who in turn support Veterans in ways VA cannot.

Caregivers play an important role in the health and well-being of Veterans, and caring for a wounded, ill, or injured Veteran is not easy work. Without family caregivers, many of these Veterans could not remain close to family and in their communities.

VA knows that family caregivers who care for Veterans in their own homes have been putting Veterans first since the founding of our nation. That's why VA's Caregiver Support Program provides training and education to enhance the caregiver's role. The program focus is to improve the caregiver's understanding of the impact their work has on the health and well-being of the Veteran they care for and their families as well as how their work affects them, too.

Caregivers who participate in VA's Caregiver Support Program tell us that the program has helped them feel more confident in their role, that it has made them even more proficient in supporting the Veteran they care for in treatment and rehabilitation.

To learn more about the VA Caregiver Support Program, visit the [Caregiver Website](#) or call the Caregiver Support Line at 1-855-260-3274. You can also contact your local Caregiver Support Coordinator located at every VA medical center across the United States.

**Military Update: New 'QRMC' Study Will Eye Converting Military to Salary System**

By year's end the Department of Defense expects to launch its 13th Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation (QRMC), which will assess the pros and cons of converting service members from traditional basic pay and tax-free allowances to a single, civilian-like salary system. By law, the president every four years must direct a QRMC to review principles and concepts of military compensation.

**LUNCHEON PHOTOS**



**Graydon Tunstall, History Professor, USF**



**Charlie Conover—Dr. Graydon Tunstall**

**Dr. Graydon Tunstall, addresses MOAA**

Dr. Graydon Tunstall, a distinguished history professor from USF, was the featured speaker at the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) monthly meeting, which was held at the Sun City Center, North Side Atrium Building on June 7, 2017.

Dr. Tunstall has a Ph.D. in Modern European History, Rutgers University, a M.A. in Modern European History, Rutgers University, and an A.B. in History, Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. From 2000-present he is the Senior and Executive Director of Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society, at USF, Tampa, FL. He has presented numerous lectures at various colleges and universities across the United States. He has written six (6) books dealing in large part with WW I and a multiplicity of articles too numerous to list. Dr. Tunstall also belongs to thirteen (13) professional organizations.

His Specialty Area is Modern Europe, Central Europe and the Balkans. He presented a thorough discussion of the history of the Middle East since World War I with an emphasis on the relationship between Israel and Palestine.

**MEMORIAL DAY PHOTOS**



**COL Michael Davis, USMC  
Speaker**



**Hillsborough County  
Sheriff's Dept. Color Guard**



**National Anthem**



**COL Michael Davis, USMC**



**Daughters of the American  
Revolution**



**Trinity Baptist Church  
Choir**

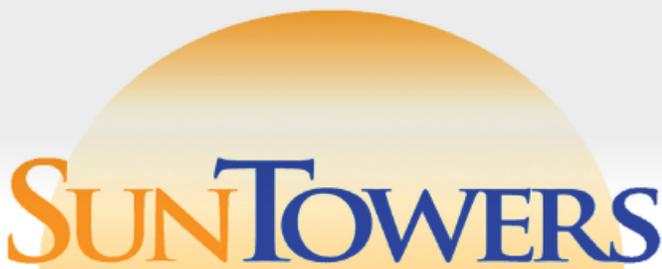


**B. Blackshire, LTC, USA (Ret)  
Master of Ceremonies**



**Ed Socha, CDR USN (Ret)  
Tolled the bell for the deceased**





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LTC Charles Conover, USA (Ret).....260-3257  
charlierconover@gmail.com

#### 1st VP

LTC Benny Blackshire, USA (Ret).....260-3105  
bwblacks@aol.com

#### 2nd VP

MAJ James Haney, USMC (Ret).....220-8758  
jhaney1@gmail.com

#### SECRETARY

LTC Ed Mooney, USA (Ret).....751-6844  
edmlc@yahoo.com

#### ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Lt Col Ferris Garrett, USAF (Ret).....841-0532  
garrett4@tampabay.rr.com

#### TREASURER

D. Kay Benson (Aux)..... 938-3030  
mamby45@hotmail.com

#### ASSISTANT TREASURER

MAJ Kirk Faryniasz, USAF (Ret).....677-2606  
kfaryniasz@hotmail.com

#### DIRECTOR

LT Dave Floyd, USN (Fmr).....334-7797  
DavidFloyd2012@yahoo.com

#### DIRECTOR

Doris Glass (Aux).....642-0497  
Luncheon Reservation Coordinator  
dobygl@juno.com

#### DIRECTOR

CAPT Frank Kepley, USN (Ret) ..... 642-0801  
Public Affairs Officer  
Legislative Affairs  
Publisher/Editor Officers Call Newsletter  
dkepley@tampabay.rr.com

#### DIRECTOR

Jane Foppe (Aux) .....541-2618  
ljcfoppe@aol.com  
Surviving Spouse Liaison

#### PAST PRESIDENT

LT Thom Brown, USNR (Fmr).....634-7435  
galenageneral1999@gmail.com

#### PERSONAL AFFAIRS

CDR Ed Socha, USN (Ret) .....634-4957  
Proofreader  
ejsfalcon1@frontier.com

#### JROTC Coordinator

Lt Col James Warchol, USAF (Ret).....633-1063  
wjammer39@gmail.com

#### CHAPLAIN

Assistant Personal Affairs  
Lt Col Samuel Rorer, USAF (Ret)..... 260-3882  
srorer@hotmail.com

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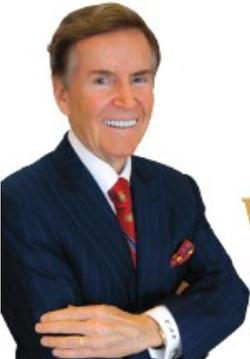


**Simone M. Baillergeon**  
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**WEALTH MANAGEMENT GROUP**

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CHAIRMAN & CEO

**SUN CITY CENTER**  
1653 Sun City Center Plaza  
Sun City Center, FL 33573

**P: 813-633-7333**

F: 813-633-61-20

**SARASOTA**  
6371 Business Boulevard  
Suite 200

Sarasota, Florida 31-21-0

**P: 800-330-4248**

[tpayant@payantwealthmanagementgroup.com](mailto:tpayant@payantwealthmanagementgroup.com)  
[WWW.PAYANTWEALTHMANAGEMENTGROUP.COM](http://WWW.PAYANTWEALTHMANAGEMENTGROUP.COM)

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- **Service Dogs** for veterans with PTSD and other traumatic injuries.
- **Homeless Prevention for Women Veterans:** help with rent, child care and licensing training.
- **Operation Warm Heart**, administered by the 1st Sergeants Group at MacDill AFB, who provide commissary vouchers for soldiers in need in Tampa.
- **Scholarships and Leadership Programs** for students from military families
- **Operation Helping Hand:** monthly support for military families of wounded servicemen and women at the James A. Haley VA Hospital .



**For more information, call 813/634-4675 or log onto our website at [mfst.us](http://mfst.us)**

1010 American Eagle Blvd., Box 301  
Sun City Center, Florida 33573-5276

## MEMBER PROFILE

### Roy Conklin, COL, USA (Ret)



Colonel Conklin graduated from the University of New York at Cortland with a Bachelor of Science degree in Administration. He was later principal, Clarkstown Senior High School, S. W. Nyack, New York'

Colonel Conklin has completed Infantry Officer Advance Course, Civil Affairs Advance Course Command and General Staff College,

Industrial College of the Armed Forces, and the Air War College.

Colonel Conklin was graduated from OCS May 22, 1952. His initial assignment was Platoon Leader in the 9<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, Korea. He was later Company Commander, 40<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. After Korea, he joined the 2nd Infantry Division in New York City in the New York National Guard for 6 years. The guard unit was dropped and he transferred to a civil affairs unit in the Bronx. He was fortunate to get a slot for a captain as the education officer in the reserve unit where he served for 16 years.

Colonel Conklin's assignments included Chief of Staff and Deputy Commander 356<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Brigade and later Commander, 1154<sup>th</sup> USAR School.

He finished his career as the commander of the Command and General Officers School, his last 5 years as a full colonel.

He was awarded a Conspicuous Service Cross in New York State and was selected to the OCS Hall of Fame.

As a civilian he was a history teacher for 5 years, a High School Principal for 20 years and a superintendent of schools for 4 years. He was also a college professor for 6 years. He is a member of the Military Order of the World Wars and Military Officers Association of America.

Colonel Conklin's awards include: Silver Star; Bronze Star with "V" device and Oak Leaf Cluster; Purple Heart; Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; Army Commendation Medal; Army Achievement Medal; National Defense Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster; Korean Service Medal; Humanitarian Service Medal; Armed Forces Reserve Medal; Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal; United Nations Service Medal and Combat Infantryman Badge;

### Fisher House Foundation to build nine new facilities



There are nine new Fisher Houses in the works this year, including two in the Bronx, one in Charleston, South Carolina, one in Connecticut, one in Alaska, two in Florida, one in Orlando and one in Tampa. The Fisher House Foundation is also

building a second facility at Keesler Air Force Base in Mississippi and its third Fisher House in Houston.

The Fisher House Foundation is best known for the network of homes they make available to veteran and military families. When a loved one is receiving treatment in a hospital or medical center, these houses provide the families with some place to stay cost free. It has saved families around \$360 million in out-of-pocket expenses.

### VFW survey: Fix VA services instead of outsourcing them



WASHINGTON — An overwhelming number of Veterans of Foreign Wars members prefer fixing Veterans Affairs medical services to establishing a new private-care based health system for them, according to a new survey released by the

group.

The poll, which collected responses from nearly 11,000 veterans last fall, also found significant improvements in VA care in recent years.

More than two-thirds of respondents said they were satisfied with their experience at VA facilities. Nearly 60 percent of the veterans said they have seen better service and access, or described their local facility as already being "high performing."

VFW officials said the results show that "VA is on the right track," but also warned that VA is still far from a perfect system.

"Respondents indicated that VA still has a lot of work ahead in order to fully restore the trust of those it was created to serve," the report stated. "Nearly 40 percent of veterans reported that their local VA medical facilities need improvements.

VFW officials said they see the clear message from their survey as "the preferred method to achieve the best care for veterans is to hire more VA doctors, hold wrongdoers accountable, improve customer service, and make VA's programs and systems more user-friendly."

*Editor's note: These comments have an all too familiar ring.*

### Sun City Center MOAA Website

Don't forget to visit our new website. The link to the website is: <http://moaafi.org/chapters/SunCity/> You will find much membership information, photos, calendar of events, past newsletters and more. If you would like to suggest topics for inclusion contact Jim Haney at [jghaney1@gmail.com](mailto:jghaney1@gmail.com)

### Publisher/Editor

### CAPT Frank Kepley, USN (Ret)

We need your input about member activities associated with MOAA and articles of interest to the military community. Contact Frank at:

[dkepley@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:dkepley@tampabay.rr.com) 813-642-0801



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**LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS**  
**Frank Kepley. CAPT USN (Ret)**

**The VA Is Using Advanced Technology To Predict Which Veterans Are At Risk Of Suicide**



The Department of Veterans Affairs has launched a new system to identify veterans who are at risk of committing suicide, and VA Secretary David J. Shulkin says it's already having an impact.

"This cutting-edge program is saving lives by identifying at-risk veterans and connecting them with the specialized care and support they need," said Shulkin.

The system, dubbed Recovery Engagement and Coordination for Health —Veterans Enhanced Treatment Program, or REACH VET, was designed to aid VA clinicians in providing preemptive care and support for vulnerable veterans, even if they're not actively seeking treatment from the VA.

REACH VET employs an advanced predictive analytics tool that analyzes data from health records to identify veterans who, according to the VA, are "at a statistically elevated risk for suicide, hospitalization, illness, or other adverse outcomes."

Since 2001, veterans suicides have increased by a staggering 32%. Last year, the VA [released a study](#) that found that , an average of 20 veterans took their lives every day in 2014. The REACH VET program is part of a broader effort to reduce that number dramatically. *See more below.*

**PTSD: National Center for PTSD**



PTSD is defined by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5th Edition (DSM-5) as a *psychiatric disorder* that can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a

natural disaster, a serious accident, a terrorist act, war or combat, rape or other violent personal assault. There is a set of symptoms associated with that trauma.

There is a growing awareness in and outside the military that PTSD is a serious medical condition that is treatable.

Clinicians working with Veterans will likely need to address co-occurring PTSD and SUD (substance use disorder). These patients may have complicated clinical presentations and poorer treatment prognoses. They can also be a challenge to treat. Although integrated treatments are intuitively appealing and can be beneficial for some, there is insufficient evidence that they are consistently effective for both disorders.

*Editor's note: the label of PTSD as a psychiatric disorder is preventing many veterans from seeking care and incurring that stigma. The Warrior to Warrior (w2w) program does not treat it as a psychiatric disorder but rather as a condition that can be treated using physical rehabilitation and physi-*

*cal therapy. It works because the veteran accepts that therapy and feels they are avoiding the stigma associated with a mental disorder. More about this program in future newsletters.*

**VA Hospitals Better on Most Outcome Measures (JAMA Internal Medicine)**



By the quality measures included in the government's Hospital Compare ranking system, Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals in general outperformed civilian hospitals in most categories, Northwestern University researchers reported in JAMA Internal Medicine.

Compared with 4,010 non-VA hospitals, the 129 VA institutions had lower 30-day mortality and readmission rates in all categories, and did better in six of nine patient safety indicators (and no worse in the other three).

But the VA hospitals didn't fare so well in patient experience or behavioral health measures, the researchers found. Ratings for doctor and nurse communication, noise levels, pain management, and responsiveness all came in worse for VA hospitals. So did measures of post-discharge planning, alcohol use screening, and tobacco use treatment.

**Trump Signs VA accountability executive order, Secretary Shulkin makes new announcements**



The President has signed an Executive Order entitled, "Improving Accountability and Whistleblower Protection at the Department of Veterans Affairs," and Secretary Shulkin made three new key announcements at the VA's Central Office.

The Executive Order is focused on improving "accountability and whistleblower protection" at the VA by creating an office dedicated to that purpose and the position of Special Assistant to the Secretary who will report directly to the Secretary and serve as executive director of the office.

The new executive director "will report directly to me as Secretary so that we can identify barriers that are preventing us from removing employees and people that we have identified that should no longer be working at VA," said Dr. David Shulkin, Secretary of Veterans Affairs. "We want to make sure that we have employees who work hard and are committed to the mission of serving our Veterans."

The executive director will advise and assist the Secretary in using all available authorities to discipline or terminate any VA manager or employee who has violated the public's trust and failed to carry out his or her duties on behalf of Veterans. The executive director will also assist the Secretary in recruiting, rewarding, and retaining high-performing employees.

The VA will establish the office and appoint the executive director within 45 days of the signing of the Executive Order. *Editor's note: it's encouraging, but no mention of the union opposition to Civil Service changes.*

## Sen. Moran fights to declassify military records of veterans exposed to toxic substances



Two U.S. Senators introduced bipartisan legislation to allow veterans who have been exposed to toxic substances in a classified incident to access their military records as they apply for disability benefits and VA health care.

Sen. Jerry Moran and Sen. Jon Tester are working to pass The Gary Deloney and John Olsen Toxic Exposure Declassification Act.

Veterans who have health conditions that are linked to exposure to toxic substances during their military services are eligible to apply for disability benefits from the VA. However, some missions and projects that resulted in their exposure to the toxic substances remain classified by the Department of Defense, despite having taken place decades ago.

The policy prevents veterans from accessing and using their service records to establish their service-connected conditions and securing a disability rating that grants them eligible for care and benefits.

The Gary Deloney and John Olsen Toxic Exposure Declassification Act would call on the Secretary of Defense to declassify the records of experiments or incidents that resulted in troops' exposure to toxic substances that could be used in a veteran's claim for benefits.

## Triton drones to be based in Florida



The Navy has chosen Mayport, Florida, as the East Coast base for its MQ-4C Triton UAV.

Naval Station Mayport will be the East Coast Forward Operating Base, according to a Navy news release.

"Mayport will be a permanent duty station for about 400 Triton UAS personnel and will support rotational deployments outside the continental United States," the Navy said. "Facility construction will begin this year with the first Triton UAS scheduled to arrive in 2020."

The Triton uses a "remote split" system, where the crews of squadron Unmanned Patrol Squadron 19, or VUP-19, that operate the East Coast UAVs will be based at Naval Air Station Jacksonville, while the unmanned aircraft and their maintenance crews operate out of Mayport.

"As the east coast FOB, Mayport will be the launch and recovery site for four forward-based MQ-4C Triton UAS aircraft and consolidated maintenance hub for up to four additional aircraft," the Navy said.

## 12 military awards now eligible for new 'C' and 'R' devices, and 2 no longer rate a 'V'

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon has quietly implemented a series of changes to its awards policy for troops involved in combat, establishing new criteria for recognizing contributions both on and off the battlefield.

Commanders may now recommend their troops for 12 types of awards affixed with new "C" or "R" devices, prod-

ucts of an internal review focused on honoring drone operators, cyber warfare specialists and others who use emerging technology to influence the battlefield in unconventional ways. The former, which stands for "combat," signifies meritorious performance "under combat conditions" while the latter, which stands for "remote," is reserved for those "not directly exposed to hostile action or significant risk."

Service specific Achievement Medals are no longer eligible for a "V," only a "C" or "R," a decision some may call controversial. That's true now, too, for the Legion of Merit, heretofore awarded with a "V" only by the Navy and Marine Corps. However, each of the services is clear to award the Distinguished Flying Cross with "V," as the Air Force has for heroism dating to the Korean War.

## Marines are once again 'The Few, The Proud'



Don't call it a comeback: it's been here for years. The Marine Corps' latest recruiting commercial ends with the iconic tagline, "The Few, The Proud," which was supposed to be on hiatus.

Known as "Anthem," the commercial uses computer-generated images to show famous Marine battles throughout history. It is part of the Marine Corps' "Battles Won" campaign.

"Including the tagline with the brand was the final decision made before the new TV ads entered the market," said Lt. Col. John Caldwell, a spokesman for Marine Corps Recruiting Command.

In February, Caldwell said that the "Battles Won" commercials would not include a tagline. Instead, they would end with the word "Marines" and the Corps' eagle, globe and anchor emblem.

## Chinese doctors grow new ear on man's arm, transplant it



An artificial ear grown on a man's arm for three months has been successfully transplanted onto his head. The man, whose surname was given as Ji, recently underwent the remarkable procedure.

He lost his right ear in a traffic accident in north China's Shanxi Province last year.

To help him restore his hearing, plastic surgeon Guo Shuzhong, who works at the First Affiliated Hospital of Xi'an Jiaotong University in the neighboring Shaanxi Province, planted an artificial ear on his arm.

To grow an artificial ear, doctor Guo and his team first stretched Ji's skin on his arm with a skin expander.

Then they took a piece of cartilage from one side of his chest to carve out a new ear before planting the artificial organ on the patient's forearm.

With the artificial ear fully grown, doctors successfully transplanted it from Ji's arm to his head using vascular anastomosis techniques. The operation took seven hours. *Editor's note: I wonder if I could grow a new brain on my elbow.*

## Report: China's man-made South China Sea islands nearly complete



BEIJING — A report from a U.S. think tank says China has nearly completed construction work on three man-made islands in the South China Sea, giving it the ability to deploy combat aircraft and other military assets to the disputed region.

The Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies analyzed recent satellite photos and concluded that runways, aircraft hangers, radar sites and hardened surface-to-air missile shelters have either been finished or are nearing completion.

The report, released Monday, appears to be the most conclusive indication yet that China is using its island-building project to give teeth to its claim over almost the entire South China Sea and its islands and reefs.

On each of the islands, China has constructed enough concrete hangers for 24 fighter jets and four or five larger planes such as bombers or early warning aircraft, CSIS reported.

"Beijing can now deploy military assets, including combat aircraft and mobile missile launchers, to the Spratly Islands at any time," the report said.

## A New Trend in Pancreatic Cancer Treatment



ORLANDO — Pancreatic cancer is projected to become the most common cause of cancer death in the United States in the coming decades as lung cancer deaths continue to drop, said Margaret Tempero, MD, a medical oncologist from the University of California San Francisco.

Citing statistics from the American Cancer Society, Dr Tempero also observed that in 2016, there were more deaths from pancreatic cancer than breast cancer.

Speaking at the annual meeting of the National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) 22nd Annual Conference, she recited more sobering statistics about this highly lethal cancer: Eighty percent of patients are diagnosed with advanced unresectable disease, and, of the minority who can be resected, 80% will relapse after adjuvant drug therapy.

## VA Forced to Delay Removing Employee Caught Watching Pornography



After a thorough internal review of an employee of the Michael DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Houston caught watching pornography *while with a patient*, the designated proposing official recommended removal from federal service.

VA immediately removed the employee in question from patient care and placed the employee on administrative duties. Due to current law, the deciding official cannot affect a final determination for 30 days from the date the proposal for removal was made. VA is committed to ensuring every employee retains their right to due process while at the same time reducing the time it takes to remove employees who have engaged in misconduct.

"This is an example of why we need accountability legislation as soon as possible," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs David J. Shulkin. "It's unacceptable that VA has to wait 30 days to act on a proposed removal."

In addition, under current law, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) must continue to pay employees who are in the process of being removed.

*Editor's note: hopefully, the legislation that is currently on the table will end this craziness. Don't bet the farm on it.*

## Doctors perform the Air Force's first robotic surgery



The Air Force has performed its first robotic surgery, a ventral hernia repair conducted last month by members of the 81<sup>st</sup> Surgical Operation Squadron, according to the [Air Force officials](#).

The surgery was performed at the Kessler Medical Center in Mississippi, led by Maj. Lauren Buck and her surgical team, with the da Vinci Xi robot system, which translates hand movement into smaller and more precise movements as the tiny instruments decrease the risk of infections and allow for better visibility and dexterity while the surgeon is operating.

"My first robotic surgery went well," Buck said. "It made the surgery easier, visualization was much better, and the da Vinci Xi has more dexterity, which is great."

The da Vinci Xi robot system is equipped with a tiny camera, the robot sends images to a monitor in the operating room that guides the surgeons.

## FDA OKs First Direct-to-Consumer Genetic Risk Tests

In the latest step toward personalized medicine, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved the first direct-to-consumer (DTC) genetic tests that provide information on a person's risk of developing a disease.

The tests in question, offered by 23andME, provide information on an individual's genetic predisposition to late-onset Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease, celiac disease, and seven other conditions.

The FDA cautions that test results by themselves do not provide a complete picture of risk because environmental and lifestyle factors also help determine whether an individual develops a particular condition.

*Editor's note: do we really want to know?*

## Florida Council of Chapters Communiqué

### June 2017 Issue

See what the other Chapters are doing. The *Florida Council of Chapter's* newsletter, the "Communiqué" can be accessed by clicking on the link below. After you click the link and then click *Allow*, it may take a minute or so for the newsletter to pop up. It is worth the wait.

Apr2014.pdf <http://www.moaafl.org/communique>

Editor—Marty Brown. Send articles and photos to: [wayne.and.marty.brown@gmail.com](mailto:wayne.and.marty.brown@gmail.com)

## Soldiers surprise their children at Yankees game after 9-month deployment



For the past nine months, Army Chief Warrant Officer Jose Gomez and Army Capt. Elizabeth Gomez, of Houston, have been deployed in Kuwait. In the meantime, their children, Daniel, 10, and Isabella, 5, have been living with their grandparents in Tampa, Florida.

With some help from the New York Yankees, the family is now reunited, reports a CBS News channel. The team honored the two children with throwing out the first pitch of a spring training game, then a video message of their parents played while Elizabeth and Jose were dressed as Yankee catchers, complete with the helmet to cover their faces.

After Isabella pitched the ball, the parents revealed themselves.

## Advocates push to start work on Global War on Terror memorial



Advocates for a National Global War on Terrorism Memorial want to see a site established before this generation's veterans all become senior citizens.

And to do that, work has to start now.

"A 40-year-old servicemember that seized the first airfield in Kandahar (in Afghanistan) in 2001 is now 56," Andrew Brennan, executive director of the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation. "Given that these efforts often take five to seven years, we're in a position where that servicemember may be taking grandchildren to see the memorial for the war he fought in.

"My grandfather served in WWII, but he never got a chance to visit the memorial (completed in 2004)," said Rep. Seth Moulton, D-Mass., who served four combat tours in Iraq as a Marine Corps infantry officer. "I want to make sure that's not the case for so many of our War on Terror veterans today."

Supporters are looking for a waiver to the 10-year rule so they can start working now to honor the nearly 7,000 U.S. troops killed in those countries.

## Military digging up Battle of Tarawa remains from Hawaii cemetery



HONOLULU — Military and Veterans Affairs officials are digging up the remains of 94 unidentified Marines and sailors killed on a remote atoll in the Pacific during one of World War II's bloodiest battles.

The servicemen were killed in the Battle of Tarawa in 1943 and buried as unknowns at a national cemetery in Honolulu after the war. Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency spokeswoman Maj. Natasha Waggoner said Tuesday advances in DNA technology have increased the probability of identifying the unknowns.

More than 990 U.S. Marines and 30 U.S. sailors were killed in the three-day battle. About 550 are still unidentified, including some still in Tarawa, Waggoner said.

During the U.S. amphibious assault on Tarawa 74 years ago, Japanese machine gun fire killed scores of Marines when their boats got stuck on the reef at low tide. Americans who made it to the beach faced brutal hand-to-hand combat.

Only 17 of the 3,500 Japanese troops survived. Of 1,200 Korean slave laborers on the island, just 129 lived.

The U.S. quickly buried the thousands of dead. But these graves were soon disturbed as the Navy had to quickly build an airstrip to continue their push west toward Japan.

## Trump's infrastructure plan could include veterans hospitals, broadband



President Trump's \$1 trillion infrastructure package could include projects targeted at broadband (internet access) and veterans hospitals, according to Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao.

While Trump has long talked about the need to repair U.S. roads, bridges, tunnels and airports, the scope and details of his proposal have been largely unclear.

But Chao's comments, made Wednesday during an anniversary event at the Transportation Department, suggest that the plan could tackle a broad range of infrastructure interests.

"The proposal will cover more than transportation infrastructure," Chao said. "It will include energy, water, and potentially broadband and veterans hospitals as well."

The potential inclusion of veterans hospitals appears to be a new development. Broadband, high speed internet access, is needed for telemedicine with VA hospitals. The telemedicine aspect could easily handle more minor ailments and follow-up appointments.

These needs could be handled in a much more efficient manner, eliminating the requirements for many in-house appointments. Currently, the internet access is not widespread enough to allow for this modality to be routinely utilized by many rural patients. So, this area, along with an increase in new hospitals, would greatly increase veterans access to care. *Editor's note: the future will soon be the present.*



**No deaths reported in in May/June**

**Monthly Member and Board Meetings**

**Luncheon: No luncheon in July and August**  
**No board mtg in July— Next board meeting Aug 9**  
**No Membership Committee Mtg in July—next meeting 16 August**

## Alarm bells ring: Expired drugs trigger resistance to antibiotics



The alleged administration of expired injections by the staff of Gandhi Hospital in an India city is just the tip of the iceberg. Drug expiration or use of drugs post expiration date is a major health nuisance in India as in other parts of the world. Experts warn that though most of the expired drugs may not cause any immediate damage to health, but lead to drug resistance in case of antibiotics.

According to general physicians and clinical pharmacists, use of drugs post expiration date do not benefit the patient. Instead, such drugs result in the patient developing resistance to them. The drugs lose their potency while a few drugs disintegrate. Resistance to drugs, particularly if they are antibiotics, is a serious medical challenge the world over.

*Editor's Note: although the system in the U.S. is much better with regard to making expiration dates known to patients, the facts are that people do retain expired drugs and when ailing, self-medicate themselves, risking a future resistance to the drug.*

## Robotic brace for Veterans of spinal cord injury



In a series of thumps, whirrs and clattering noises, Brandon Myers was able to achieve what his body would no longer let him do on his own. Augmented by brace support, motion sensors and a computer control system and further aided by his caregiver and crutches, he slowly walked forward in an upright posture. His steps were small and unbalanced at first but became more fluid as he got used to the machine saddled to his torso, hips and legs.

"This exoskeleton is not quite as fluid or fast as a robot you would see in a science fiction movie but its light years apart from what I can do in a wheelchair," Myers said as his face lights up with a smile. "Now I can walk."

According to John Colaneri, VA physical therapist trained on the system, the ReWalk Exoskeleton equipment has motors at the hip and knee region that give the user the ability to stand from a seated position. With the assistance of a caregiver and the use of forearm crutches, wearers bear weight through their bones in their legs, allowing them to take steps without needing to contract muscles. In addition, the structural support of the exoskeleton at the hips and knees helps with moving the patient forward.

"Because it requires assistance from a caregiver and crutches, the exoskeleton doesn't give a patient the ability to walk completely independently and won't fully replace the need for a wheelchair," said Colaneri. "Instead, it allows users to walk within their communities and perform some functional tasks while standing."

*Editor's note: Technology marches on. An amazing step forward. Another reason to make sure that the VA hospitals are not eliminated in favor of private care. This is the kind of innovative technical advancements the VA is famous for.*

## Report outlines goals to reduce threat of hepatitis B, C by 2030



A report by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recommends enhanced methods of screening, treatment and prevention to help eliminate hepatitis B and C as a public health concern in the US by the year 2030 and save almost 90,000 lives. The

report says a coordinated federal effort is needed, such as expansion of needle exchanges, free access to the hepatitis B vaccine and unrestricted treatment for patients with hepatitis C.

About 1.3 million people in the United States have chronic hepatitis B and about 2.7 million have chronic hepatitis C. These infections cause about 80 percent of liver cancer cases worldwide.

Liver cancer incidence in the United States rose 38 percent between 2003 and 2012. Liver cancer deaths increased 56 percent during that time, primarily due to viral hepatitis, according to the report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine.

Hepatitis B is spread through body fluids, such as through sexual contact or sharing IV drug equipment. It could also be passed from an infected woman to her baby at birth.

Hepatitis C is also spread by blood contact, and most people are infected by sharing needles and other types of drug equipment, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

There is a vaccine for hepatitis B, and hepatitis C can be cured with short courses of medicines, the report said.

## This Drone Helicopter Could Revolutionize the Medevac Forever



The U.S. military may have found itself the aerial ambulance of its dreams. Since 2016, the Army's Medical Research and Materiel Command has examined the potential applications of unmanned aerial drones in assisting combat troops on the battlefield, and when it comes to facilitating a quick and relatively safe medical evacuation, Dragonfly Pictures' DP-14 Hawk is just what the doctor ordered.

The DP-14 Hawk isn't just small, it's also fast and agile, making it perfect not just for resupply missions but for ferrying wounded troops out of hard-to-reach landing zones. With a top speed of 105 knots and a rapid climb rate of 500 feet per minute, the Hawk can maintain a cruising speed of more than 80 mph for more than two hours — even when fully loaded with just over 400 pounds of cargo in its 6-foot-by-20-inch, human-friendly cargo area. As The Drive points out, the Hawk even resembles a miniaturized version of the CH-47 Chinook helicopter favored for rapid-troop deployments.

This isn't the first time the military has experimented with aerial extractions, and The Drive's story about the DP-14 Hawk contains some fascinating history of such attempts. But based on DPI's specs, the Hawk seems like the safest and most efficient possible iteration of the concept yet.

## Veteran suicide continues to be an unacceptable reality that haunts our nation.



The current VA and DOD programs are burdened with stigmatic and bureaucratic challenges that currently prevent many veterans from getting the help they need. Tragically, many veterans feel isolated in their suffering and fear if they seek help from within the system, they will be margin-

alized within their own community. A program, called 'Warrior2Warrior's,' offers a non-threatening and stigma free approach to ending this blight providing veterans in need with intensive physical rehabilitation and peer to peer mentorship, complimented by a variety of secondary services specific to the needs of each individual warrior. Their de-institutionalized solutions are designed to crash through these barriers.

Their vision is to honor the sacrifices our veterans have made for each and every one of us. In the short-term, they will have a laser-beam focus on eliminating veteran suicide. In the long term, w2w's efforts will expand to include helping wounded veterans and first-responders live the most vibrant life possible.



This program recognizes that veterans in need often feel isolated; alone with no place to go. Their vision is to develop a physical location that will house all required services to help veterans thrive.

"Resilience Ranch" will resemble forward operating bases on the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq. It will have a simple dirt road, use "FEMA like" trailers, tents, fire pits and focus 100% on the requirements these veterans need. The ranch will be rustic and austere, but have exactly what these warriors need to get healthy. For many veterans, it will feel like they are back "home." It will resemble a military base, and be a place where they will feel welcome forever. They will build this destination to replicate the feeling alumni from one of our great Universities get when they go back to their alma mater for homecoming weekend. The only difference will be, every weekend will be homecoming in this town.

The program optimizes physical wellness through physical rehabilitation. There is no stigma attached to physical rehabilitation. This significantly increases teammate participation and provides w2w a gateway to build trust and recommend additional programs.

Simultaneously, as the warrior's overall vigor improves, so does the level of trust and "buy-in" placed in w2w foundation.

Warriors are next assigned to a "pipeline to wellness" that provides additional secondary and tertiary services based upon their needs. A pipeline may include additional physical therapy through our partner EXOS, drug/alcohol addiction recovery, regenerative medicine (self-derived stem cells), equine-based programs, and more traditional behavioral health therapies to name a few potential options. They collaborate with the best resources and programs available.

Warrior2warrior closely and persistently communicates with each teammate in need, coordinating all required services while establishing an enduring peer-mentor relationship that is built on trust and a commitment to each other.

Their ultimate goal is to continue refining their approach in order to one day eliminate veteran suicide altogether.

*Editor's note:* I have devoted considerable space to this program because I feel that w2w is on the right track. I would strongly encourage each member to visit: <https://www.warrior2warrior.org/program/#the-program> and consider supporting this effort.

*This program has much in common with My Warriors Place, i.e., attacking a serious problem using non-traditional, but more effective methods. I will be providing more about this program in the August newsletter.*

## WWII vet, 102, receives high school diploma, overdue medals

BUFFALO, N.Y. — A 102-year-old World War II veteran who served with Canadian and American forces and survived captivity by the Nazis has received his high school diploma and overdue medals.

Sydney Cole dropped out of his Buffalo, New York, high school in the 1930s. Rejected by the U.S. Army Air Corps before America entered the war, Cole headed across the border and joined the Canadian Royal Air Force.

He was discharged after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor and joined the U.S. Army in 1943.

Cole was piloting an artillery observation plane during the Battle of the Bulge when he was shot down in early 1945. He spent the next four months in a German POW camp. Cole received his diploma and 10 medals, including a Purple Heart and Bronze Star Medal.

## Reuters names VA among world's most innovative research institutions



Reuters has named VA as a top innovator among the world's government bodies.

The news agency bases the honor on a complex formula that takes into account factors such as successful patents, articles in academic journals that are cited in patent applications, and journal articles involving collaborations with industry.

In the case of VA, inventions such as the CT scan, cardiac pacemaker and nicotine patch owe at least part of their development to VA research support and ingenuity.

In December 2016, the U.S. Patent and Trade Office issued a patent to VA and an academic partner, Stanford University, for a chemical agent called ethanone that boosts the ability of T cells in the immune system to repair DNA and ease inflammation. The compound could eventually be part of treatments for rheumatoid arthritis, which affects some 1.5 million Americans.

VA's high success rate with new technologies can be traced, at least in recent years, to the agency's Technology Transfer Program (TTP), part of the VA Office of Research and Development.

A long list of patents dating back to 2002, shows eight new ones just since the start of 2017. One, for example, involves a new way to zero in on specific brain regions and target them for treatment. Another involves new methods to evaluate drug interactions. Yet another describes an ankle-foot prosthesis that enables users to walk more easily on sloped surfaces.

*Editor's note: as has been stated many times, the VA is and has been at the forefront of significant, meaningful research. A huge reason not to privatize the system.*

# 10 must-haves for the World War I infantryman – and one piece of junk

(Part 2 of 4) Submitted by editor

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. – The World War I soldier endured bitter cold, poison gas, enemy snipers and a grueling fight from the trenches.

The U.S. joined the Allies in 1917, making this year a big one for the WWI Centennial and a fitting time to honor the doughboys.

## Must-haves on the battlefield in WWI.



**1. Model 1918 Trench Knife.** Big blade, with brass knuckles. This bad boy was considered a versatile trench weapon for close-combat fighting.



**2. Trench periscope.** Used by both sides, this device prevented head-shots from enemy snipers who frequently fired at anybody who went above the trench parapet.



**3. M1917 Gas Mask.** Poison gas was one of the most feared weapons on the battlefield. The rubberized US gas mask was based off the British “small box respirator.” It included a rubber face mask with lens and a hose to a box filter, strapped to a soldier’s chest. Some soldiers wore the M2 French mask instead.



**4. The M1918 Browning Automatic Rifle (Caliber .30-06)** Introduced later in the war, this John Browning-designed rifle, could fire from a 20-round box magazine. While it did not reach the front in large numbers in WWI, it was favored by troops

and remained in the Army inventory through Vietnam.

**5. Olive Drab Wool Balaclava** and **6. Fingerless Trench Gloves.** These items were often sewn by women at home and mailed by the thousands to troops overseas. “Severe conditions on the Western Front” eventually prompted the issue of fingerless gloves to protect the hands.



**7. Identity Disk.** This precursor to the dog tag was the first time U.S. troops received issued identifiers.



**8. Trench watch.** Wrist watches at the time were considered effeminate for men, who preferred pocket watches. But the trench watch made practical sense – it could be worn on the wrist of soldiers

who were already wearing a lot of gear. Pulling out a pocket watch to check the time no longer made sense. Trench watches included a cover to protect the face from hazards in the field.



**9. 1910 Entrenching Tool.** This early version of the entrenching tool could not fold, but it could still dig a trench. It’s inclusion on this list is a bit of a no-brainer here.

**And now for a piece of equipment that soldiers truly reviled:**



**10. The M1915 Chauchat Automatic Rifle (8mm).** Americans (who couldn’t speak proper French) called this hated weapon the “Show Show.”

This is “arguably one of the very worst designed infantry weapons ever.” The French weapon was difficult to shoot and had a heavy recoil. Add on the straight-stock design, and it was quite painful to shoot. Finally, the open magazine welcomed a lot of dirt and mud, often causing jams.

## Warrior 2 Warrior

### A Veterans suicide prevention and treatment presentation

Co-directors: Ms. Susan Ullman, the wife of an Army Green Beret who succumbed to suicide.

Navy Seal CAPT Tom Chaby, USN (Ret). Former Commander of Seal Team 5.

**Date: October 10**

**Time: 11:00 am**

**Place: SCC Community  
Hall**

**Catered by Banquet  
Masters**



#### Reservations required

**Point of contact for MOAA, MOWW,  
MFST Frank Kepley — 642-0801  
dkepley@tampabay.rr.com**

**Others: contact your service organ-  
ization to make a reservation.**

**Lunch fee: \$14.00 (payable at door).**

**NON REFUNDABLE**

They operate with a nationwide network of volunteers overseen by only one paid staff member. Unlike most programs grown out of some bureaucracy or institution, W2W was designed and developed by Special Operations, their wives and families. It's different, it's not run by bureaucrats, it's run by warriors for warriors.

The warrior ethos makes it nearly impossible for a teammate to ask for help. Fight through the injury, don't admit weakness, keep it inside. Asking for help risks stigma, marginalization, loss of security clearances, or worse. The VA and DoD bureaucracies are ineffective and most importantly.....this is critical.....they have no mechanism to identify teammates early on the glide slope to trouble. What these Special Operations veterans and their families came up with is a personalized peer driven deinstitutionalized program that breaks down the barriers and stigma to getting emotional help.

Instead of using mental health screenings, self referrals, or waiting for a crisis, Warrior 2 Warrior uses physical rehabilitation and physical therapy to gain acceptance. These guys will readily go through the "Physical Therapy" door, they're hesitant to go through the "Mental Health" door. It works because there is no stigma attached to physical rehabilitation.

Warrior 2 Warrior's high touch, highly personalized, peer-to-peer, de-institutionalized, non-bureaucratic approach works. Over 300 warriors have been through the program since inception. All came out healthier and many were intercepted on a trajectory to a very dark place. Warrior 2 Warrior is saving lives and saving families for these among our nation's greatest citizens. It is a 501(c)3 organization raising funds to support the program.



## MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

**MOAA:** The SCC Chapter of The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) membership is granted to Army; Navy; Marines; Air Force; Coast Guard; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Public Health; the National; Guard or Reserve components both active or retired; and former officers and Warrant Officers who were separated under acceptable conditions.

**MISSION:** The mission of Sun City Center FL chapter shall be to promote the purposes and objectives of the Military Officers Association of America; foster fraternal relation among retired, active duty and former officers of active duty, retired and reserve components personnel of the uniformed services and their dependents and survivors; provide useful services for members and their dependents and survivors and serve the community and the nation.

**MEETINGS:** A meeting is held monthly (except July/August) in the Atrium building in the Florida room at 11:00 a.m. and includes lunch and a guest speaker.

**ACTIVITIES:** Coordinate and sponsor Annual Memorial Day ceremony; provide awards and honorariums to outstanding JROTC Cadets; contributed to Operation Warm Heart and Helping Hand; contribute to My Warriors Place; provide funds for MOAA scholarships and participate in numerous community activities.

Additional information can be obtained by calling 813-642-0801 or e-mailing [dkepley@tampabay.rr.com](mailto:dkepley@tampabay.rr.com). You can also contact us by mail at Frank Kepley, 815 Freedom Plaza Circle, Apt 104 Sun City Center Fl. 33573.



Sun City Center Chapter  
Military Officers Association of America  
P.O. Box 5693  
Sun City Center, FL. 33571-5693

Place Stamp  
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## Current Resident or

### VA Secretary Presses for Accountability Legislation in Wake of Federal Appeals Ruling

#### MSPB DECISIONS

Browse or search MSPB precedential and nonprecedential decisions.



The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit in *Helman v. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)* has ruled that the expedited Senior Executive Service (SES) removal and appeals authority provided by the Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014 is unconstitutional.

As a result of this ruling, the Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) has been directed to review the administrative judge's decision upholding VA's November 2014 removal of the director of the Phoenix VA Healthcare System. The former director's removal remains in effect at this time.

Commenting on the ruling, Veterans Affairs Secretary Dr. David J. Shulkin said, "Today's ruling underscores yet again the need for swift congressional action to afford the Secretary effective and defensible authority to take timely and meaningful action against VA employees whose conduct or performance undermines Veterans' trust in VA care or services. "We appreciate the House passing H.R. 1259, VA Accountability First Act of 2017 as a vital step toward providing the tools necessary to address misconduct while ensuring due process. Just as importantly, we look forward to the Senate taking up the legislation and helping to ensure passage as soon as possible."

*Editor's note: I knew it! Here we go again. H.R. 1259 will no doubt be challenged by the MSPB.*

### LUNCHEON FEE INCREASE

*Because the Board of Directors has been unable to find a volunteer to organize and manage the MOAA golf tournament, they have decided to no longer hold the event. The work necessary to run the tournament is extremely arduous and time-consuming and is more than one person can, or should be expected to take on. Consequently, in order to help provide some of the resultant lost income, so the chapter can maintain its current programs, the board has decided to increase the luncheon fee to \$15.00. The increase will take effect at the **luncheon on September 6.***

**The sponsors that appear in this publication do not reflect an endorsement by MOAA or this affiliate.**

**The Sun City Center, FL MOAA Newsletter is published by the Sun City Center Chapter, which is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). MOAA and its affiliated chapters and councils are non-partisan.**

**MOAA Take Action link: [http://www.moaa.org/Main\\_Menu/Take\\_Action/Take\\_Action.html](http://www.moaa.org/Main_Menu/Take_Action/Take_Action.html)**



# VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

## PRESERVE YOUR MILITARY HISTORY .



### A PROGRAM OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

**T**his program captures through a video interview, firsthand account of Veterans who served in any branch of the US military in any capacity, from World War I through the present, and are no longer serving. Civilians who served in support of a US war effort in a professional capacity are also welcome to participate.

**3rd Friday of Each Month  
10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.  
By Appointment Only**

If you are a Veteran or know Veterans that would like to share their stories, schedule your appointment now.

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Sun Towers Retirement Community  
call 813-634-3347.**



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**SUN CITY CENTER  
VETERANS DAY  
MILITARY BALL**

**SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11th, 2017  
5 P.M. UNTIL 9 P.M.**

**THE BALL WILL FEATURE A PATRIOTIC PROGRAM  
HORS D'OEUVRES - A SERVED DINNER  
ENTERTAINMENT AND DANCING  
BYOB (GLASSES AND ICE PROVIDED)**

**SUN CITY CENTER COMMUNITY HALL  
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\$60.00 PER PERSON - CHECKS PAYABLE TO MOWW  
SELF APPOINTED TABLE CAPTAIN CAN RESERVE A  
TABLE OF EIGHT WITH A \$120.00 DEPOSIT  
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moww.militaryball@yahoo.com (preferred) or 813-260-3910**