



The Council Communiqué

Florida Council of Chapters
Military Officers Association of America

April 2022

Issue 169



President's Message

COL Mike Borders, USA., Ret.

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Fellow Florida Council Members: As we move into April and what passes for Springtime here in Florida, the FCoC and our chapters are heavily engaged in a range of activities. Many of you have already submitted your LOE packages to MOAA National. This is a big deal, and if you have not yet done so, you should attend to it. We are also in Advocacy in Action season, and your efforts to send in those "cards and letters" is as important as ever. Lastly, we are inching ever closer to our summer convention in West Palm Beach. If you have not yet registered, you can go to our FCoC website: www.moaafi.org to do so. Marc Oliveri and the entire convention team are putting on a once in a lifetime convention. "Fun in the Sun" is the focus. We will have our annual business meeting, elections, installation of the new board, a Mystery Dinner, and a Casino Night. Of course, we will have a memorial service to honor those friends we lost during 2021. There is more info on the convention elsewhere in the newsletter, to include info on placing an advertisement in the convention magazine, as well as sponsorship of tables at the Casino Night. Lt Gen

Dana Atkins, the President and CEO of MOAA National will be our keynote speaker at the "All Hands" breakfast. You won't want to miss this convention—hope to see you there!!

Diana and I have had the opportunity to visit many of your chapters over the last few months. I continue to be impressed by the leadership and members of our Florida chapters. It is essential that the chapter leadership provides a "product" that will keep the membership engaged. Beyond the key areas of emphasis, such as legislative advocacy, chapter members are looking for a way to stay engaged and to feel that their contributions "give back" in some meaningful way. Whether your chapter supports R/JROTC programs, scholarships, Toys for Tots, etc., your chapter members want to see these kinds of programs. Let's face it, nobody needs help going to lunch or dinner. But your members will go to your luncheons and dinners if they know that they are a part of something bigger than themselves. Good newsletters and websites are important too. These are sources of timely and valuable information that your members look

Continued on next page

to stay abreast of the issues.

In your April *Military Officer* magazine, you will find the blue letters for you to send to your legislators. This is important. I also encourage you to TAKE ACTION by going to the link provided on each page of this newsletter. You can also do this by going to the FCoC website: www.moaafi.org, or the MOAA National website: www.moa.org. The benefits you protect and help to preserve are crucial to the overall effort to recruit and retain a solid active-duty force. Each of us want our nation's military to be strong and to be the best in the world. Do your part by getting involved and TAKE ACTION.

Diana and I hope to visit several of your chapters between now and the convention. Please let me know if there is a good time for us to do so. We really enjoy these visits to the chapters. Seeing your teams at work is fun and rewarding. I appreciate all you do.

Cheers,
Mike



Vice President's Message

CDR Patrick R (Pat) Kluever, USN, Ret.

Naval Aviator (1320) - Navy Test Pilot School Graduate (Class-71)

Greeting and Salutations from a recent explorer to the Galapagos Islands.

March is the warmest and wettest time of the year in the Galapagos island chain that sit right on the equator. It is spring so everything is green and the animals are friendly (if you know what I mean).

The Silver Seas "Origin" was our ship. First operational in 2020 it was purpose-built for the Galapagos with a flip-down marina at it's stern, internal bays for the many zodiacs used to transport explorers to and from the ship, and a set of station-keeping thrusters so an anchor need not be used to avoid damaging the reefs. Powered by water-jets it is also safer for turtles and other wildlife than using propellers.

Council President Mike Borders covered the many things going on during spring time here in Florida Council and Chapters. I echo Mike's call for Chapters to submit inputs for annual Level of Excellence (LOE) awards, to provide their personal support to our Florida Advocacy in Action (AiA) teams (especially if your Chapter has a close relationship with your local Congressman), and I strongly encourage Chapter leaders and members to sign up for the 9-12 June convention in West Palm Beach. This really is a once in a life-time event focused totally on fun and camaraderie.

I hope all our Florida Vietnam Veterans were properly recognized and honored on 29 March at National Vietnam Veterans commemoration events.

I personally attended our first spring JROTC awards formation at Naval Air Station Jacksonville on 30 March - what great program "To Build Better Citizens". The Florida Council is pleased that we are able to support our many Chapters by providing MOAA medals and ribbons. By the way, I am currently the keeper of these medals and ribbons, so work with your Area Vice President to let me know if your Chapter needs medals and ribbons for upcoming ROTC or JROTC awards events. However, please don't stock up so we have enough to go around. A one-week notice of need would be appreciated.

Ecuador is still struggling with the COVID beast, so it is great to be back safe in the State of Florida!

Best Regards, Pat K..

12 Month Calendar:

1-28 APR: Advocacy in Action (AiA) engagements at district-level with Reps & local Senate offices

28 APR: Monthly Round Table - Improving Chapter Health (Virtual)

1 MAY: Level Of Excellence (LOE) Input Deadline

26 MAY Monthly Round Table - Media Exposure & OCT Issue of MOAA Magazine (Virtual)

9-12 June: Florida Council MOAA Convention - West Palm Beach Marriott

30 JUN: Monthly Round Table - Recruiting (Virtual)

28 JUL: Monthly Round Table - Event Planning (Virtual)

25 AUG: Monthly Round Table - Community Outreach (Virtual)

29 SEP: Monthly Round Table - Branding (Virtual)

26 OCT: Fall FCOC Board Meeting (TBD) (Virtual)

27 OCT: Monthly Round Table - Transition Services (Virtual)

17 NOV: Monthly Round Table - Retention (Virtual)

29 DEC: Monthly Round Table - EOY Review/Discussion (Virtual)

6-7 JAN 2023: Annual Leadership Training Seminar - Rosen Center, Orlando

SIGNIFICANT DATES FOR APRIL & MAY

April 5, 2022 – Gold Star Spouses Day – A day dedicated to those whose spouses gave their lives while serving in the U.S. military or as a result of service-connected injuries or illness.

April 9, 2022 – National Former POW Recognition Day

April 14, 2022 – Air Force Reserve Birthday

April 23, 2022 – Army Reserve Birthday

May 1, 2022 – Silver Star Banner Day – Per Congressional resolution, it is an "Official Day to honor wounded, ill, and injured Veterans".

May 6, 2022 – Military Spouse Appreciation Day – To recognize the service and sacrifices of military spouses.

May 13, 2022 – Children of Fallen Patriots Day – To honor the children left behind by the brave men and women who gave their lives while defending our freedom.

May 21, 2022 – Armed Forces Day Observed on the third Saturday every May. To pay tribute to men and women currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces.

May 22nd, 2022 – NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps Anniversary

May 30, 2022 – Memorial Day - A solemn occasion to honor the men and women who died while serving in the military.

Question? What town is considered the official birthplace of Memorial Day? Answer on page 29.



Membership Chairman

COL Steve Bond, USA (Ret)

Since last June, we've outlined the fundamentals of the State-wide Membership Campaign to grow our numbers and make our voices even louder. Over that time, we've encouraged Chapter Leaders to take a hard look at their chapters and implement the elements of the campaign into their planning and operations. This month, I'll briefly summarize those past articles and lay out the way ahead.

To summarize, in June we talked about the large numbers of potential members in Florida--It is a "Target Rich Environment". In August, we outlined the three Campaign Lines of Effort or "LOE" as shown on the chart to the right. In October, we discussed LOE #1--Chapter programs needed retain current members and appeal to new members. The key question there is--*Why would someone want to join your chapter?* In December, we talked LOE #2--about how to go about recruiting new members, including current MOAA National Members and others that are eligible to join. January's topic was Internal & External Media Communications and Public Relations needed to publicize your chapter's good work and your support recruiting and retention.



To implement the campaign, Chapter Leaders need to fix responsibilities for each of the Lines of Effort. The Chapter President should be overall responsible for the campaign. A chapter officer needs to be assigned to guide and develop programs that appeal to the broad interests of current members and potential recruits. The Membership Chairperson has the responsibility for recruiting, including developing materials to aid in the recruitment effort and maintaining member databases. A Public Affairs Officer needs to be assigned to get the word out--internally and externally--about what your chapter is doing. In some chapters, the same individual may be filling multiple key positions, but *every chapter member is on the Membership Committee working to recruit new members and retain current chapter members!*

This Spring, we will disseminate the charts and notes for our Membership Campaign and facilitate internal chapter discussions. Later this Summer we will hold web-based "ZOOM" meetings to discuss the plan, answer questions, and share what you've learned about retention and recruiting. In the fall, we will coordinate an effort at the council-level with MOAA National to invite non-chapter

MOAA members in Florida to join a chapter. Meanwhile, get ready! Look at your chapter--do you have programs in place to appeal to new members? If you haven't done so, develop the recruiting material and assign responsibilities for the Lines of Effort. The Campaign Objective is to grow our numbers and make our voice even louder--in our communities, across the State, and in concert with MOAA at the National level. If you have questions, contact me at stevebond335@gmail.com.

Recruiting Best Practices

- Every member is a recruiter!
- Establish a recruiting budget line
- Create an internal recruiting competition among members
- Build a recruiting package (invitation letter, current newsletter, membership application)
 - Always carry recruiting info with you
 - Have a website or web presence
- Place chapter membership applications on your website
- Use social media to expand your reach (i.e., chapter Facebook page)
- Conduct meetings at different venues and times to meet member needs and encourage active participation
 - Connect with base Retirement Services Office (RSO) or transition center
 - Strive for and earn MOAA recruiting and retention incentives and awards
- Utilize Sales Training techniques (Different approaches for Serving Officers, Retirees, Surviving Spouses, and Former Officers)



Chaplain's Message

By CH (COL) Anthony P. "Tony" Clark, ARNG, Ret.

T.S. Eliot's opening lines of *The Waste Land* reflect on the month of April:

April is the cruelest month, breeding
 Lilacs out of dead land, mixing
 Memory and desire, stirring
 Dull roots with spring rain.

When I read the poem as a young adult, I often wondered how - at least from Eliot's perspective - April can be cruel? For those of us in the Sunshine State, April seems far from cruel: the greens and blooms of spring grow brighter and fuller, baseball shifts from the spring training of March to

Opening Day where every team sees hope for a pennant, and (with a tip o' the cap to the group America) the days grow longer, and the nights are stronger than moonshine.

Was it just the fact that Eliot lived in jolly old England, where, like our northeast, April was still cold and dreary? Or was there something deeper, something more profound, than just the weather?

Reading, studying, and reflecting on *The Waste Land* as an adult, however, helped me understand Eliot's opening lines better. Eliot was not reflecting on the weather; no, he was looking deeper, deeper into lives that experience longing, loss, emptiness and looking deeper into a society and culture that was morally bankrupt, devoid of purpose, and emotionally barren. It was cruel for April to encourage hope when there is none.

Reading and reflecting on Eliot's poem can take us – if we are willing - into our own personal and corporate wastelands, deserts, and empty places. While Eliot may lead us into the waste land for internal reflection (What are my life longings? What are my life losses?) and corporate reflection (What are the broken promises of modern society?) he does not leave us there. He offers a tentative and three-dimensional way (drawn from a Hindu fable of thunder) for us to navigate through the waste land and feel “a damp gust bringing rain.”

GIVE: We live in a consumer focused and driven society. Escaping the waste land requires giving ourselves – our time, our talent, our treasure, our influence – to others without expectation attached. Do we give to get, or do we give without strings attached?

BE COMPASSIONATE: Life is hard. People can be cruel. Can we approach others knowing they are carrying heavy loads, too?



RELEASE CONTROL: Eliot wrote *The Waste Land* several years before a conversion to Christianity. He was learning, however, that he needed a “hand expert with sail and oar” and he (and we) needed the “controlling hands” of the Expert Navigator.

I wonder if Eliot ever considered rewriting the opening lines of *The Waste Land* after discovering Jesus as a perfect model of self-giving love and compassion and surrendering his life to Him? Because April (at least most years) offers us the hope of resurrection, new life, and a way through the waste land.



Legislative Affairs

Lt Col Bob Bienvenue, USAF, Ret., Legislative Chair

	<p>Special Message from MOAA's President Your Critical Role in This Year's Advocacy in Action Campaign by: Dana Atkins March 30, 2022</p>	
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Changing laws on Capitol Hill is arduous work. Legislation addressing critical issues can remain stuck in subcommittees through an entire two-year congressional session. Other bills can advance through committees only to lose momentum and die before reaching a floor vote. MOAA members can move these changes forward, but only if we're all pulling in the same direction. That's where **Advocacy in Action** comes in.

MOAA Legislative Update:

Read about the latest MOAA Advocacy News and Calls-to-Action here.



[ACT NOW: [Send a Message to Your Lawmakers Supporting MOAA's Advocacy in Action Priorities](https://moaa.quorum.us/)]

<https://moaa.quorum.us/>

Our aim is to have multiple contacts with all 535 congressional offices on our AiA message for these three issues:

- **Concurrent Receipt for Combat-Injured Servicemembers:** The Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282, S. 344) would fix a longstanding injustice by allowing tens of thousands of combat-injured veterans to receive full retired pay and disability pay. The act has amassed 205 House co-sponsors, adding 54 since January, and is at a critical point as lawmakers draft the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).
- **Affordable mental health for TRICARE beneficiaries.** The Stop Copay Overpay Act (H.R. 4824) would overturn the doubling of TRICARE copays for mental health care in recent years. The bipartisan bill has only four co-sponsors, but additional momentum from your AiA efforts would improve chances of inclusion in the FY 2023 NDAA.
- **A 4.6% military pay raise.** This raise applies to all eight of our uniformed services; the percentage is linked to the Employment Cost Index (ECI) by statute. It remains one of MOAA's annual priorities to ensure the raise is not reduced to fund other programs or pay table overhauls – cumulative reductions over a recent three-year span (2014-2016) left servicemembers 2.6% below what they should have received.

Florida Council of Chapters *Advocacy in Action*

The FCOC ***Advocacy in Action*** primary team has already begun the process of contacting our 29 senators and representatives to request a meeting to present our advocacy goals.

Each individual MOAA member in Florida is encouraged to help by **clicking the link above** to send letters to your legislators, announcing those requests for meeting from our Florida MOAA leaders – Council Board members, Area VPs and selected others (14 primary team members) who are arranging online and in person meetings. Chapter leaders may be invited by the primary team members to participate in the meetings with the representative in your respective congressional district. Read up on the issue papers and watch for updates and future ***Calls-to-Action*** via *The MOAA Newsletter*, MOAA's [Advocacy News page](#), and MOAA.org/AiA.

"Past and present members of our uniformed services, as well as their families and survivors, have answered the call to duty and sacrificed greatly in their service to our country. These servicemembers and their families have borne the brunt of over 20 years of combat in Afghanistan, Iraq, and elsewhere. They rarely ask for anything, so we must be vigilant in solving problems like the ones mentioned above."

As of this article, neither of our senators have signed on to S-344, The Major Richard Star Act which has 56 co-sponsors.

Similarly in the House, despite there being 209 cosponsors, only 12 of the 27 members of the Florida delegation have signed on to support Rep. Gus Bilirakis (FL- 12) who introduced the bill in February of last year. Click on this link to see if your representative is one of the co-sponsors. [Cosponsors - H.R.1282 - 117th Congress \(2021-2022\): Major Richard Star Act | Congress.gov | Library of Congress](#)

Toxic Exposure Reforms Hang in the Balance as Senate Takes Up Critical Bill

MOAA joined several lawmakers and other supporters of the "Our PACT Act" at a March 29 press conference urging passage of this bill offering long-sought comprehensive toxic exposure reform. The Honoring Our PACT Act *"cares for those who are still sacrificing for our nation and fundamentally changes how our nation responds to toxic exposures,"* said **Cory Titus, MOAA's director of government relations for veteran benefits and Guard/Reserve affairs.** *"This bill offers the health care and the process reforms and recognizes the presumptive illnesses that MOAA and every other veterans' group are asking for."*

HR 3967 passed in the House on March 3rd by a vote of 265 to 174. Click here to see the list of Florida representatives who voted 15 -12 on this measure. [Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives - Vote Details](#)

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.), Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.), and Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-Calif.), took part in the press event alongside representatives from other veterans service organizations and advocates including comedian Jon Stewart. During his remarks, Schumer turned his back to the cameras and faced the ill veterans, survivors, and veterans advocates to make a promise: ***The Honoring Our PACT Act will get a vote in this session of Congress.***

As the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee considers changes to the legislation, ***constituent outreach is crucial in the coming months to grow support.*** While the Honoring Our PACT Act will receive a vote, it must still reach the 60-vote threshold to pass the Senate. [Write your senators](#) and ask for them to support this legislation:

We must make clear that a comprehensive solution is vital and must be passed in this session of Congress.

Addressing Military Spouse Unemployment

MOAA continues to work closely with colleagues at the National Military Family Association and Hiring Our Heroes to increase awareness of this important legislation – The Military Spouse Hiring Act (S. 3909), the Senate companion to H.R. 2974, both of which would expand the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) to create a new target group for military spouses, whose jobless rate has remained between 22% and 24% for over a decade.

Military-mandated moves every two or three years have a significant impact on a spouse's ability to find and maintain employment. Additionally, employed spouses often see their résumés discarded by future hiring managers due to the sporadic nature of work experience (different locations and jobs) and gaps in employment history resulting from short assignments (a school, for example). With nearly a third of servicemembers considering leaving the service because of concerns with spouse employment, this is not just an issue of family financial well-being — it's a recruitment and retention issue.

The Florida legislature has taken action on two of the DSLO Licensure Portability topics for military spouses this legislative session. .

Now our federal legislators need to step up and incentivize military spouse employment by the expansion of WOTC with this new legislation.

[Ask Your Lawmakers to Co-Sponsor the Military Spouse Hiring Act](#)



Florida Department of Veterans Affairs Update

Lt Col R. Steven Murray, USAF (Ret.)
Communications & External Affairs Director, Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs

New Florida Veterans' Home to be Named for Alwyn C. Cashe

ORLANDO, Fla. – The Lake Baldwin State Veterans' Nursing Home in Orlando, scheduled to open to residents later in 2022, will be renamed in honor of the late Sgt. First Class Alwyn C. Cashe, a U.S. Army Medal of Honor recipient who grew up in nearby Oviedo.

The announcement was made at the Florida Capitol during the March 29 Cabinet Meeting by FDVA Executive Director James S. "Hammer" Hartsell.

The 112-bed skilled nursing facility is a former VA Community Living Center, which has been under renovations and inspections. An Open House and Flag Raising Ceremony is planned for the morning of May 21 to coincide with Armed Forces Day.

Fifteen Florida Veterans Inducted Into Hall of Fame

TALLAHASSEE – Gov. Ron DeSantis and the Cabinet voted unanimously to induct 15 veterans into the Florida Veterans’ Hall of Fame. The names for the Class of 2021 were presented for a formal vote during the March 29 Cabinet Meeting by FDVA Executive Director James S. “Hammer” Hartsell.

The Florida Veterans’ Hall of Fame recognizes and honors those military veterans who, through their works and lives during or after military service, have made a significant contribution to the State of Florida through civic, business, public service or other pursuits. It is not a traditional military hall of fame, as it focuses on post-military contributions to the State of Florida.

“Honoring the best of our Veterans’ community each year helps reinforce Florida as the most veteran sought after state in the nation,” said Hartsell, a retired Marine Corps Major General. “I was honored to submit the names of these 15 patriots during today’s Cabinet Meeting. They represent the best of the best and we looking forward to honoring them in person next month.”

The Florida Veterans’ Hall of Fame Council met in late 2021 to review and select nominees submitted from the general public. Following a formal report and audit, the results were transmitted to Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs, which submits the nominations to the Governor and Cabinet. Today’s vote formally approves the selection. A ceremony honoring the 15 inductees from the Class of 2021 is scheduled for April 27 at the Capitol.

The Class of 2021 is the ninth class to enter the Florida Veterans’ Hall of Fame.

Inductees include:

Robert Adelhelm, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret) - Jacksonville
Bishop (Dr.) Douglas Alexander Sr., U.S. Army Veteran - Hernando
Thomas Bowman, Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret) - Spring Hill
Robert D. Chelberg, Lieutenant General, U.S. Army (Ret) - North Palm Beach
William W. Francis II, Colonel, U.S. Air Force (Ret) - Tallahassee
Michael W. Hartford, Captain, U.S. Navy (Ret) - Ellenton
Daniel V. Hughes, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran - Palm Coast
Rep. Stan Jordan, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret) – Jacksonville
Ray A. Quinn, Sergeant Major, U.S. Army (Ret) - St. Augustine
Darryl J. Reyes, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret) – Tampa
Frederick Robinson, U.S. Marine Corps Veteran - Apopka
Gill Ruderman, Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret) - Bradenton
William D. Salter, U.S. Army Veteran - Milton
Harry O. “Skip” Taylor, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army (Ret) – Viera
William D. Wilson, U.S. Air Force Veteran – Tallahassee



RON DeSANTIS
GOVERNOR

VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY IN FLORIDA

WHEREAS, throughout the rich history of the United States, patriotic men and women have taken up arms and sworn an oath to defend our nation, establishing an honorable tradition of dedicated service; and

WHEREAS, more than 3 million men and women served in the Vietnam War with more than 58,000 making the ultimate sacrifice; more than 304,000 were wounded and more than 1,500 are still missing in action; and

WHEREAS, Florida is recognized as the one of the most military and veteran friendly states in the nation, with 1.5 million veterans calling the Sunshine State home; and

WHEREAS, Florida is home to more than 498,000 Vietnam-era veterans, making it the second largest population of Vietnam veterans in the nation; and

WHEREAS, during March's Women Veterans' History Month, we recognize and honor the women veterans in Florida who served during the Vietnam War; and

WHEREAS, the patriotism of those in uniform who continue to defend the timeless truths and great freedoms upon which our nation was founded will continue to make our state and nation proud, and serve as an inspiration for generations to come; and

WHEREAS, we will always honor the legacy of our Vietnam veterans who served, were wounded, or lost their lives in battle and can never repay our debt of gratitude for the courage they demonstrated; and

WHEREAS, this fifth annual Vietnam War Veterans Day is an opportunity to honor all Vietnam veterans and their families and recognize the enormous contributions they continue to make to our state;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ron DeSantis, Governor of the State of Florida, do hereby extend greetings and best wishes to all observing March 29, 2022, as *Vietnam War Veterans Day in Florida*.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Florida to be affixed at Tallahassee, the Capital, this 29th day of March, in the year two thousand twenty-two.

Governor

THE CAPITOL
TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32399 • (850) 717-9249

Governor Signs Proclamation Honoring Florida's Vietnam Veterans

TALLAHASSEE – Gov. Ron DeSantis has signed the annual Vietnam War Veterans Day in Florida Proclamation. Approximately one in three Florida Veterans served during the Vietnam War era.

March 29 is Vietnam War Veterans Day in Florida.



You are invited to the Heroes Honor Festival—a public tribute to honor our Vietnam veterans. Organized by the non-profit [Engage Your Destiny \(EYD\)](#) and the 9/11 generation of wartime veterans, HHF is open to the public over Memorial Day Weekend (May 27th & 28th) at the Daytona International Speedway. It's a two-day celebration featuring world-class entertainment, renown guests of honor, interactive exhibits, military flyovers, a patriotic parachute team, traveling memorial walls, a family fun zone, and a veteran's resource expo.

All are invited to gather for this grand display of appreciation honoring our Vietnam veterans. Don't miss special guests including Ann-Margret, Chris Noel, Maj. Gen. Patrick Brady and Lt. Col. Oliver North plus country music legends Toby Keith, Justin Moore, and Craig Morgan. After the HHF concludes on Saturday, Rolling Thunder & the American Legion Riders will host a Demonstration Ride on Sunday in commemoration of our Vietnam veterans.

Update: This event is now FREE for all veterans, active military, spouses and kids under 12! Reserve your tickets now at HeroesHonorFestival.com!



Florida Veterans Council Update

MAJ Lorraine Holland, USA (Ret), FCoC Committee Chair
Florida Veterans Council

The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.
— Mahatma Gandhi —

April is National Volunteer Month, and as a veteran, I am always looking to add meaning to my life by helping to give back to other veterans, especially the ones who need a “hand-up” to improve their quality of life. One of the great opportunities we have as Florida MOAA members is the camaraderie we share with each other, and what better way to exchange ideas on how we can better improve the lives of our veterans than by networking at the 2022 State MOAA Convention 9-12 June in West Palm Beach?

Something as simple as asking a veteran if they need a copy of their DD Form 214 Discharge can open-up many benefits for the veteran they rightly earned. Go to www.archives.gov/veterans and it takes you right into “Veterans’ Service Records” so you can help request it for the veteran if they are unable to do so. There are several other very important documents the veteran can request on this website.

Become a Volunteer for the Florida Governor’s Challenge on Preventing Suicide among service members, veterans, and their families. In Florida, we are changing the narrative of mental health – especially when it comes to preventing suicide among service members, veterans, and their families. From Florida’s 21 military bases to our 1.5 million veterans, the Governor’s Challenge supports efforts to use evidence-based practices to prevent suicide among our service members, veterans, and their families. To succeed, we need individuals, organizations, and entire communities to accept this challenge to reduce the veteran suicide rate because we know veterans are the strength of our nation. The statewide initiative uses evidence-based practices to prevent and reduce suicide attempts. To read more on the Governor’s Challenge, visit www.SaveFLVets.org

Hope for Healing Florida is an initiative started by First Lady Casey DeSantis – a partnership across state agencies. Hope for Healing navigates the many ways Floridians can access help for mental health and substance abuse, especially for our veterans. They need veteran volunteers to connect with veterans! <https://www.hopeforhealingfl.com/>

At the Florida Veteran and FDVA Council meeting on 24 March 2022, we were informed the 2022 Florida Legislative Session ended on March 14, 2022. There were 3,685 bills filed, and 285 bills were passed. Of the 3,685 bills filled, 67 bills were veteran related, and stunningly only 5 veteran bills made the cut! Bills are subject to a veto, and the following summary of veteran-related bills will be presented to Gov DeSantis:

*Educational Opportunities for Disabled Veterans***SB 554 Substituted for HB 45**

Beginning with the 2022-2023 academic year, a disabled veteran who receives a tuition benefit to attend a state university, Florida College System institution, career center operated by a school district, or charter technical career center under the GI Bill, but who does not qualify for the 100-percent eligibility tier federally, is eligible for a waiver of tuition and fees from the institution attended. The award amount is equal to the amount that is the difference between the portion of tuition and fees authorized under federal law and the full amount of tuition and fees charged by the institution attended.

*Recognizing Veteran Suicide***HB 63 -Substituted for SB 302**

Recognizing Veteran Suicide: Urges Congress to recognize epidemic of suicide among veterans & fully fund suicide prevention efforts by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

*United States Space Force***HB 465 Substituted for SB 438**

United States Space Force; Revising the definition of the term “uniformed services” to include the United States Space Force; revising the military service branches for which any county or state official who is called to active service may receive a leave of absence; updating military base names; adding post exchanges operated by the United States Space Force to the those that are exempt from paying tax on cigarettes sold; revising the armed forces uniforms that are protected from imitation to include uniforms of the United States Space.

*Educator Certification Pathways for Veterans***HB 573- Substituted for SB 896- SENATE Enrolled Text (ER) Filed**

Expands eligibility to seek educator certification to specified military service members; authorizes DOE to issue temporary certificate to specified military service members & specifies duration of temporary certificate for specified military service members.

*Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program***HB1315 (laid on Table) SB 1712 -Enrolled Text (ER) Filed**

Veteran Suicide Prevention Training Pilot Program Requiring the Department of Veterans' Affairs to establish the pilot program; requiring pilot program participants to receive certain training; requiring the department to contract with an organization to develop the curriculum for such training; requiring the department to submit an annual report to the Legislature by a specified date, etc.

APPROPRIATION: \$500,000 Effective Date: 7/1/2022.



Personal Affairs

Col Paul Loschiavo, USMCR (Ret)

In 2022, CVS joined Tricare, replacing Walmart, Sam's Club, and several other local pharmacies. As a very frequent user of Express Scripts, this caught my attention.

Three years ago, I had a kidney transplant. As a result of this, I take a handful of anti-rejection drugs twice a day. These drugs are so important that I literally carry 24 hours' worth with me every time I leave home. If I'm going somewhere overnight, I bring a week's worth. My backup supply fills a tool box.

Curious as to how others use Tricare and Express Scripts, I conducted an *unscientific*, statistically *invalid* survey, by sending an email to the seventy five members of the Palm Beach Martin Counties Chapter of MOAA.

The survey questions were simple: Do you use Express Scripts? If so, do you use their mail service? And make any comments. I got back 26 responses. Of those, 22 (84%) used Tricare and Express Scripts. Four did not, of which two used the VA, one goes to a pharmacy, and one rather healthy member takes no meds. Of the folks who used Express Scripts, 19 of 22 (86%) used mail delivery.

Some negative comments included Express Scripts difficulty with specialized or compounded meds and unreliable service. (I'd question whether it's Express Scripts or the USPS that's unreliable). Some people mentioned that they like to talk to a human face-to-face about their meds. (Does the drive through count?)

There were numerous positive comments centered on the simplicity of using Express Scripts.

I was not really surprised by the number of people who use Express Scripts. If you're on Medicare, Tricare works as great coverage for meds. I remember getting a post card from Tricare reminding me during Medicare enrollment season that Tricare can cover almost all drugs with minimal cost. As my anti-rejection drugs run *tens of thousands of dollars* per year, this is pretty important.

I was a little surprised by how many people use the Express Scripts mail service. Many commented that they use a local pharmacy for one-off drugs and use Express Scripts for maintenance drugs. That makes sense. Setting up a new drug takes about ten days. If a medical provider prescribes a Z-pack for the flu, Express Scripts and the US Postal Service are simply way too slow.

As I read the comments, I was totally surprised by how many people call Express Scripts to order more meds. Call by telephone? I didn't really know that you could do this.

The Express Scripts website is *excellent*. If you are not using it and can shop on Amazon, you should check out their website. Once set up, it's simple to use. One tab shows all of your prescriptions and their situation with respect to refills. Getting low on Lipitor? With a couple clicks,

it's on the way. When you need a renewal from your health care provider, Express Scripts will contact them and attempt to renew it. In my *extensive* experience, normal refills are in my mailbox in five or six days. Renewals and holiday weekends might add a day.

You can set up auto-refills and they will send you reminders about refills.

The online system is available 24/7/365. I don't know about the phone system.

When I read that Express Scripts was switching to CVS, I thought that this would be a good subject for an article about the advantages of the mail delivery. When I did my "survey," I never expected that the vast majority of respondents would already use the mail delivery. I also found out that the VA also does mail delivery. Apparently, the change to CVS will affect just a small minority of users.

In my survey, I did not ask about online versus phone usage. A few people volunteered that they like the call-in system. I didn't ask about it because I didn't *know* about it. I like the online system. It really is convenient.

But, by far, the best answer was "I don't take any drugs." Wow. Of course, that means that 96% of the respondents are living a decadent life and just one is a BEAST!



Surviving Spouse Corner

Patricia Green, Surviving Spouse Liaison

Congratulations, Spouses! Florida has tied for the second most SS Virtual Chapter members. The only state to exceed ours is Texas. I push membership to the Virtual Chapter at every opportunity. If you haven't joined yet, please do. There are a number of Chapters that still don't have a member in the SS Virtual Chapter. Often it affords a direct communication with National MOAA on Surviving Spouse issues.

At the March 15 meeting, Mark Belinsky outlined the MOAA goals for Surviving Spouses. They are:

- Improving DIC benefits
- Retaining Survivor Benefits after remarriage
- Support for the Survivor Comfort Act. (This is the bill that allows the Survivor to keep the last month of pay.)

Mark also explained the process for participating in Advocacy in Action. Check the Legislative section of the Communiqué for more information. There is also information and instructions on the MOAA website. Get involved and participate.

I have been trying to visit some Chapters near me to have conversations with their SS Liaisons and Surviving Spouses. Florida is a big state, though.

Please let me know if I can help with your Chapter. If you don't have a Liaison yet, appoint one. Help him/her to discuss these issues above at one of the Chapter meetings.

If the surviving Spouse Liaison of your Chapter has been doing a remarkable job, suggest that the President nominate her/him for a Level of Excellence Award. Forms are on the National website. The deadline is May 1.

Odds and ends

Let me know if you are attending the MOAA Florida convention in June, perhaps a get-together can be arranged.

Refurbish or buy new flags. Get ready to display them on Memorial Day. Your local Military Cemetery may be having a moving tribute you will want to attend.

Enjoy and celebrate that special Holiday in May for mothers. Happy Mother's Day!

See you at the Convention in June, Pat

In just two months.....

SAVE THE DATE

June 9-12
2022

West Palm Beach Marriott

FUN in the SUN

45th ANNUAL CONVENTION
Hosted by the Florida Council of Chapters

MOAA
MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

The Dinner Detective
Interactive Murder Mystery Dinner Show

Casino Party
PLANNERS

Fun in the Sun!

Behind the Scenes of the FCOC 2022 Convention

Marty Brown, Publicity Coordinator

FCOC Convention 2022

n4gl.marty@gmail.com

It's been my pleasure to work with Marc Oliveri and the [2022 Convention](#) Committee to bring you what's going on behind the scenes. It's been quite a journey from our first Zoom meeting on August 10, 2021.

I want to leave you with a few quick links and a direct link to our [Communiqué Convention Special Edition](#). This edition is dedicated to the 2022 Convention and contains what you need to know, from registration information to dining menus. Please take a look.

Remember, the Friday evening **Casino Night** is a fundraiser for [The MOAA Foundation](#) (TMF). Generously sponsored by Fleet Landing, we are looking to members and chapters to support this worthwhile organization as it enhances the lives of our currently serving military, dependents, and retirees.

Chapter participation can be table sponsorships, gift baskets for the silent auction that follows the event, or monetary donations. This information is available on the [Sponsorship Opportunities](#) page.

You can also submit your chapter ad for the Convention Program on this page. Thank you for your support!



CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

Please remember to update your Chapter rosters on the FCOC Website. This helps to ensure that there is a proper accounting of your members as well as see to it that everyone gets reminders of the distribution of this Communiqué'. Go to the web site, MEMBER ACCESS, CHAPTER ADMIN and complete the process of updating your rosters.

Florida Council of Chapters “Chapter News”

Sun City Center Chapter

Ed Mooney, Board Secretary

At it's February 2nd luncheon the Chapter was briefed by Gabriel Guzman, HCC's Enrollment Development Coordinator, on free courses for Seniors.

Mr. Guzman receives a Certificate of Appreciation from MOAA 1st VP, Gary Bridges, COL USA (ret)



Citrus County Chapter

By COL Mark Bodenheim USAR (Ret), Membership & Communication Director



The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Citrus County Chapter speaker event on March 10, 2022, at the American Legion Post 155, featured County Commissioner Holly Davis. Commissioner Davis, shown here using a power point presentation, spoke on a variety of subjects affecting Citrus County residents and veterans. The next MOAA sponsored speaker event will be September 8, 2022



MOAA Citrus County Chapter Vice President (right), COL Curt Ebitz, USA (Ret), presents a certificate of appreciation to Citrus County Commissioner Holly Davis for her presentation at the March 10, 2022 MOAA sponsored speaker event.

MOAA Citrus County Chapter Members Participate in Ashley's House Ceremony and Donation

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Citrus County Chapter President, COL Pete Tan, USA (Ret), and chapter member CW5 Phyllis Wilson, USA (Ret), participated in the groundbreaking ceremony of Ashley's House on January 15th, 2022, in Eustis Florida. COL Tan is also the Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army (CASA) for Florida (North) and CW5 Wilson is the president of the Military Women's Memorial (MWM) as well as a board member of the Army Women's Foundation (AWF). The MWM is the nation's historical repository documenting all military women's service. The mission of the AWF is to promote public interest in the Army and recognize and honor the service of all U.S. Army women, past and present.

"Ashley's House" will be a 4,000 square-foot transitional group home for female veterans dedicated to the memory of 1st Lt First Ashley White-Stumpf, 24, who was deployed in a Combat Support Team and killed in action on October 22, 2011, during combat operations in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan.

Marie Bogdonoff, founder and CEO of Villagers for Veterans stated, "The house will be an all-female veteran transition home offering women veterans a temporary safe haven while also providing job training, counseling, and much needed female camaraderie as they work towards self-sufficiency in a secure and loving environment."



Ashley House Dedication Breaking Ground Ceremony 2022 (L-R) Marie Bogdonoff, CW5 Phyllis Wilson, COL Pete Tan, and Ruth VanDyke, (AWF Board member and Central Florida MWM Ambassador), attending the groundbreaking ceremony for Ashley's House in Eustis, Florida



The MOAA Citrus County Chapter on March 10th, 2022, donated \$250 to Villagers for Veterans for the Ashley's House project. (L-R) LCDR Kathryn Wilgus, USN (Ret), VP of Villagers for Veterans; Marie Bogdonoff, founder and CEO of Villagers for Veterans; and MOAA Citrus County Chapter VP, COL Curt Ebitz, USA (Ret)

Cape Canaveral Chapter

Marilyn M. Sanford, MOAACC Media Relations

President and Board Chair of National Veterans Homeless Support (NVHS) Guest Speaker

George Taylor Jr, the President & Board Chair of National Veterans Homeless Support (NVHS), was the guest speaker at the MOAACC March luncheon. He discussed the issues facing at-risk and homeless veterans and how NVHS addresses these issues.

The National Veterans Homeless Support (NVHS) is a 501(c) 3 non-profit located in Cocoa, and its mission is to eliminate homelessness among veterans in Central Florida. In this role Taylor is responsible for ensuring that the organization achieves its mission by getting homeless veterans off the streets, and preventing at-risk veteran families from losing their homes.

Since he first joined the organization as their CFO in 2008, NVHS has been instrumental in a 90% reduction in the homeless veteran population of Brevard County. Additionally, he also currently serves in the US Air Force as the Helicopter Maintenance Unit Superintendent in a Combat Rescue squadron located at Patrick Space Force Base, and holds the rank of Chief Master Sergeant. During his 20 years in the Air Force he has deployed several times in support of the Global War on Terrorism and Operation Enduring Freedom. George holds an MBA from Florida International University, and a Bachelors in Operations Management from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University.

MOAACC partners with NVHS to ensure that MOAA Grant funds go to deserving local veterans and their families. Their Good Deeds Foundation (GDF) also supports NVHS. The relationship with NVHS began in 2021 when growing numbers of Brevard veterans struggled to keep up with bills and avoid homelessness. Between a MOAA grant of \$3,500 and the GDF's \$1,600 in assistance, nine veteran families with more than 12 children were assisted through NVHS. It will likely be an important connection for MOAACC and GDF in the years to come as they try to assist more veterans and their families in distress.



Lt Col Brian Whalen, MOAACC 1st Vice President (center) presents a MOAACC Appreciation Plaque to Jennifer Taylor (left) Chief Operating Officer of NVHS, and George Taylor, Jr. (right) NVHS President.

Central Florida Chapter

CDR Randall Fiebrandt, USCG (Ret), Focus Editor/
Communications

Our own Chaplain Tom Love and Sgt Maj John Gionet (pictured speaking) were our guest speakers at our February 8th luncheon meeting to tell our chapter members of the events that led to February 3rd becoming Four Chaplains Day.



Clearwater Chapter

Aaron Middleton

In February, Congressman Gus Bilirakis (R-FL) spoke with our chapter about the important work that he and his colleagues are doing on Capitol Hill to support our veterans and servicemembers.

In March, MOAA National Program Director of Council & Chapter Affairs gave our chapter an update on all the good, hard work that MOAA National is putting in to allow chapters like ours to best support our local communities.

Bob Behm and Dave Mason recently conducted interviews of JROTC Cadets at Clearwater High School. They selected the top candidates for our annual JROTC scholarship. Each year we sponsor a \$3000 scholarship, and at the April luncheon we will have a Cadet join us to address all members on their plans and how our scholarship will assist them in achieving their goals.

Our Annual JROTC Golf Tournament in support of the seven JROTC High Schools in our area was another success. This worthy cause makes a direct contribution to the local schools and provides them opportunities to conduct leadership activities that they may not otherwise be able to conduct. This event helps shape our future leadership.



BG Jeffrey Doll thanks The Honorable Gus Bilirakis on update on Legislative Matters



BG Jeff Doll presents The MOAA Certificate Of Appreciation to Capt Frank Michael

Indian River Chapter

Jim Rannazzisi, Lt Col, USAF-Ret, Director

Indian River Chapter Raises Funds for the American Gold Star Mothers

The Indian River Chapter located in Vero Beach has just over 125 members. Our idea of fundraising has been a 50-50 raffle and a donation jar at our luncheon meetings; and donations received from our members with their annual dues payments. A major fundraiser had not been undertaken by the Chapter—ever!

One of our Board members was experienced with tribute concerts and recommended that our Chapter host a concert. Our target was \$5,000. Our Board approved of the idea without having a specific beneficiary. We partnered with the Vero Beach Elks Lodge and booked a well-known tribute artist over nine months in advance of the concert date in March.

Things started to heat up when we found a cause that excited our membership.

The American Gold Star Mothers, is a private, nonprofit organization of American mothers who lost sons or daughters in service of the United States Armed Forces. The Indian River County Chapter of the American Gold Star Mothers was founded by Michelle Dale, whose son, Dale Kridlo, was killed in action in Afghanistan in 2010. Michelle is an Honorary Affiliate Member of our Chapter.

For the past two years the Gold Star Mothers held a Walk-A-Thon for Military/Veteran Suicide Awareness. Our Chapter identified with 22 suicides a day as being totally unacceptable! We have been a sponsor of the Walk-A-Thon every year with donations totaling \$1,750.

Our Chapter vision is to become the premier organization to provide continuing leadership and support to veterans in Indian River County. Our Board recognized that to fulfill this vision we had to provide more financial support for this cause. The tribute concert was the solution.

We formed a small planning team and got to work last fall. We quickly realized that ticket sales alone might not ensure that we would meet our fundraising goal. We came up with a \$500 sponsorship program and targeted veteran-friendly businesses. We developed a webpage and a Facebook event to extend our marketing reach well beyond our Chapter membership. We found a way to take payments from the public as well as our members using SignUpGenius. We didn't seek, but we received significant donations from our members who wanted to remain anonymous. We raffled off two concert tickets at a local community event-Downtown Friday Night.



Pictured in the foreground in white is Michelle Dale, President of the American Gold Star Mothers of Indian River County, during a rousing rendition of Neil Diamond's classic hit America.



Our Chapter membership and the community identified with this cause and knew of the highly regarded reputation of our tribute artist Keith Allynn (pictured at left) — a Neil Diamond look-alike and sound-alike. A dozen of our members helped at the concert checking-in people, ushering them to their tables, selling 50-50 tickets and taking pictures. We sold out the Elks Lodge with over 300 attendees who were very eager to participate in our 50-50 raffle.

The bottom line: The entertainer was a huge hit and we raised \$8,700 for The American Gold Star Mothers.

Kingdom of the Sun Chapter

LTC Arlo Janssen, USA (Ret), Editor of the Sunbeams, KOS/MOAA

The Kingdom of the Sun Chapter held their February 3, 2022, meeting at the Braised Onion in Ocala, Florida. The Call to Order was conducted by the Chapter President, MAJ Joseph Voge, USA (Ret). Social distancing was the order of the day. The program for February 2022 was sponsored by the ladies of the KOS Chapter. Naida Rasbury made a very interesting presentation to the KOS members and guests attending the luncheon. Naida pays tribute to her mother's show business career as being the catalyst for her own (Naida's) career that began with a role in George Gershwin's Porgy & Bess which premiered on Broadway in 1935. Naida has sung the National anthem at many of our KOS Chapter meetings and events.



Naida Rasbury presenting her story of life in show business at the February 2022 KOS Chapter luncheon.

The Chapter held their March 3, 2022, meeting at the Braised Onion in Ocala, Florida. The Call to Order was conducted by the Chapter President, MAJ Joseph Voge, USA (Ret). The KOS Chapter was honored to have LTC Walter J. Smiley, Jr USA (Ret), from MOAA Headquarters in Alexandria, VA. LTC Smiley is the Committee Chair for Council and Chapters. LTC Smiley made an excellent slide presentation on actions covered by MOAA at the national level. COL Mike Borders, President



LTC Walter J. Smiley, Jr USA (Ret), making his presentation to the KOS membership



COL Mike Borders, USA (Ret), President of the Florida Council of Chapters (FCOC) updating the KOS Chapter members on FCOC activities.

of the Florida Council of Chapters (FCOC), and his wife Diana attended the March 3, 2022 KOS luncheon. COL Borders updated the KOS members on issues facing the FCOC. He highlighted the 45th annual Florida 2022 Convention to be held in West Palm Beach on June 9 -12, 2022.

Historic Mayport Chapter

CDR Pat Kluever, USN (Ret)

NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

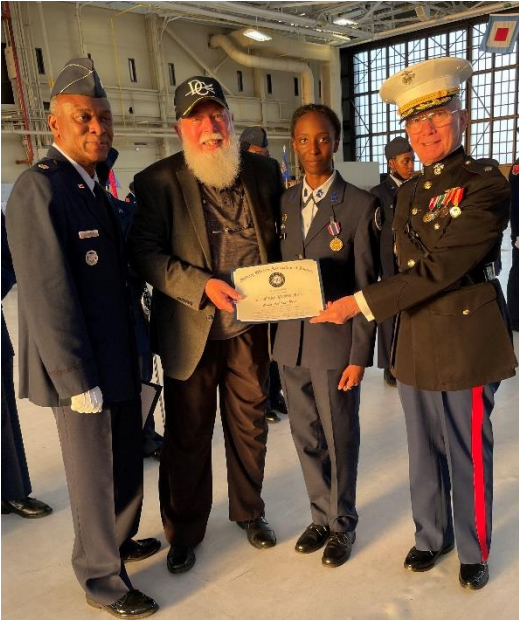
Over 100 Fleet Landing residents and MOAA Historic Mayport Chapter members gathered to honor our Vietnam Veterans on Tuesday 29 March 2022 - National Vietnam Veterans Day - in Fleet Landing's Johnson Hall at 2:30 pm.

The program followed a well-attended 0800 flag raising of the POW and Vietnam Veterans flags at the Fleet Landing flag plaza at which the veteran's favorite Vietnam War song "We Gotta Get Out Of This Place" was played and sung by the attendees.

Thank you to all who helped support this event to honor our Vietnam Veterans with a special Thanks to guest speakers COL David Abramowitz, USA (Ret) and NSDAR Regent Sherry Saucerman, and to Fleet Landing for their continuing outstanding support to our MOAA Chapter and our resident-veterans.

Thanks for all the positive feedback from those who attended - one response was especially meaningful to me - Bravo Zulu - Well Done to all concerned. The occasion made us proud to be members of The Mayport Historic Chapter. Our Chaplains, as always, provided perfect bookends of grace to a solemn event. Please thank them for us. Attaboy!





ANDREW JACKSON USAF JROTC AWARDS

LtCol Joe Ruthenberg, USMC (Ret) and CDR Pat Kluever, USN (Ret) attended the Andrew Jackson High School JROTC awards event at NAS Jacksonville Wednesday evening March 30th. They presented the JROTC MOAA medal to Cadet Leilani Dent as the unit's outstanding junior cadet. We are pictured below (left) with the unit's senior military instructor Major Trent Jackson, USAF (Ret) and Cadet Dent - Many Thanks to CDR Bob Gossen for producing the very professional certificate!

Tampa Chapter

Sara Marks, CAPT NC USN (Ret), Editor, The Retrospect

On Friday, March 2022, US Congresswoman Kathy Castor held a Veterans' Roundtable Forum at the Hillsborough County Veterans Memorial Park. It was well-attended by over 20 members of our local veteran and active-duty military community along with veteran advocates. According to county records, Hillsborough County has the largest population of veterans in the state of Florida with nearly 98,000 veterans who call Hillsborough their home. Hillsborough County is also the home of MacDill Air Force Base, with over 12,000 active-duty military and more than 7,000 civilians stationed on the base supporting the 6th Air Mobility Wing and two Geographic Combatant Commands.

Congresswoman Castor focused on Veterans' legislation. Key on her agenda were bills in the US Congress:

- 1) The PACT Act - H.R. 3967: Toxic Exposures/Burn Pits. This bill addresses health care, presumption of service-connection, research, resources, and other matters related to veterans who were exposed to toxic substances.
- 2) The GI Bill Parity Act - H.R. 1836: Assisting National Guard and Reserve Members for educational benefits. Introduced in the House on 03/11/2022, this bill expands eligibility for Post - 9/11 GI Bill educational assistance. Specifically, the bill adjusts the type of service that entitles a member of the Armed Forces, Reserves, or National Guard to such assistance. Under the bill, service by a Reservist or National Guard member that is entitled to pay, counts toward benefit eligibility. Such service includes training, active military service, inactive training, and general duty for which basic pay is warranted.

3) EVEST Act - H.R. 4673: Ensuring Veterans' Smooth Transition Act. This act would automatically register active-duty military members in the VA Healthcare System upon their discharge. Retirees would have the option of opting out within 60 days if they would prefer.

Additionally, Congresswoman Castor gave an update on the U.S House Appropriations Act - H.R. 2471 - which passed on 03/09/2022. This bill, in addition to the 12 fiscal year 2022 appropriations bills, provides \$13.6 billion in emergency funding to support the Ukrainian people and defend global democracy in the wake of Russia's unprovoked attack on Ukraine.

Among the many attendees were Tampa MOAA Chapter members Norman Bild and Ben Ritter advocating for MOAA Legislative priorities at the national, state and local levels, DJ Reyes, Colonel US Army (ret) - a staunch advocate on the Tampa Veterans Treatment Court for veterans who have legal and special needs, and Frank Strom, Director of Hillsborough County's Department of Consumer and Veterans Services and Immediate Past President at State of Florida County Veteran Service Officer Association.

After the Roundtable Forum concluded, Congresswoman Castor was interviewed by WFLA-TV News Channel 8. The interview may be seen by clicking on the photo below:



From L to R: Ben Ritter, DJ Reyes, Congresswoman Castor, Frank Strom

HONORING ONE OF TAMPA CHAPTER'S OWN FORMER POW'S

In honor of April 9th, National Former POW Recognition Day, CWO4 Francis Xavier O'Connell, USA RET, WWII Veteran and Former POW in Germany we thank you for your service and dedication to our great Nation is not forgotten. Thank you Sir!

Francis Xavier O'Connell, born in Cranston Rhode Island, is the youngest of 6 brothers, 4 of whom served in the US Army. After graduating from Cranston High School, Francis enlisted into the Army and completed his basic and advanced artillery training in Fort Bragg, NC.

Upon completion of training Francis was shipped to Casablanca where he joined the 45th Infantry Division. His division trained for battle alongside the first appointed U.S. Special Forces. In August 1943, he went by ship to Sicily and was part of an amphibious assault landing where they met initial stiff resistance prior to securing the island.

In September 1943 the 45th Infantry Division moved onto Salerno for another assault landing and difficult fighting. After a successful campaign in Salerno in early 1944 his unit was shipped to Anzio for another amphibious assault landing. The Battle of Anzio was a bitter campaign, where they fought their way to Rome, eventually taking Rome in June 1944. After a brief R & R his unit shipped to Southern France where they went ashore near St. Tropez and fought their way inland to Meximieux. This was the fourth amphibious landing for Francis. In September 1944, in the heat of battle, his unit relieved another Forward Observer group. During this process, Francis's unit became surrounded by Panzers and German infantry and taken prisoner. As prisoners, they were loaded on trucks and trains and sent to Germany. Along the way they were frequently strafed by friendly aircraft. After 9 months of captivity Francis was freed when Allied forces took the area. When freed, his unit made their way on foot to Bremerhaven and eventually sent back to the U.S. by ship.



After returning home, weighing 80 lbs. and suffering from extreme malnutrition, Francis spent 3 months in a hospital to regain his health. Francis entered Brown University where he earned a bachelor's degree in business administration. He rejoined the Army in 1949 and was promoted to Warrant Officer. In this capacity Francis served in an Intelligence Division in numerous duty stations in the U.S. and internationally in Germany, Saudi Arabia, Ecuador and Brazil. In 1984 CWO4 Francis O'Connell retired from the Regular Army and continued in the 63rd Division of the U.S. Army Reserves as a Personnel Officer until 1989.

Francis resides in Lutz Florida where he is an active member of Disabled American Veterans and enjoys his passion for music, friends and family.



Francis, who is devoutly religious, has never wavered in his firm belief that he survived the war and being a POW through the power of prayer from his mother, Theresa O'Connell.

Source: Reprinted from MOAA Tampa Chapter's June 2020 The Retrospect.

Answer:



The Civil War, which ended in the spring of 1865, claimed more lives than any conflict in U.S. history and required the establishment of the country's first national cemeteries.

By the late 1860s, Americans in various towns and cities had begun holding springtime tributes to these countless fallen soldiers, decorating their graves with

flowers and reciting prayers.

It is unclear where exactly this tradition originated; numerous different communities may have independently initiated the memorial gatherings. Nevertheless, in 1966 the federal government declared Waterloo, New York, the official birthplace of Memorial Day.

Waterloo—which first celebrated the day on May 5, 1866—was chosen because it hosted an annual, community-wide event, during which businesses closed and residents decorated the graves of soldiers with flowers and flags.

**Find & Join
a Chapter**

Continued on next page

Also

On May 5, 1868, General John A. Logan, leader of an organization for Northern Civil War veterans, called for a nationwide day of remembrance later that month. "The 30th of May, 1868, is designated for the purpose of strewing with flowers, or otherwise decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country during the late rebellion, and whose bodies now lie in almost every city, village and hamlet churchyard in the land," he proclaimed.

The date of Decoration Day, as he called it, was chosen because it wasn't the anniversary of any particular battle.

On the first Decoration Day, General James Garfield made a speech at Arlington National Cemetery, and 5,000 participants decorated the graves of the 20,000 Union and Confederate soldiers buried there.

Many Northern states held similar commemorative events and reprised the tradition in subsequent years; by 1890 each one had made Decoration Day an official state holiday. Southern states, on the other hand, continued to honor their dead on separate days until after World War I.

Memorial Day, as Decoration Day gradually came to be known, originally honored only those lost while fighting in the Civil War. But during World War I the United States found itself embroiled in another major conflict, and the holiday evolved to commemorate American military personnel who died in all wars.

For decades, Memorial Day continued to be observed on May 30, the date Logan had selected for the first Decoration Day. But in 1968 Congress passed the Uniform Monday Holiday Act, which established Memorial Day as the last Monday in May in order to create a three-day weekend for federal employees; the change went into effect in 1971. The same law also declared Memorial Day a federal holiday.





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Continued on next page

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (MOAA) FLORIDA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS (FCOC)

The MOAA Florida Council of Chapters (FCOC) is comprised of 41 Chapters with nearly 5,000 members and their families. FCOC is one of MOAA's largest Councils. MOAA has a membership of over 380,000 members in all 50 States.

The FCOC's primary communication vehicles are our bi-monthly publication, *The COUNCIL COMMUNIQUÉ* and our Website www.MOAAFL.org. Ads run for one year.

The *COMMUNIQUÉ* is distributed electronically to all our chapters, MOAA Headquarters in Virginia, and our influential contacts across the state of Florida.

The *COMMUNIQUÉ* provides a unique forum for businesses to reach a select segment of the population. The membership is patriotic and professional. We encourage your business to reach out to our members by advertising in *The COUNCIL COMMUNIQUÉ*.

In appreciation of Businesses that also support the FCOC Annual Convention with Ads in the Convention Souvenir Program Book within the last year the FCOC offers a discount for the same size Ad shown on the following Order Form.

Thank you!

FCOC

Advertise with Us!

Submitting Articles and Pictures for *The Communiqué*

Articles can be attached to an email. Microsoft Word works best (Arial 12). You can also type your information into the body of an email where it can be copied and pasted into the newsletter. PDF files can also be used but without photos.

Pictures should have a .jpg extension. If you are sending pictures from your chapter, please include the chapter name and the names of those in the picture. A few words on what the event is about will help interest the readers.

If you have questions about your submission, contact

Randy Fiebrandt
rfebs1953@gmail.com



The Council Communiqué[®] ADVERTISING ORDER FORM



Size of Ad	Per Issue	Annual Placement
QuarterPage (4"Hx3.5"W)	\$ 75	\$ 300 (Save \$150)
Half Page (8" H x 3.5" W) or (4" H x 7.5 W)	\$150	\$ 600 (Save \$300)
Full Page (9.625" x 7.5" W)	\$300	\$1,200 (Save \$600)

Size of Ad: _____ / # of Placements: _____ OR Annual: _____

Notes: Annual is from Jan-Dec; six (6) issues published electronically on the 10th of the even month. Mid-year placement for a recurring annual placement can be at pro-rated annual rate for remaining issues. Copy due dates for 2020 are: the first day of February, April, June, August, October, and December.

(Ad placement in printed Annual Convention Program (June) is handled separately by Convention Committee; POC's listed under Committee Chairs on last page of Communiqué)

Amount: \$_____ (make check out to: Florida Council of Chapters and mail, with this completed ad order form, to: Treasurer - FCoC, P.O. Box 60603, Fort Meyers, Florida 33906)

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• Submit PDF or jpeg file of ad(s) or ad update via email **with a scanned copy of completed order form** to: vpfcoc@gmail.com

• Ad copy must be submitted by the first of the month of the month of publication; i.e. Feb 1 for the January-February edition. Please notify the Council Vice President in advance if you plan to change the ad copy.

Please address questions to Pat Kluever at (540) 775-4955 or at "vpfcoc@gmail.com"

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Area: Northwest

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[Clearwater Chapter](#)

CLEARWATER
Area: West Central
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[Flagler County Chapter](#)

Palm Coast
Area: Northeast
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[Florida Gold Coast Chapter](#)

Coral Gables
Area: Southeast

[Florida Keys](#)

Islamorada
Area: Southeast
[View Website](#)

[Gainesville Chapter](#)

Gainesville
Area: Mid Central
[View Website](#)

[Halifax Area Chapter](#)

Daytona Beach
Area: East Central
[View Website](#)

[Imperial Polk County Chapter](#)

Lakeland
Area: Mid Central

[Indian River Chapter](#)

Vero Beach
Area: East Central
[View Website](#)

[Kingdom Of The Sun Chapter](#)

Ocala
Area: Mid Central
[View Website](#)

[Lake & Sumter Counties Chapter](#)

Lady Lake
Area: Mid Central
[View Website](#)

[Lee Coast Chapter, MOAA](#)

Sanibel Island
Area: South West
[View Website](#)

[Mayport Chapter](#)

Jacksonville
Area: Northeast
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[Mid-Florida Gulf Coast Chapter](#)

Palm Harbor
Area: West Central
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Sarasota
Area: South West
[View Website](#)

[Military Officers Association of South West Florida](#)

Naples
Area: South West
[View Website](#)

[Military Officers Club of Volusia County](#)

Orange City
Area: East Central
[View Website](#)

[MOAA of Citrus County](#)

Lecanto
Area: Mid Central
[View Website](#)

[Nassau County](#)

Fernandina Beach
Area: Northeast
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[Northeast Florida Chapter](#)

Jacksonville
Area: Northeast
[View Website](#)

Florida Chapters, Continued

**Northwest Florida Military Officers
Association**

Fort Walton Beach
Area: Northwest
[View Website](#)

Palm Beach Area Chapter

Boynton Beach
Area: Southeast
[View Website](#)

**Palm Beach-Martin Counties
Chapter**

Jupiter
Area: Southeast
[View Website](#)

Pensacola Chapter

Pensacola
Area: Northwest
[View Website](#)

Santa Rosa Chapter

Milton
Area: Northwest

St. Petersburg Area Chapter

St. Petersburg
Area: West Central
[View Website](#)

South Central Florida Chapter

Sebring
Area: South West
[View Website](#)

South Dade Chapter

Princeton
Area: South East

Sun City Center Chapter

Sun City Center
Area: West Central
[View Website](#)

Suncoast Chapter, MOAA

Port Richey
Area: West Central
[View Website](#)

**Suwannee River Valley
Chapter**

Lake City
Area: Northeast
[View Website](#)

Tallahassee Chapter

Tallahassee
Area: Northwest
[View Website](#)

Tampa Chapter

MacDill AFB
Area: West Central
[View Website](#)

Treasure Coast Chapter

Fort Pierce
Area: East Central
[View Website](#)





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Military Officers Association of America



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<http://moaafi.org/>

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