



The Council Communiqué

Florida Council of Chapters
Military Officers Association of America

August 2021

Issue 165



President's Message

COL Mike Borders, USA., Ret.

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Over the past couple of months, Diana and I have reinitiated our travels to chapters around the state. Tampa, Polk County, and Cape Canaveral to mention a few. Coincidental to a few of the activities was the presence of several of the board members. We didn't exactly have a board meeting, but we were able to chat about several things, such as the 7-8 January 2022 Leadership Forum in Orlando, the 10-12 June FCoC Convention in West Palm Beach, as well as the advent of Zoom, COVID, and a host of topics affecting what we do as MOAA members. One topic that came up often was Membership, in all its facets. Elsewhere in this edition of the Communiqué, you will see inputs from COL Steve Bond. Steve is the President of the Cape Canaveral chapter, and is our FCoC chair for membership. In my discussions with him and other leaders, we came to one basic conclusion: being passive doesn't work. Seems like a blinding flash of the obvious to those chapters who successfully recruit and retain members. Some folks by their nature are not comfortable with recruiting.

But if you see your chapter declining in membership, you may want to become more aggressive and activist in this area. I have picked up new chapter members in the grocery store, at the gas pump, in restaurants, etc. Anytime I see someone that has a hat or t-shirt that indicates affiliation with the military, I greet them, determine their background, and if they are/were and officer, I recruit them. You can't be bashful. There are many ways to successfully recruit and retain members--I encourage you to read Steve's inputs.

What makes a given chapter successful varies considerably. My personal assessment after serving as a chapter president, and the several positions on the FCoC over the last seven years, is that camaraderie and fellowship with former officers is what brings most people in. But they are also looking for a way to give back. This is what *Camaraderie With a Purpose* is all about. It is another way of saying *Never Stop Serving*. If your chapter provides more than just a chance to get together for lunch or

continued on next page...

dinner, you will see it grow. With growth comes strength. You sure can't do anything without members!

Diana and I look forward to visiting your chapter soon. We really enjoy meeting your members, seeing what your team is doing, and learning from your experiences. Let me know when you have an activity scheduled and we will try to make it. Obviously, with 40+ chapters, we can't be everywhere at once, but we'll try. Thanks for 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)

My wife Mary and I were going to celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary last year in the fall of 2020 with a Viking European Sojourn River Cruise - but then COVID happened. So we rebooked for this September, and now cases are spiking in Duvall County and we are concerned. But Viking still says it is "A Go" so we are hopeful.

MOAA articles show our Advocacy in Action this year has gained traction on all three fronts 1) caring for veterans with toxic exposure, 2) young adult TriCare coverage, and 3) food insecurity for junior-enlisted military families. In many areas the Florida delegation is helping support these initiatives, but more support is needed. Please consider writing and calling your representatives in Congress to add their support. Every two weeks I see young active-duty military families lining up at USO Mayport to pick up food to help get them through the month and I know this need is real and urgent. These families will not go to local food banks but they will go to the USO because they consider that long-history organization to be part of their support team. Let's fix the military pay system to correct this dire problem!

It is not too early to start thinking about the Leadership Training Seminar in Orlando at the Rosen Center (7-8 January 2022). This will be a fully in-person event and we are expecting a lot of new information about the new MOAA Committee Module, Level of Excellence Awards, and details on plans for a totally awesome convention in Palm Beach 9-12 June 2022 focused on fun events and mystery. Don't miss the reveal in January in Orlando or the in-person fun in June 2022 in Palm Beach!!

Planned Events - 12+ Month Horizon

7 - 10 October 2021 - Georgia State MOAA Convention, Ft. Benning, Georgia
 15 - 16 October 2021 - MOAA National Convention, Arlington, VA
 23 October 2021 - Virtual Fall FCoC Board Meeting (Approve Final 2022 Budget)
 7 - 8 January 2022 - Rosen Center Orlando - Leadership Training Seminar

WHAT YOUR FLORIDA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS DOES

Florida Council of Chapters and its Chapters are chartered by and affiliates of The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

MOAA and the FCOC are non-partisan, non-profit 501c(19) organizations, and exist to improve the awareness, life style, and overall environment of its affiliate member chapters; support and serve member chapters; influence the political process in matters pertaining to active duty, retired and former military personnel; and enhance the image of America's uniformed services in our local communities.

The Council serves its affiliated Chapters by means of Council officers' in-person and virtual visits, a Council newsletter, a website with Chapter support and training, quarterly Board meetings, annual Leadership Seminar, and annual Convention.

SIGNIFICANT DATES FOR AUGUST

August 4th - Coast Guard Birthday (1790)
August 7th - Purple Heart Day - Honors the men and women who have been wounded or killed in military service.
August 14th - Navajo Code Talkers Day
August 16th - National Airborne Day - August 16, 1940 marked the first official Army parachute jump, validating the innovative concept of inserting United States ground combat forces behind a battle line by parachute.
August 19th - National Aviation Day
August 29th - Marine Forces Reserve Birthday

SIGNIFICANT DATES FOR SEPTEMBER:

September - National Service Dog Month
September 6th - Labor Day
September 11th - Patriot Day - Patriot Day is an annual observance on September 11 to remember those who were injured or died during the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001.
September 17th - POW/MIA Recognition Day - A time set aside to remember those who were prisoners of war (POW) and those who are missing in action (MIA), as well as their families.
September 18th - Air Force Birthday
September 26th - Gold Star Mother's and Family's Day
A day set aside to honor the families of our nation's fallen service members.



Chaplain's Message

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

Please allow me to introduce myself.

Greetings from the Sunshine City, St. Petersburg, Florida! I am your newly appointed chaplain for the Florida Council of Chapters and I am honored to serve in that role on your behalf.

It would seem meet and right for introductions, so the following is a bit about me, my background, and my experience.

I retired from the Florida Army National Guard in late 2018 as the Senior Army/State Chaplain after more than thirty years of uniformed service. That service included Active and Reserve Component work in the Enlisted and Officer ranks with experience in Military Intelligence, Special Operations, Light Infantry, and Air Defense formations from battalion to state headquarters. As a chaplain, I jumped out of perfectly good airplanes, chased hurricanes around the state in recovery operations, and counseled scores of Soldiers, Airmen, and their families in challenging times.

I then retired from The Episcopal Church in late 2020 after more than twenty five years of congregational leadership in Central Florida and Southeast Texas. That work included serving on local, regional, and national boards. As a parish priest, I navigated a congregation through the financial challenges of 2008, guided another congregation through the pandemic, and completed a Doctor of Ministry degree that focused on the integration of spirituality and work.

My current work with The Boley Centers in St. Petersburg (I moved here in November 2020) focuses on assisting homeless Veterans find stable employment in the Tampa Bay area. This work keeps me connected with the military community and allows me to continue serving fellow Floridians.

My work also allows me time to volunteer and continue serving through the St. Petersburg Area MOAA Chapter, the Suncoast Chapter of the Association of the United States Army, and Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve. If I'm not at work or volunteering, you will find me walking a local trail, playing golf, practicing yoga, listening to live music, or visiting a brewery, distillery, or winery.

My wife and I have two adult children: Rebecca Clark Odham (she's married to a Soldier stationed at Ft. Carson, CO with two very active young boys) and the late Patrick Clark.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you as chaplain for the Florida Council of Chapters. May the Lord continue to guard and guide each and every one of us through these "interesting times."



Membership Chairman

COL Steve Bond, USA (Ret)

With our goal to grow our membership numbers State-wide and make an even larger impact for those we serve—our members, other Veterans, those serving in the Uniformed Services, their spouses, as well as Military inclined students—How do we go about doing that? In the last *Communique*, I wrote about Florida being a “Target Rich Environment” for finding new chapter members—my estimates are there are over 160,000 active, former, or retired officers in the State—and that is not counting eligible spouses! Now let’s discuss growing our numbers in terms of a Military Operation. As with any military operation, we need an objective. In this case, our objective is to increase chapter membership. To achieve that objective, there are three main Lines of Effort (LOE): (1) Retaining Current Chapter Members, (2) signing up New Members; and (3) a Public Relations effort to support the campaign by getting the word out about what your chapter does.

- LOE #1: Retaining your Current Members.** This LOE reflects everything your chapter is doing (or needs to do) to keep your current members, as well as attract new members. Ask yourselves these questions: Why would someone want to join your chapter? Does your chapter do things for your members? Does it provide services and philanthropy in your community? Retaining members is not just the responsibility of the Membership Committee, but rests with all Chapter leaders. Every member you keep is one less that you need to recruit!
- LOE #2: Signing up New Members.** Recruiting new members is a responsibility for every chapter member. We all need to talk to prospective members about what MOAA and our chapters do and have information available to sign up new members. Every member is a recruiter for your chapter!
- LOE #3: Public Relations to get the word out.** This is both an *internal* effort to keep your membership aware of what the chapter does, AND an *external* effort to let potential members and the community-at-large know what your chapter is doing and what we are about.

As with any military campaign, we need to organize your chapters, and to assign tasks and responsibilities to achieve the objective. The Chapter President should be overall responsible for the Membership Campaign, assisted by other chapter leaders for each of the individual LOEs—perhaps the Chapter Vice President for the various programs that do things to retain Members; the Membership Chair for the providing tools to members to recruit others and administer the various databases, and a Public Relations Chairperson to “get the word out”. Recruiting and Retention are a total chapter responsibility. Every member is a recruiter. In subsequent articles, I’ll discuss each of these three Lines of Efforts in greater detail. Meanwhile, let’s get organized and grow our numbers!

If you have questions or comments, contact me at President@MOAACC.org.



Legislative Advocacy – Philanthropy – Camaraderie

Membership Campaign Lines of Effort



"NEVER STOP SERVING"

Recruiting Best Practices

- Every member is a recruiter!
- Establish 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

WHY JOIN A LOCAL MOAA CHAPTER?

You know the value of belonging to MOAA and your chapter. But when you are talking to a potential new chapter member, it's important to remember that many officers might have only limited knowledge of MOAA's chapter system. Creating a dialogue and asking open-ended questions is the best way to find out if and how a chapter membership could help a prospective member. Find out as much as you can about their priorities to tailor a response that is more likely to resonate with them personally. Here are some aspects of membership that may appeal to them.

1. **Make yourself heard.** MOAA's chapters provide critical grassroots support for MOAA's national legislative agenda. Chapter members let their legislators know what's on their minds and open doors for MOAA's legislative team in Washington, D.C.
2. **Give back to the community.** Chapter members are MOAA's ambassadors in their communities, supporting countless programs that make a difference in the lives of others. These members continue to serve and are giving back in the truest sense.
3. **Value added to chapter members' lives.** MOAA chapters sponsor interesting programs and opportunities to interact with civic, political, military, and business leaders on issues important to members.
4. **Networking with fellow officers.** Chapters include second-career members in the work force and retired service members who have contacts in their communities that can be valuable to transitioning officers.
5. **Stay informed.** Chapter newsletters, websites, and meetings provide you with the latest information on local, state, and national issues and changes to military benefits.
6. **Influencing state legislation.** Most states have a council of chapters that unites chapters in the state. These councils, and independent chapters in states without a council, often lobby for and pass state-level legislation that affects military members and their families, such as exempting military retired pay from state income tax or increasing funding for state veterans' programs.
7. **Camaraderie with a purpose.** MOAA chapters unite active duty, former, and retired officers from every branch of service, including National Guard and Reserve, as well as surviving spouses, offering the opportunity to connect with others with similar backgrounds and interest and develop close and lasting friendships.



Legislative Affairs

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



MOAA's *Advocacy in Action* Campaign – Status Update



Congress Goes on Recess Until After Labor Day – But Our Work Must Continue

With much work remaining to finalize the Authorization and Appropriations Bills Congress will not be conducting any meaningful business on them until after September 13th. Expect that the government will be funded under a Continuing Resolution possibly until late December.

The status of Congressional support for the Bills that address MOAA's top priorities has hardly changed since the last Communiqué. One thing is pretty clear – without evidence of significant support by way of co-sponsorship on those bills – there is little chance they will come up for a floor vote nor end up in the NDAA.

Now is the time to take action with your Congressperson. The same goes for our Senators – neither of whom have signed on as co-sponsors of any of the Senate versions of those bills.

The July 15th MOAA Newsletter provides links to send out messages [again] to gain support for the top 3 issues - [MOAA - Advocacy in Action Moves Forward: MOAA's Major Progress on Our 3 Issues](#)

**Toxic Exposure Reform
TRICARE Young Adult Parity
Hunger in the Ranks**

Continued engagement from constituents is still necessary. Don't just send an email: Call (866) 272-MOAA (6622), MOAA's toll-free line to the U.S. Capitol switchboard, to be connected with your legislators' offices, and call their District Offices too.

Look for a ***FCOC Special Legislative Call-to-Action*** in the next two weeks which will outline a plan to "blitz" our elected representatives with phone calls and emails with the MOAA messages seeking their co-sponsorship.

MOAA Legislative Update:

Read about the latest MOAA Advocacy News and Calls-to-Action [here](#).



<https://takeaction.moaa.org/>

Florida Congressional Delegation Co-Sponsorship Status for MOAA's Bills of Interest Under **Advocacy in Action - 2021**

			Advocacy in Action Bills			Call-To-Action Messages	Other Bills	
District	Name	Party	HR 2339	HR 2436 HR 2127	HR 475		HR 1282	
1st	Gaetz, Matt	R				84		Co-sponsorship status as of June 30th Dark Green represents co-sponsors on board BEFORE we started our Virtual Meetings. Light green represents co-sponsors who signed on SUSEQUENT to when our Virtual meetings started.
2nd	Dunn, Neal	R				12		
3rd	Cammack, Kat Freshman	R				39		
4th	Rutherford, John	R		May 28		31		
5th	Lawson, Al	D				1		
6th	Waltz, Michael	R			Original Sponsor	10	June 4	
7th	Murphy, Stephanie	D				17		
8th	Posey, Bill	R				30		
9th	Soto, Darren	D				16		
10th	Demings, Val	D	May 17	May 21		5		
11th	Webster, Daniel	R				97		
12th	Bilirakis, Gus M.	R		original		42	Original Sponsor	
13th	Crist, Charlie	D				23		
14th	Castor, Kathy	D				34		
15th	Franklin, C. Scott Freshman	R			June 4	29	June 14	
16th	Buchanan, Vern	R				42		
17th	Steube, W. Gregory	R				40		
18th	Mast, Brian	R				44		
19th	Donalds, Byron Freshman	R				37		
20th	Hastings, Alcee L. Dec'd	D				No msgs		
21st	Frankel, Lois	D				14		<p>HR 2339 Basic Needs Allowance proposal would give an estimated \$400 monthly subsidy to servicemembers with a household gross income (not including the Basic Allowance for Housing, or BAH) at or below 130% of the poverty line. The subsidy is meant to ensure no military family faces food insecurity. It would be accompanied by financial education resources. This bill has 41 cosponsors: 32 Democrats, 9 Republicans.</p> <p>S. 1488, Military Hunger Prevention Act: 21 co-sponsors NEITHER FL Senator</p> <p>Twenty years ago, the first troops were deployed to fight the global war on terror, many serving near open-air burn pits and other environmental dangers. HR 2436 The Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act will concede exposure to toxic substances for those veterans. As the health consequences of burn pits and other toxic substances continue to be studied, the veteran community is witnessing a rise in rare cancers and other illnesses. We must ensure our veterans receive quality health care for these illnesses. This bill has 41 cosponsors: 28 Democrats, 13 Republicans</p>
22nd	Deutch, Ted	D				4		
23rd	Wasserman Schultz, Debbie	D				10		
24th	Wilson, Frederica	D				44		
25th	Diaz-Balart, Mario	R				6		
26th	Gimenez, Carlos Freshman	R				43		
27th	Salazar, Maria E. Freshman	R				9		

	S. 437, the Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act, 37 co-sponsors. Senator	NEITHER FL
	HR 2127 The Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Act would grant the VA health care enrollment to veterans who served in areas of known toxic exposure, and creates a mechanisms for the enrollment of veterans who may be exposed to toxic substances in the future. This bill has 46 cosponsors : 38 Republicans, 8 Democrats	
	S. 927, the Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Act, 11 co-sponsors Senator	NEITHER FL
	H.R. 475, The Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act would ensure military families have the same health care protections for their young adult children as their civilian counterparts covered by commercial plans. This bill has 64 cosponsors : 42 Democrats, 22 Republicans.	
	S. 1972, Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act: 4 co-sponsors. Senator	NEITHER FL
	HR 1282, The Major Richard Star Act provides that combat-disabled uniformed services retirees with fewer than 20 years of creditable service (Chapter 61 retirees) may concurrently receive, without reduction, veterans' disability compensation and retired pay or combat-related special compensation. This bill has 109 cosponsors : 67 Democrats, 42 Republicans.	
	S 344 Major Richard Star Act Senator	NEITHER FL

ANC Eligibility Changes

The extended schedule for the FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) will provide lawmakers an opportunity to intervene on planned eligibility changes at Arlington National Cemetery – discriminatory changes that will dramatically reduce the benefit of full military honors.

[Ask Your Lawmakers to Preserve the National Cemetery Benefit](#) by grandfathering current 20-30+ year retirees and to fund a new National Cemetery to be ready to accept burials by 2050 when the spaces at Arlington are projected to be filled.

Concurrent Receipt Update: Lets Finally End This Unintended and Unjust Offset

The Military Coalition – a consortium of organizations (of which MOAA is a co-chair) representing a combined 5.5 million members – is asking for continued personal advocacy to get the message to our legislators on the unfairness of the offset particularly for Chapter 31 retirees. Gaining co-sponsors for the Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282/S.344) will increase awareness and commitment to resolving this inequity for those who were retired early due to combat or combat-related injuries or illnesses.

[Ask Your Lawmakers to Support the Major Richard Star Act](#)

Latest Concurrent Receipt Update *Excerpted from MOAA Advocacy News -July 21st*

It is very disappointing to see the Major Richard Star Act (S. 344/H.R. 1282) has so far not been included in this year's NDAA. This legislation would authorize receipt of VA compensation and medical retirement pay, without offset, for those injured in combat and forced to medically retire. With support from over 52 senators and 114 House members as of Aug. 3, this legislation has strong backing to make incremental progress on the enduring concurrent receipt problem.

For first time, some burn pit victims will get presumptive status for disability benefits

Excerpted from Air Force Times, Mon Aug 2, 2021, posted by Leo Shane III

Veterans exposed to harmful burn pit smoke while serving in overseas war zones will for the first time get presumptive disability benefits status under a new announcement by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The move comes after years of lobbying from veterans advocates and months of legislative pressure from Capitol Hill on the issue. In a statement, VA Secretary Denis McDonough called the move “the right decision” to recognize the sacrifice of veterans.

Initially, the new move will cover only veterans suffering from three illnesses — asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis — and only if they manifested within 10 years of a veteran's overseas service. And for now, the new presumptive benefits status does not include any rare cancers that numerous veterans groups have said have occurred in alarmingly high rates among veterans exposed to overseas burn pits.

Presumptive benefits status allows veterans applying for disability benefits to forgo certain paperwork and medical exams used to prove their injuries and illnesses are directly connected to their time in the military. Similar status has been granted in the past for illnesses related to Agent Orange exposure during the Vietnam War, where widespread use of the chemical defoliant was well-known but difficult to prove in specific locations decades later.

Millions more vets could get new benefits under pending toxic exposure legislation Note 1.

In the past, Veterans Affairs officials have estimated more than 3.5 million troops were exposed to the toxic smoke from burn pits during overseas deployments over the last 20 years. The most striking portion of the bill would be recognition that all troops who served in Iraq and Afghanistan likely suffered some level of poisoning from burn pits used extensively throughout the country. The legislation establishes a list of 23 cancers and respiratory illnesses believed linked to the toxic smoke, allowing veterans who served in the countries and later contract the conditions to skip eligibility and verification processes for VA benefits.

Bob's Comment:

It took years for congress to address the Agent Orange Exposure illnesses that the VA had denied. Let's not let that delay happen to the more recent veterans who are suffering a variety of illnesses associated with Toxic exposures.

Note 1: The text of these MOAA-supported bills has been included in omnibus legislation in both the House and the Senate. Both make major, necessary changes on behalf of veterans and their survivors when it comes to toxic exposure benefits, and both are championed by the chair of each chamber's Veterans Affairs Committee. This support is critical going forward in a legislative process facing pressures from budgetary debates and other concerns.



Personal Affairs

Col Paul Loschiavo, USMCR (Ret)

It goes without saying that when a spouse passes on, the survivor suffers a major trauma. Many things occur, most of which are unplanned and unpleasant.

For the typical military retiree husband with a spouse, the surviving spouse immediately gets hit with reductions in military retired pay and Social Security, both of which actually *claw back* funds should the retiree fail to pass away on the last day of the month. Then... there's a problem with joint accounts, where the now-deceased spouse's name had top billing. Say what?!?

Vendors, such as power companies and cable companies, generally do not do anything when an account holder dies, unless the surviving spouse stops paying the bill. Most financial institutions will quickly change accounts titled as "joint account with right of survivorship" to that of the survivor.

Getting this done just a matter of paperwork, and it's a good idea to get everything updated sooner than later. If any of those companies ever issues a payment *to* the account holder, it will be made payable to *both* names. If this occurs ten years after the deceased person passes away as the survivor is moving to be near the kids, depositing that check becomes problematic.

The big problem is with *credit cards*.

Credit cards are normally titled to one person, then that person makes the account joint with the spouse. If the person with top billing passes on, the account is immediately *closed*. Period. And banks are always looking for the names of deceased people, especially, those to whom the bank has loaned money. Open credit card accounts fall squarely into this category.

When a credit card issuing bank discovers that a borrower has died, they immediately shut down the account. (The card *immediately* stops working...). Just then a survivor has a dramatic need for funds and credit cards that list the deceased spouse as the account holder will most likely stop working instantly. Ouch.

The survivor must then go through the complete process of applying for a new credit card and waiting for an account to be opened. Compounding the difficulty is the fact that the surviving spouse may not have much of a credit record when all family transactions were done in the now deceased spouse's name.

Can you think of a worse time to be disconnected from one's money?

The thing to do is get a credit card in the spouse's name now.

The military retiree can be a joint owner but the *spouse* must have top billing. In other words, the spouse should apply for a credit card. Then set up at least one recurring charge to that credit card so it does not get closed for lack of use. Even better, use the card regularly! Have your spouse use it regularly. The initial credit limit may be small. It will get raised with use.

I'd go one step further and get that card from a financial institution *different* from the one you generally use. If USAA is ever shut down by a major hack, wouldn't it be great to have an unaffected Navy Federal credit card?

Few readers of this piece carry balances and pay interest on credit card debt. Most pay off the balance as soon as they see the monthly bill. But *convenience* makes the use of credit cards ubiquitous.

Arrange it *now* that if you unexpectedly pass away, your spouse will not be left in a lurch.



Surviving Spouse Corner

Patricia Green, Surviving Spouse Liaison

Legislation to support, Meetings to attend

In this column I have often encouraged readers to join the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter. It meets twice a month. The information you hear on the Zoom is invaluable and the conversations are heartwarming.

The meetings are at 5pm on the 1st Tuesday of the month. This is a conversational meeting. At 1pm on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, the meetings are formal with speakers and presenters of information and issues.

On July 20, 2021, LTC Mark Belinsky from National MOAA, one of the speakers at the last Virtual Chapter meeting, gave this legislative update:

Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act, HR2214/S1669

Normally the last month of Retirement pay must be returned. This bill allows the monies paid to a joint account during the month of death of a retired member of the Armed Services, to remain in the joint account.

Caring for Survivors Act 2021 HR3402/S976

This is legislation that would improve Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, which remains a MOAA priority.

Supporting Families of Fallen Soldiers HR 3793

The purpose of this bill is to increase the maximum amount of a policy under the Veterans' Group Life Insurance and Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance to keep up with inflation. The proposed legislative above is for the benefit of surviving spouses and families. Explore the MOAA website and this publication for information concerning this and other legislation.

If you want to join the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter,

Go to the www.moaa.org website

Go to the "I am a" space

Click on menu pull down, Surviving Spouse

Scroll down to Join the Virtual Chapter and fill out the application.

If you need help, contact me (deg06@aol.com)



Florida Department of Veterans Affairs Update

Lt Col R. Steven Murray, USAF (Ret.)

Communications Director, Florida Department of Veterans Affairs

Governor Ron DeSantis has signed the 2021 Florida Purple Heart Day Proclamation.



RON DeSANTIS
GOVERNOR

FLORIDA PURPLE HEART DAY

WHEREAS, in honor of Florida's Purple Heart recipients, the Florida Legislature has designated August 7th as Florida Purple Heart Day; and

WHEREAS, the original Purple Heart, designated as the Badge of Military Merit, was created by George Washington during the Revolutionary War in 1782 as an award for the Continental Army; and

WHEREAS, on the 200th anniversary of George Washington's birth, the Badge of Military Merit was renamed as the Purple Heart recognizing soldiers in the Army who were killed or wounded in combat; and

WHEREAS, the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor estimates more than 1.8 million Purple Hearts have been awarded to our nation's service members since 1782; and

WHEREAS, Purple Heart eligibility was expanded in 1942 to include members of the U.S. Armed Forces who have been killed or wounded by enemy action; and

WHEREAS, Florida waives undergraduate-level tuition at state universities and community colleges for Florida recipients of the Purple Heart; and

WHEREAS, Florida's tuition waiver program for Purple Heart recipients includes the state's career and technical training facilities; and

WHEREAS, I was proud to sign the "Purple Star Campus Program" into law on June 24, 2021, to provide resources for transitioning military servicemembers, veterans and their families; and

WHEREAS, Floridians are encouraged to honor our state's Purple Heart recipients, many of whom paid the ultimate sacrifice to ensure the freedoms we hold dear today.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Ron DeSantis, Governor of the State of Florida, do hereby extend greetings and best wishes to all observing August 7, 2021, as *Florida Purple Heart Day*.



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 7th day of August, in the year two thousand twenty one.


Governor

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www.FLGov.com



Florida Veterans Council Update

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

As a member on the Florida Veterans and FDVA Council, it is my great honor to participate on our Governor's Panel on Florida Women Veterans. Our first meeting (in person or virtual) will be 19 Aug at 10am at the American Legion 1912 Lee Rd, Orlando. I am seeking information from our members to identify organizations that provide services to our female veterans that would be interested in contacting me. If you are interested on being on the panel, we are taking nominations. Please email me at lorraine holland@hotmail.com or call 407-221-1388. I will forward the Zoom link when it's made available. I am very grateful for the opportunity to help shine a light on our Florida Women Veterans!

Operation Roll Call Governor's Panel on Female Veteran Benefits and Communications DRAFT PLAN – 21 July 2021

The Governor's Panel on Female Veteran Benefits and Communications is created within the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs to assess the needs of female veterans in Florida and if veterans benefits and FDVA and VA communications are tailored correctly to female veterans. Florida has approximately 1.5 million veterans of which 165,000 are females. It is important that State and Federal veterans' benefits are accessed by all eligible veterans. Because services and communications are generally geared toward male veterans this panel will assess from female veterans their opinions and any recommendations for improvement. The Panel is part of the FDVA's Operation Roll Call initiative.

The Panel will examine and if necessary make recommendations for improvements in the following areas:

- Ensure proper recognition of the role of female veterans and education on their veteran status
- Ensure Veteran services are tailored toward female veterans
- Review policies for VA staff when interacting with female veterans
- Review policies of FDVA nursing homes to ensure considering the needs of female veterans
- Review programs, such as Mission Act and Skillbridge, etc. to determine if utilized by women and if necessary, recommend changes or ways to better disseminate information to female vets
- Research demographics of military occupations of female veterans and civilian career paths

Florida Department of Veterans Affairs shall provide administrative and support services related to the functions of the panel. The Department shall work in coordination with the Florida Veterans Foundation and other Veteran Service Organizations to support the panel.

The panel consists of twelve members recommended by Veteran Service Organizations or are female veterans or community veteran advocates and appointed by the Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs.

The Executive Director shall designate a chair of the Panel and it will be staffed by Vanessa Thomas, FDVA's Woman Veterans Coordinator.

Panel members shall serve without compensation or per diem and travel expenses.

The panel may not meet or take any action without a quorum present, which is a minimum of five members. Each member of the panel is entitled to one vote, and any recommendation or other action of the panel must be upon a majority vote of the entire membership of the panel.

The panel shall submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs by January 1, 2022.

Bob Asztalos
Deputy Executive Director
Florida Department of Veterans Affairs
Email: asztalosB@fdva.state.fl.us
Office: 850-487-1533 ext: 7710
Cell Phone: 850-755-7491

The VA is Conducting a Major Study of Women Veterans

Adapted from a MOAA National Article (If you are a women veteran, or have a female family member who is a veteran, this may be of interest)

The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) wants thousands more female veterans to enroll in its Million Veteran Program -- a blood repository used by researchers to tackle the world's toughest medical questions. The program, which began in 2011, has created the largest biobank on the planet, with 841,000 participants. The genetic material in the repository, managed by the Boston VA Healthcare System, has been used for studies on various types of cancer, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's, diabetes and mental health disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder.

Just 75,000, or 9%, of the participants are women -- a shortcoming that skews the outcome of medical research and can leave gender-specific health questions unanswered. There are differences in anatomy, biology and physiology in men and women and so it's really important to understand what factors influence health and disease in women.

Enrollment involves completing a questionnaire and providing a finger-prick blood sample at one of the VA's 65 participating medical centers or completing online registration followed by sample donation at a VA health facility.

Once enrollment is complete, the identities of donors are kept secret from researchers, and all samples are labeled with a code rather than with any identifying information.

The samples are, however, linked to their corresponding veterans' medical records, albeit with identifying information stripped out. Each sample also comes with completed questionnaires on lifestyle and employment, including combat experience and toxic environmental exposures.

The biobank has already provided the basis for 65 research studies, with 30 more to come. Women currently make up roughly 10% of the U.S. veteran population, but are expected to account for more than 18% by 2040.

The effort to enroll more women in the program -- VA is aiming for 5,000 more by the end of the fiscal year -- comes as the Veteran Health Administration increases services for female veterans.

Lawmakers have also been calling for improvements in gender-specific health care to accommodate this growing veteran cohort.

Women veterans interested in enrolling in the program can find more information at the [VA's Million Veterans Program](#) web site.



Coast Guard Day was August 4th

Celebrated annually on August 4th, Coast Guard Day commemorates the anniversary of the founding of the U.S. Coast Guard as the Revenue-Marine in 1790. On August 4, 1790 Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton established the Revenue-Marine to serve as an armed customs enforcement service. In 1894, it was renamed the Revenue Cutter Service. In 1915, it merged with the U.S. Life-Saving Service. Thus the United States Coast Guard was formed.



Florida Council of Chapters "Chapter News"

Lake & Sumter Counties Chapter

LTC Donald L. Hansen, USA (Ret.)

Our Chapter's Annual (except for 2020) Military Charities Golf Tournament was held on Friday, April 16th, and was an outstanding success. We increased the number of players by more than a dozen over what we had in 2019 and for the first time, we were able to enlist 12 Hole Sponsors (contributed \$500 or more to the tournament) which included, in addition to our Major Sponsors: Parady Financial Group, Inc. and Palm Ridge Dental; seven other corporations: Atomic Cool Kartz, The Spice and Tea Exchange, Key Scales Ford, Luxury Diamond Company, Colony Dental, American Legion Post 347, and Lexus of Wesley Chapel; and three of our fellow Chapter member couples: Timothy and Annette Balliett, Danny and Sandra Abbott, and Thomas and Christine Smith. Altogether, we netted over \$29,000 to support our JROTC scholarships and to contribute to the military charities we support and who support us. The Hole Sponsors each received a Pin Flag for the Hole they sponsored and will be able to keep them until next year's tournament, April 8, 2022, when we hope they will continue their outstanding support.

Because we were forced to cancel last year's tournament due to the pandemic, we had to fund last year's \$9,000.00 for 12 JROTC Scholarships, 2 for each of the 6 high schools that offer JROTC in our two county catchment area, by using our Chapter's reserve fund. Due to the success of the tournament this year, we were able to replenish our reserve fund, meet our scholarship obligations for 2021, and have approximately \$11,000 to be able to donate to our two regular charities we support, Operation Helping Hand in Tampa and Support The Troops in Wesley Chapel, as well as five additional local charities. Those charities are Combat Veterans To Careers, Honor Flight, D.A.V. Orange Blossom Chapter, Operation Shoe Box, and Smiles For Veterans Dental Program sponsored by The Villages-Evening Rotary Club. Over the last couple of months we have visited a number of these Charities and presented our donations (See below).



Dennis Story, Commander of D.A.V. Post 150, receiving our Chapter donation from President Don Hansen and Membership Chairman Al Arnold.



Robert (Dusty) Rhodes, The Rotary of the Villages-Evening Chairman of Administrative Services, receiving our Chapter donation for Smiles For Veterans Dental Program from President Don Hansen.

The Charities we support and the amounts we have been able to donate after this year's tournament is as follows:

Support The Troops (Wesley Chapel) \$4,000.00
 Operation Helping Hand (Tampa MOAA Chapter) \$1,500.00
 Villages Honor Flight, Inc. \$2,000.00
 Combat Veterans To Careers \$1,000.00
 D.A.V. Orange Blossom Chapter \$1,000.00
 Smiles For Veterans Dental Program \$1,000.00
 Operation Shoe Box \$ 500.00

Total \$11,000.00



Camille Gieck, The Villages Operation Shoebox Director, receiving our Chapter donation from President Don Hansen



Peter Tetrault, Villages Honor Flight, Inc. VP-Administration, receiving our Chapter donation from President Don Hansen.

MSG David Booth, USA (Ret.), President and CEO of Combat Veterans To Careers receiving our Chapter donation from 1stVP Bruce Hacker.



Southwest Florida Chapter

Susan Farr, President

On May 31, 2021 CDR Jeff Kuhnreich, USN(ret), Member and local Board Member of MOAA SWFL, delivered the keynote address at the Collier County Council of Veterans Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony. Over 650 people were in attendance including Congressman Byron Donalds (FL-19), Naples City Mayor Teresa Heitmann, State Senator Kathleen Passidomo, and most importantly a number of Gold Star Families. CDR Kuhnreich discussed the importance of service to the nation, to remember our history and learn from it, and honor the memory of those who have fallen in our defense. He related a very personal story to the crowd who were visibly moved. In his conclusion, he asked the crowd to “live a life worthy of their sacrifices.”



CAPT Jack Fulmer, CDR Jeff Kuhnreich, Harve Sturm (Commander of the Jewish War Veterans in Naples)



CDR Jeff Kuhnreich, Florence Weinstein (WWII nurse), CPO William Carl

St. Petersburg Area Chapter

LTC Pauline Mallory, President, SPAC-MOAA

50 YEARS LATER: SPA-MOAA CHAPTER MEMBER RECEIVES SILVER STAR

Saint Petersburg, Fla. – May 31, 2021 – Fifty years after serving in Vietnam, MOAA Saint Petersburg Area Chapter member, John Kieffer, was awarded the Silver Star Medal for gallantry in combat.

While friends and fellow veterans looked on, US Congressman Charlie Crist presented Kieffer the medal at a Memorial Day ceremony in Saint Petersburg, Florida.

On the day of the combat action, Kieffer was an infantry First Lieutenant serving as a platoon leader with the 5th Infantry Division. His mechanized infantry platoon, equipped with M-113 Armored Personnel Carriers, was assigned to provide infantry support to a tank company, equipped with M-48 "Patton" tanks, operating just east of Khe Sanh and south of the DMZ in northern I Corps.

During that operation, the combined task force received incoming mortar, RPG and small arms fire. One of the tanks, operating in a vulnerable valley area, was hit with an RPG, killing one and wounding two crewmen. After the casualties were evacuated, the tank, which appeared to be on fire, was evacuated in place where it had been hit.

The congressman, whose office represented Kieffer with the Department of the Army (DA) in the matter, referenced the award's citation, stating: "That day, LT Kieffer volunteered to lead a four man team to retrieve an armored vehicle, which had been abandoned while being used in heavy contact with North Vietnamese Army Regulars. During that recovery, LT Kieffer and his team came under a barrage of enemy small arms, RPG and automatic weapons fire. Rather than move to a secure location, LT Kieffer continued to deliver suppressive fire with his personal weapon until his team and the vehicle had successfully egressed to safer ground."



In documentation recently provided to DA, Captain William Cranford, the tank company commander, wrote, "I awarded all 5 soldiers who participated in that action, including LT Kieffer, Bronze Stars w V (BSM w V), and told LT Kieffer that I would upgrade his BSM to a Silver Star. To date, LT Kieffer has never received any award for this action."

About two years ago, one of the two tank crewmen, Private First Class Gordon Jenkins, who had accompanied Kieffer on that recovery mission, recognized and messaged him on Facebook. PFC Jenkins provided Kieffer a copy of his BSM w V and, importantly, the tank commander's name and phone number. When Kieffer called CPT Cranford, he recalled the event and offered Kieffer his assistance in finally getting that medal awarded.

Kieffer contacted Congressman Crist's office, who filed the award request with DA. Attached with it were statements from the above mentioned witnesses to the event, and signatures from Kieffer's living wartime chain of command. Also provided was the tank unit's daily journal, which recorded the operational events of that day to include several entries referencing the recovery of the tank. Kieffer had retrieved a copy of that journal in 1998 during a visit to the National Archives in D.C. in an earlier attempt seeking information in connection with the award.

Sun City Center Chapter

Maj. James Haney USMC

Sun City Center Chapter July 7th 2021 Membership Luncheon

The Chapter met to recognize members that had been critical to a special Memorial Day Ceremony, experience comradery over a good buffet meal and celebrate Independence Day with an outstanding presentation.

Pictured are two groups that participated on 31 May 2021 as readers of the local veterans that passed away over the past twenty-four months and others that ushered attendees to their seats in Trinity Baptist Church.

After the meal, 2nd Vice President Walt Cawein (Lt Col, USAF ret) presented a moving and highly relevant program produced by 1st Vice President Eunice Paxtot (COL, USA ret) reminding attendees of how great our country truly is and why July 4th is a very special day as it celebrates the "birth" of this Nation with concepts of individual freedoms, liberties and the pursuit of happiness; a highly engaging program. The presentation received high praise from the members attending and their guests, and even a recommendation that it be presented annually around the 4th of July to remind us of our many blessings as citizens of the United States.



Chapter President Jim Haney, Ceremony ushers Eunice Paxtot, Ferris Garrett & Leo Hill, and AVP Benny Blackshire



Living Flag Tribute readers Charlie Conover, Bob Cochran, Janet Blackshire & Jim Warchol, and AVP Benny Blackshire in back

Cape Canaveral Chapter

Marilyn M. Sanford, MOAACC Media Relations

MOAACC Awards Annual Scholarships

On July 20, 2021 the Military Officers Association of America's Cape Canaveral Chapter (MOAACC) awarded \$50,000 in total scholarships to 10 outstanding students. All of the winners have demonstrated a combination of leadership, scholastic aptitude, and community involvement. Following a year of pandemic-reduced internship and work opportunities, the scholarship awards will aid these students by allowing them to further focus on their studies and extracurricular activities. The students' areas of study include Transportation, Education, 3-D Character Animation, Human Resources, several Engineering disciplines, Supply Chain Management, and Graphic Design. In addition, one winner will be commissioned in the Air Force in FY22.

The MOAACC Scholarship Committee was formed in 1983 and the first scholarship awarded in 1984 was for \$2,000, paid at \$1,000 annually for a two year period. In 1994 the Scholarship Fund Drive raised over \$10,000 for the first time, allowing the presentation of 6 scholarships of \$1,500, as well as adding \$1,000 to the Scholarship Endowment Fund. Present MOAACC members are proud that the Fund has grown from humble beginnings of a \$2,000 scholarship, to the ten \$5,000 scholarships that were awarded this year. Thanks to members' donations the Endowment Fund is now self-sustaining, which will ensure MOAACC can continue awarding these scholarships for the foreseeable future.

The scholarship recipients and their respective schools are:



- Sean Alcorn, Merchant Marine Academy
- Alexandra Baysinger, Florida State University
- Isabella Bordner, University of Central Florida
- Mary Fentress, Florida State University
- Austin Hayes, University of Florida
- Samantha Oates, Syracuse University
- Thomas Reilly, University of Central Florida
- Spencer Smith, University of Florida
- Mason Yaskovic, Florida Institute of Technology
- Deborah Yelle, Florida Southern College

Historic Mayport Chapter

CDR Pat Kluever, USN (Ret)

“Then And Now” The Healing Power of Art for Military Veterans

1 July 2021: Historic Mayport Chapter President, retired Navy Commander Pat Kluever and wife Mary were accompanied by retired Navy Captains Giles and Eileen Norrington to the opening of the “Then and Now” exhibit at the St. Augustine Art Association galley at 22 Marine Street in downtown St. Augustine. The exhibit displays art work by military veterans and former POWs to demonstrate the healing power of art for military veterans. The exhibit is unusual in that it takes up all the galleries of the entire facility and features a reconstructed POW cell in the south gallery.

With an overview provided by a handout, the exhibit is self-guided with explanatory postings by each work of art. Some displays have numerous communiques from prisoners to their guards and others, and it takes time to contemplate the meaning and emotion of each note.

The main speaker, an Army Returned POW living in Wyoming unexpectedly needed to stay with his ailing wife and our own CAPT Giles Norrington was asked to make a few comments. Gile’s comments were from the heart and delivered with personal empathy as he complimented the artists on their work, encouraged them to continue their efforts to heal from the hidden wounds of combat, and thanked them for their service and sacrifice. At the conclusion of his remarks the entire room rose with applause in a long standing ovation as Giles returned to our table. We were all inspired by the events of this fine evening



The exhibit will be in place until 22 August 2021, and I hope many of our members and Fleet Landing residents will be able to attend this outstanding display of veteran's artwork. Fleet Landing will be taking a bus to the exhibit for a private viewing the morning of Friday 13 August followed by lunch at nearby O.C. White's restaurant. Chapter member-residents sign up early as seating is limited to 21 persons.

Fleet Landing-Historic Mayport Chapter Independence Day Activities

5 July 2021: The weather threatened the Independence Day activities on Monday 5 July, but our members and residents were ready and the flag raising and parade took place on schedule. Thanks to Eddie and Mac of Fleet Landing Safety & Security for their support to keep us safe from traffic during the events and lead us through the community (this time to include North Pointe and the 8000 building).



The program in the beautifully decorated Johnson Hall was well attended and flawless except for some internet access issues, but the Notables lead by Joan Craddock and accompanied on the piano by Karen Sturtevant carried the day. Retired Marine Corps Colonel and astronaut Bob Springer provided uplifting remarks and stressed the importance of teamwork to succeed. Many Thanks to the Wellness team for the excellent decorations and support.

Coleman Center was completed decked out with 4th of July finery including a huge and appropriately lighted Statue of Liberty to welcome residents to an outstanding buffet luncheon. Well Done to dining for an over-the-top experience for this Independence Day celebration.

Once again Bravo Zulu to the entire Fleet Landing team for a wonderful 4th of July holiday celebration (on the 5th)!!

continued on next page...



USO Mayport Healthy Military Family Support

8 July 2021: USO Mayport had to close the previous day due to the threat of flooding so our Chapter received an urgent call to support this event a day later than planned. A team of volunteers from Historic Mayport Chapter assembled at USO Mayport on short notice to sort and package food, and support USO Mayport's Healthy Military Family initiative by helping deliver meats, vegetables, greens, bread, and deserts and assorted other basic needs to grateful junior enlisted active-duty military families. Our team arrived at 10:00 am and departed at 1:30 pm. The pre-registered families arrived during their 15 minute time slot and pulled up into one of 5 delivery slots along the USO Mayport driveway. Our Team checked military I.D. cards then delivered food into each vehicle in a no-contact format.

Following delivery, drivers were invited to shop for additional needed items at outdoor tables. The flow of families to receive food and shop was steady during the entire time.



Our Chapter team consisted of President Pat Kluever, members Dante Capurro, John Lones and Mary Pat Lynch. Member Cindy Tomlin was able to help for a majority of our support effort, but had to depart for another commitment. Thanks to all who helped with this important volunteer effort to support junior enlist active-duty families at USO Mayport. The team was personally thanked for our timely response

by USO
Jacksonville
Executive
Director Mike
O'Brien and USO
Mayport Director
Joyce Shellhorn -
Well Done
Team!!



USO Mayport Healthy Military Family Support

21 July 2021: This morning the Historic Mayport Chapter Team helped pack and distribute meals to junior-enlisted active-duty military families at USO Mayport as part of the Healthy Military Family Initiative. Thanks to Team volunteers Dick Beltson, Dante Capurro, Reid Crawshaw, Mary Kluever, Peggy Steck and Chapter President Pat Kluever.

Many thanks to all our volunteers who help combat food insecurity for junior-enlisted active-duty military families in our area!!

Tampa Chapter

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

On July 28, 2021 at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital (JAHVH) in Tampa, members of the Operation Helping Hand (Op HH) Executive Council declared the retiring Director of the JAHVH, Mr. Joe Battle, as an Honorary Member of the Op HH Executive Council.

Mr. Battle was recognized with a special award by Op HH for his outstanding leadership in the treatment and rehabilitation of the wounded and injured in the combat zones. During Mr. Battle's tenure as hospital director, he was instrumental in the continued success of Op HH which since 2004 has assisted the wounded and injured at the JAHVH and their families.

Op HH was initiated by members of the Tampa Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).



(L-R) Mr. William Szydlowski, Op HH Treasurer, Lutz; LTC Jim Griffin, Hyde Park, US Army (Ret); Op HH Chairman, Mr. Joe Battle, retiring Director at the James Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa; CWO Thomas South, US Army (Ret), Tampa, Op HH Director and LTC Robert Sawallesh, Valrico, US Army (Ret), Op HH Director

Kingdom of the Sun Chapter

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

The Kingdom of the Sun Chapter met at the Braised Onion Restaurant in Ocala, FL, on June 3, 2021. The call to Order was conducted by the Chapter President, Lt Col Carol Walker, USAF (Ret). The speaker for the June 2021 luncheon was Jeffrey Askew, the Marion County Service Officer. He spoke concerning the new location for the Marion County Veterans Services office.

On Saturday, July 24, 2021, a "Stuff the Backpacks" party was held at the Store Right Self Storage location in Ocala, FL. COL Craig Ham, USA (Ret), was the host for this event. Members of the Kingdom of the Sun (KOS) Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and other volunteers attended the Stuff the Bus backpack event. The backpacks were stuffed with school supplies and are being delivered to all children in need at the different schools. This summer COL Ham plans to deliver 25 filled backpacks to each of the 34 Marion County elementary schools in the July/August time frame. The Stuff the Bus program was organized by the KOS Chapter over twenty years ago and is now partnered with the Marion County Veterans Council.

The next KOS Chapter meeting is scheduled for September 2, 2021, with Chief Balken of the Ocala Police Department. His topic will be "Policing Challenges in 2021."



Volunteers at the "Stuff the Backpacks" party held at the Store Right Self Storage location in Ocala, FL on July 24, 2021.

L-R: Suzanne McGuire (Secretary, Marion County Veterans Council), COL Gorham Black (1st VP, KOS-MOAA), COL Craig Ham (2nd VP, KOS-MOAA), Ron Perkins, (Marion County Veterans Council), Justin Perkins, (Senior, Forest High School), and Audrey Dewey, (Ocala Blue Star Mothers). Not pictured were Lt Col Wayne Brown (USAF) and his wife Marty Brown.

Photo by Andy Fillmore, Ocala Star Banner. Photo published in the Ocala Star Banner on August 1, 2021.

South Central Chapter

COL Mike Borders, USA., Ret.

The South Central Florida Chapter recently awarded a \$500 grant to Cadet Alma Sanchez of Hardee County (Wuachula) High School. AFJROTC Senior Aerospace Instructor Lt Col Steve McDaniel, a member of the chapter recommended Cadet Sanchez due to her outstanding personal, academic, and professional qualities. Cadet Sanchez will be attending Michigan State University in the fall and has won a 3-year Army ROTC scholarship. She will be enrolled in the Army Nursing program and plans on making Army Nursing her profession. She actually turned down a 4-year Air Force ROTC scholarship in order to do the Army Nurse Program. Lt Col McDaniel said of Cadet Sanchez: "I have had over 700 students as a high school AFJROTC instructor, and she is by far the very best I have seen." The South Central Florida chapter is pleased to have made this contribution to Cadet Sanchez' educational pursuits and congratulates her in advance of a successful Army Nurse career.



Lt Col, USAF (Ret) Steve McDaniel, AFJROTC Chief at Hardee County High School, Cadet Alma Sanchez, and COL, USA (Ret) Mike Borders, South Central Chapter President.

Central Florida Chapter

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

At the monthly luncheon of the Central Florida Chapter, on August 10th, our guest speaker was Mr. Brian Bauer, the Constituent Services Caseworker & Veterans Affairs/Military Specialist for Congressman Darren Soto, 9th District of Florida. Mr. Bauer (a Navy veteran himself) told us about his work for Congressman Soto and how he is tasked to advise the Congressman of the various issues affecting active duty and veterans. His work with organizations, such as MOAA, is invaluable to his understanding of the issues at hand. Notably, he mentioned that he is one of only 5 such military specialists in all of Florida's congressional district and Senators offices (and Senator Scott has two of those). When asked about the thousands of form letters, postcards and e-mails being sent to congressional offices, he stated that they are noted by their numbers, but a hand-written signed personal letter is "5000 times more influential." Do Both !



August 14th is National Navajo Code Talkers Day

Navajo code talkers in the U. S. Marine Corps relayed orders in the Navajo language on a field radio in the South Pacific. Cipher machines, or machines that create coded messages, did not work well in the jungles of the Pacific Islands during World War II. However, the United States military needed coded messages to send secret information from the battle lines to air bases and other locations. Native Americans who spoke the Navajo language helped solve this problem.

The Navajo “code talkers,” as they became known, used English code words that they translated into their language to send messages. The Japanese military could hear these coded messages, but they could not understand their meanings. The Navajo language was not well known.



The Navajo code talkers served in some of the fiercest battles of the Pacific. They saved many lives and helped the United States and its allies win the war. However, the code talkers were never allowed to discuss their work with anyone. Most Americans did not know about the code talkers’ role in World War II until much later.

In 1942 the Marine Corps recruited young Navajos to serve in the Pacific during World War II. They would learn how to use their native language as a code during combat operations. Neither the Japanese Army nor Navy were ever able to crack the code, which remained classified until 1968. In 1982 President Reagan declared August 14 “National Navajo Code Talker Day,” to honor their service to the nation.

National Navajo Code Talkers Day is August 14. This holiday honors the contributions of Native Americans / First Nations people who contributed to the United States war effort during World War Two, as well as recognizing the evolution of U.S. code related to Native American languages and the participation of First Nations tribe members in U.S. military efforts from many conflicts.

The story of the Navajo code talkers is complex. Some object to the name of the holiday, mistakenly believing that Navajo tribe members are singled out for the distinction at the expense of other tribes that participated in this war effort.

But the name of the holiday refers not to the Navajo tribe itself but is a broader term that refers to the “Navajo code” used to fool Axis powers including the Nazis and Japanese Imperial forces.

President Ronald Reagan established Navajo Code Talkers Day in 1982, and the holiday honors all the tribes associated with the war effort including (but not limited to) Cherokee, Choctaw, Comanche, Hopi and Navajo.

The Navajo code depended on the complexity of the Navajo language as well as further encoding the messages (depending on when and where they were sent). These combined factors rendered it impossible to break as a code, and some sources report it is one of the few, possibly the only “code” used by the U.S. military, that was never broken during the conflicts it was used in.

1942 was an important year for a variety of reasons, but it's also the big milestone in the Navajo Code Talkers story. The U.S. Marine Corps partnered with Philip Johnston, who spent a great deal of his life living as the child of missionaries on Navajo reservations.

Johnston himself was not Navajo, but he knew the language so well that at the age of nine it's reported that he served as an interpreter for a Navajo lobbyist group. Johnston's idea was to take the complex Navajo language and create a security code using it. Native speakers would be needed to develop the program and carry it out, and an initial group of 29 First Nations recruits were sent to California. Johnston himself also enlisted.

The CIA official site reports that Navajo was deemed to be a near "perfect" language to create military codes with since non-native speakers are very rare. The language was documented by missionaries, but these people had to invent an alphabet to work with since a written one that might seem familiar to newcomers was not used by the tribe itself.

The Navajo Code itself isn't simply use of the language. Military communications were further encrypted by using Navajo as the baseline for a word-substitution code that might be easily breakable otherwise if rendered in English or French.

The Navajo language and its complexity gave the military an advantage when it came time to make the code. Word substitution made it "virtually unbreakable" according to the CIA. How did the code work? It will look very familiar to some – if you have ever played paper cryptography games, you'll recognize some of the tactics used to encode the Navajo language.

The Navajo speakers, in one of the best examples, took common Navajo bird names and applied them to weapons of war. There were other measures also taken. The details of them aren't as important as the results.

According to the Central Intelligence Agency, Navajo Code Talkers translated, sent, and re-translated an initial coded message in roughly 150 seconds. Such efforts done without the use of the Navajo Code are said to have taken hours by comparison. Some 400 code talkers were trained and used in World War Two.

Code Talkers were the unsung heroes of World War Two. There are some who strongly believe that the U.S. success in the Battle of Iwo Jima was not possible without the participation of the Code Talkers. No one could know of the sacrifice and service of these American military heroes until the Code Talkers program was declassified in 1968.

It would take 14 more years to be honored in a highly visible way. That honor came in 1982 with the establishment of Navajo Code Talkers Day in 1982 by President Ronald Reagan.

At the turn of the century, President Bill Clinton awarded Congressional Gold Medals to 29 Code Talkers, and a year after that in 2001, President George W. Bush presented more medals to honor these veterans. See also <https://youtu.be/QmignAQTTCl>

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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*.

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Articles can be attached to an email. Microsoft Word works best (Ariel 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



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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)

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Military Officers Association of America



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