



The Lantern

Palm Beach-Martin Counties Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
www.moaaf.org/chapters/PBMCC



June 2021 Issue

President's Message

Herb Sennett, LTC, CH, USAR (RET.)



Several members of the chapter attended the annual Florida Council of Chapters Conference in May held this year in Sarasota. It was my first both as president and as a member of MOAA. And I must admit to you that I was highly impressed with everything about the meeting.

Our chapter received several recognitions for our achievement including the Communications Award for our Newsletter. We have Skp Barnes to thank for that great honor. He has done an amazing job, as I am sure you fully understand. In fact, I must admit to you that this edition of The Lantern is late because of me. Yep. I got tied up with personal issues and totally forgot to get this article to Skip in time for him to release this issue on time. I have included a picture of me receiving the award on behalf of Skip since he could not attend. Remember that it is Skip who deserves all the credit for this award. Congratulations, Skip!

In interacting with officers from other chapters around the state, I discovered that our chapter is one of the most active and among the best in the state. Even the leadership team told me that fact.

I was particularly impressed with our Florida Council president as well as the MOAA national president who was in attendance at this session. Both men

reminded me of just why and how the US military is above and beyond the best in the world: because the men and women who have been in major leadership roles over the past fifty years or so are the men and women who are in leadership roles within MOAA.

Beverly accompanied me to this meeting and attended the breakfast on Saturday morning as well as the Military Ball that night. Of course, she helped to make me look good by being with me. I have attached a picture of us that was taken as we entered the ballroom. Then we spent the afternoon on Saturday exploring the downtown area of Sarasota: quite the charming atmosphere.

The military ball was a wonderful affair with all the “trimmings” of a military event. I was particularly impressed with large number of “older” citizens enjoying themselves on the dance floor after the dinner and program ended.

Of great importance to me was the report of how MOAA has influenced both the state legislature and the US Congress. That is what we are all about—in addition to the socializing and swapping of old war stories. And that ability to influence the government is probably the greatest contribution that MOAA makes to our great nation.

We have an Officers Call coming up on June 23, starting at 4:00 pm and going as long we want. We will meet again on the back porch of the Duffy's Restaurant on Okeechobee Blvd. west of the Turnpike. And plans are underway for a formal dining-in for late September or early October. Because of the radical changes some venues have made in their pricing, I am asking for your

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suggestions as to places you might know of that could handle about forty to fifty at a sit-down dinner. Please contact me (hsennett@gmail.com) or Tom Choate (choatetw9@gmail.com).

I have attached a couple of pictures of the event in Sarasota as well as a picture of the two JROTC MOAA Medal recipients at Palm Beach Lakes High School.



All ready for the Ball!

Get your MOAA News!



Here are a couple great links that will be worth your time to explore. They will take you directly to MOAA National for legislative updates and to the Florida MOAA Council Newsletters.

Go directly to MOAA and check out the interesting legislative updates:

<http://www.moa.org>

Read our Florida Council Newsletters:
<http://www.moafl.org/Communique/Default.aspx>

Legislative Affairs

Col Paul Loschiavo USMCR (Ret)

In May, MOAA ran its annual program to connect with every Representative and Senator in Congress called **Advocacy in Action**. My job was to connect with Congressman Brian Mast (FL-18. Stuart - Jupiter).

MOAA's legislative priorities for this year are:

- Getting the VA to recognize **toxic fume** exposure as a proximate cause of ailments among veterans
- Getting **Tricare** to cover children of veterans until age 26, just as commercial health insurance policies are required by the Affordable Care Act to cover children until they are 26
- Providing a “**basic allowance for needs**” for junior enlisted people with families.

Brian Mast is an Afghanistan veteran. He was an EOD Tech supporting some Army Rangers when he lost his legs to an IED. As a congressman, he's extremely pro-military and pro-veteran. My assignment was not exactly an uphill battle.

Figuring that my experience with these things was about forty years ago, I connected with some local reserve units to see if there were any people who could talk about these things first-hand.

Enter **Marine Corps First Sergeant Mitchell Fury**. 1stSgt Fury is the senior enlisted Marine on the active duty staff that supports 4th ANGLICO, my former reserve unit. It's his job to prepare the Reserve Marines for deployment and combat.

In mid May, 1stSgt Fury and I were on a Zoom call with Max Berry, the veterans affairs staffer on Congressman Mast's staff in DC. Brian intended on being on the call but was sitting on the floor of the House voting on a number of bills. Max mentioned “Nancy runs a tight ship...”

1stSgt Fury did much of the talking. Looking at retirement in a year, he's been trying to get documentation about his exposure to toxic fumes into his records from the burn pits he was near during two deployments to Afghanistan. It's well known in the military that getting help from the VA for respiratory issues is a challenge.

He went on to describe the shock a young Corporal felt when he moved his family to West Palm Beach to serve as an active duty instructor in 4th ANGLICO. Finding housing and then covering all the necessary

startup costs was *daunting*. The 1stSgt concluded by talking about the local military family members coming in for new military ID cards when they turn 21 and the issues they face as they are losing their medical insurance.

All-in-all, it was an excellent event.

Did I move the needle? Probably not. But that's because Brian is *already* on board. (He's already co-sponsored legislation on toxic fume exposure...) It was a classic case of *preaching to the choir*.

But... during May, the same Zoom call occurred 535 times around the nation. Did all those calls move the needle? If past experience is any indication, I'm sure it did.

Now... next year, I'm going to try to be on the call with... *Nancy*.

MOAA Vacations!

Ok.... we're getting back to normal and people are beginning to do things. I've spoken to a number of people who are already booking cruises.

I'd bet that you didn't know that MOAA has a vacation affiliate. It actually schedules cruises that are *limited* to MOAA members.

Now, I'm not saying that if you do a cruise with only MOAA members from around the nation, you have to do MOAA stuff all the time or even at any point, but, think about it. You're on a cruise ship with only military officers and significant others. Is this bad?

They have a Mississippi River cruise this July with six rooms remaining as I write this. Check it out at MOAA.org and put “cruise Mississippi River” in the search block. You'll see all the details. Just put the word “cruise” in the search block, and you'll see that they have a bunch in the works including Europe and Machu Picchu.

The folks who run the MOAA Cruises do everything. They negotiate an attractive group rate. (You may bring as many friends and family as you'd like.). They check all the details. They make it easy as is possible.

One more thing: Book a MOAA trip and the chapter gets fifty bucks!

State Convention

Also in May, the Florida Council of Chapters of MOAA held its annual convention. Herb Sennett, Marc Oliveri, and I were there with our spouses.

We all tend to think of MOAA as a social group of military officers, that exists to hold events at which we can get together and share war stories. We do that in our chapter. But it's really more. Much more. MOAA is the *eight hundred pound gorilla* when it comes to lobbying Congress on behalf of military people.

Our job here in the chapter is to keep you interested in what MOAA National is working on. Ideally, you are completing and mailing the post cards that MOAA puts in the magazine. Also, we are supposed to encourage you to be a member of MOAA National. If you are a Basic (free) member, we are supposed to encourage you to become a Premium (yearly paid) member. If you are a Premium member, we are supposed to encourage you to become a Life member.

FCOC exists to help chapters in the state of Florida. Our 44 chapters range from Canaveral, with over 1,200 members, to a few that are hanging on by a thread.

At the convention, Herb, Marc, and I got to rub shoulders with LtGen Dana Atkins, the president of MOAA, and MajGen James "Hammer" Hartzell, the Director of the Florida Department of Veterans Affairs. When you're debating whether to go to Officers Call, you should know that those two are busting their butts to help veterans. And that's... why MOAA exists.

Next year's Convention is right here in West Palm Beach. Marc Oliveri is running it and it sounds as if will be a fun time. There will be a Casino Night and a Dinner Theater. Mark your calendar. June 9-12, 2022.



Palm Beach Lakes High School Cadets receiving our Chapter recognition awards



Social time at the Florida Council of Chapters



Presentation of the "Communications Award" to our Chapter

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Daymo: This handsome boy is really amazing. He is super smart, wants to please, loves to cuddle, knows his commands, loves other dogs...the list goes on and on. Did I happen to mention he is quite the looker! He is a year-old Rhodesian Ridgeback/Hound mix, and is searching for his new best friend. He would be a fabulous addition to any family! If you are interested in having Daymo join your family visit.

<http://www.allforonepetrescue.org> and fill out an application



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Upcoming Events:

June:

Board Meeting via Zoom, June 10th, 4:30pm

Officers Call, June 23rd, 4pm at Duffy's on Okeechobee Blvd.

July and Aug:

No dinners planned for the summer

Officers Call TBD

Next Lantern Newsletter: September

Editorial Policy: All content provided by MOAA National, the Florida Council and this Chapter is nonpartisan.

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