



# THE DEFENDER

A monthly publication of the Northwest Florida Military Officers Association  
[www.nwfmoa.org](http://www.nwfmoa.org)

Vol. 22 No. 02 Serving All Branches of The Uniformed Services FEBRUARY 2016

## Lunch Meeting & Discussion

**When:** Thur, 4 February 2016  
**Time:** Gathering 1130, Lunch 1200  
 Program to follow  
**Place:** Ft. Walton Bch. Yacht Club  
 180 Ferry Road, NE, FWB  
**Program:** Opportunity Place Inc.

Please:

### • MAKE A RESERVATION

- Wear a name tag
- Bring proper change:  
 \$13.00 for everyone

Reservation deadline is Friday at noon prior to meeting. Call Bill Van Hoesen at 225-2957 or send an email to: [bvanhoesen@cox.net](mailto:bvanhoesen@cox.net) if you are attending.

## Officers & Directors

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Scott Berry ..... 582-0839  
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## A Shelter for Women and Families

Our speaker this month will be Ms. Debra McDaniel, Executive Director for OPPORTUNITY PLACE, INC

Opportunity Place is both old and new. They opened their doors in 2009 under the umbrella of Okaloosa Walton Homeless Continuum of Care/Opportunity, Inc. and earlier this year, became its own non-profit corporation, OPPORTUNITY PLACE, INC. Throughout this time, their mission has remained the same – to help women and families in Okaloosa and neighboring counties, who are homeless, or at considerable risk of homelessness – often times at no fault of their own – some of whom are Veterans.

The Shelter is located at 305 Lovejoy Road in Fort Walton. Single women are able to stay 45 days and families up to 90 days. During their time at OPPORTUNITY PLACE, INC. residents receive housing, nutritious meals, assistance with budgeting, securing sustainable employment, permanent housing and childcare, are



connected to community resources, and much more.

The Board of Directors, staff and volunteers are committed to helping women and families achieve independence and self-sufficiency because they believe every woman, child and family has the innate right to be safe and an opportunity to succeed in life.

Ms. McDaniel is relatively new as Executive Director for OPPORTUNITY PLACE, INC. She feels passionately about the mission of the organization and finds great joy each time another resident succeeds. “But it is not easy,” she noted. “Without community resources, the Shelter would not be able

# From the President's Pen

By Scott Berry

Greetings!

Well, for better or worse, you'll have Scott Berry to kick around for another year as your president. Things have finally settled down for me and I hope they have for you as well. The Christmas holidays are behind us, the MOAA cruise (our very first one)



**Scott Berry**

is history, we survived the installation ceremony, and I can now walk without my protective boot from my broken left ankle. I've even taken off the support for my left wrist that I jammed when I fell and broke my ankle. So 2016 is off to a good start and headed in the right direction.

So let's roll back the calendar a year. Remember M.A.P.? It stands for Membership, Advocacy, and Participation. That was my game plan as president last year. I'd like to tell you how we did. While our total membership declined primarily to members passing away, we had a record number of new members—21 by my count. That's more than the last several years combined so a green check for membership. For participation, the average attendance at monthly meetings is significantly higher and Dave Parisot led the charge in making our name more visible in the community so a check for participation. Advocacy is what I (we) need to emphasize this year. That was my Achilles heel. The results of advocacy are often intangible and long term but that shouldn't detract from its importance. I've seen firsthand how a strong advocacy program can make a definite change. I'm still scratching my head on an aggressive yet practical approach. If you have any ideas please let me know.

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# Member Spotlight



**Bill Byerley**

## *A Shelter (cont.)*

Continued from page 1

to keep its doors open. Financial contributions are critical to keeping the lights on. Donations of shelter supplies, personal hygiene products and our Meal Donor Program keep our cost down. Volunteers provide the personal, human touch so needed at a Shelter."

If you are interested in supporting OPPORTUNITY PLACE, INC., volunteering or know of a woman or family from Okaloosa or neighboring counties in need of assistance please call the Shelter (850) 659-3190 or visit the OPI website or Facebook. [www.opifwb.org](http://www.opifwb.org) [https://www.facebook.com/opifwb/?ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](https://www.facebook.com/opifwb/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel)

## PUBLIC RECORD

New Life Member

Lewis C. (Rocky) Heckroth, Lt Col, USAF

New Member:

Father Stephen Voyt, Lt Col, USAF

In Memoriam:

Gerald J. Moore, Col USAF Ret. 1-9-2016



## 2015 in Review

By Kathy Prout,  
Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee chair

Once again, 2015 was a very busy year. Last April, during the annual Council Presidents' Seminar, members of the Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee (AMAC) voted to change our name to the Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee (SSAC). We believe the name change will bring a better understanding of who we are within MOAA. During the seminar, SSAC members also participated in Storming the Hill and advocated on issues that impact active duty and retired servicemembers and their survivors and families. Our advocacy efforts focused on:

- active duty military compensation;
- TRICARE increases;
- concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability compensation; and
- the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBP/DIC) offset.

In October 2015, during MOAA's annual meeting in Orlando, Fla., the committee's name change became official. The AMAC is now the SSAC. Council and chapter leaders should note that their auxiliary members now should be classified and identified as surviving spouses.

The Levels of Excellence Award dinner also was held during the 2015 annual meeting. The awards dinner started with the presentation of the 2015 Auxiliary Liaison/Surviving Spouse Excellence Award to Joan Perry, surviving spouse liaison (SSL) for the Grand Strand (S.C.) Chapter, who was recognized for her outstanding efforts to support surviving spouses and her volunteer work. She beat out seven other outstanding nominees.

Last year, SSAC members worked to increase the number of SSLs in MOAA's councils and chapters. Forty-one new SSLs were added, with the goal to have surviving spouse representation in every council and chapter.

On the legislative front, SSAC members again focused on eliminating the SBP/DIC offset. At press time, bills to eliminate the SBP/DIC offset, H.R.1594 with 176 cosponsors and S.979 with 15 cosponsors, were stalled in the House and Senate Armed Services committees.

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## A NEW YEAR AND NEW BEGINNINGS

By Chaplain Tom Azar, USAF Retired

It's easy in our olden years to shrug one's shoulders and say "just another new year..." But before we express discouragement, take a few mindful moments and reflect over all the blessings and successes you received in 2015. It wasn't perfect by any means. I lost my mother and a good chaplain friend; I did however move to a brand new apartment complex with 90 plus veterans. I walked my daughter down the aisle (actually the sandy Air Force beach on 98) then turned to marry her off to a fine gentleman-it was the best day of my life! Health, friendships, finances and travel all went up and down but on an upward path and I'm still here. How's your report card? Can you reflect on how the positive outweighed the negative ?

So leaning forward to make 2016 a great year, may I softly recommend taking some serious time and identify

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**We are a non-profit 501(c)3 no kill cat and kitten shelter that needs VOLUNTEERS!**

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Do you have any of these skills, or others to offer?

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- Grant Writing

Do you want to help out with our Shelter or Thrift Store?



Please contact us:  
[volunteer@saveourcatsandkittens.com](mailto:volunteer@saveourcatsandkittens.com)

To learn more about us, go to  
[www.saveourcatsandkittens.com](http://www.saveourcatsandkittens.com)



# Are the Commissaries Safe?

By: Col. Steve Strobbridge, USAF (Ret) Director,  
Government Relations

The FY 2016 Defense Budget proposed privatizing the military commissary system over several years. The Pentagon's main goal was to eliminate the \$1.3 billion annual DoD subsidy for the commissary system.

The House version of the FY 2016 Defense Authorization Bill didn't include the proposed budget cut or the privatization concept.

But the Senate version did — cutting the FY 2016 commissary budget by \$322 million and requiring DoD to submit two reports to Congress. The first, due by Feb. 1, was to be on the viability of privatizing the system. If viable, and validated by the Government Accountability Office, a second report was to provide a plan to do so.

The threat to this high-value benefit caused understandable uproar among military beneficiaries.

Multiple studies have concluded privatization inevitably would lead to significantly higher prices; lower patronage not only at commissaries but also at exchanges and other base facilities that benefit from commissary traffic; eventual closure of the commissaries; and seriously adverse effects on exchange revenues, which are needed to fund base gyms, libraries, and other morale, welfare, and recreation activities.

MOAA, The Military Coalition, and others worked hard to articulate these concerns to House and Senate leaders and generate grassroots input from commissary patrons.

In the end, the House and Senate compromised, and the final FY 2016 Defense Authorization Act:

- reduced the FY 2016 commissary budget cut from \$322 million to a far more manageable \$30 million;
- instead of a plan to privatize the system, required a DoD plan to make delivery of commissary and exchange benefits “budget neutral” (i.e., no cost to DoD) by the end of FY 2018, also to be validated by the GAO;
- authorized DoD to conduct pilot programs to evaluate ways to achieve commissary/exchange budget neutrality; and
- most important, specified that such initiatives must (a) maintain high levels of customer satisfaction, (b) provide high-quality products, and (c) sustain the current level of savings for customers.

MOAA and The Military Coalition supported these provisions, in full knowledge that making the program budget-neutral while still achieving the same levels of patron savings and satisfaction and product quality is functionally impossible.

Subsequently, the new deputy chief management officer for DoD acknowledged this reality. He also acknowledged previous DoD proposals were aimed at simply cutting the budget, regardless of the risk to the commissary program.

Continued in the March issue of *The Defender*

## NWFMOA Photos



2015 Board Meets for the Last time



Lt Gen Manor conducts installation of 2016 officers and directors

## Surviving Spouse Corner (cont.)

Continued from page 3

On Dec. 11, 2015, MOAA's Director of Government Relations Col. Steve Strobridge, USAF (Ret), testified before the House Armed Services military personnel subcommittee on the SBP/DIC offset. (Read, "MOAA to Congress: Repeal 'Widows' Tax.")

To drum up additional support, SSAC Chair Kathy Prout started a petition on Change.org to increase public awareness and support for eliminating the SBP/DIC offset. The petition is titled, "Stop denying earned survivor benefits to military surviving spouses." Many MOAA council and chapter presidents and our SSLs already have signed and shared the petition, which contains nearly 75,000 signatures and will be sent to every member of Congress. If you haven't done so already, please sign and share the petition with your family, friends, and fellow council and chapter members.

SSAC members also developed a resource list of organizations that support military surviving spouses, surviving children, and caregivers. If you know of an organization that's not included on the resource list, please email that information to [auxcomm@moaa.org](mailto:auxcomm@moaa.org).

## President's Pen (cont.)

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I'd be remiss if I didn't recognize the achievements of your entire 2015 board of directors. Several of them found a niche and it payed dividends. Regrettably, our programs person, Tom Godbold, moved on to other things. Worse yet, the position remains vacant and we're scrambling to come up with the kind of quality programs/speakers we enjoyed last year. Bill Van Hoesen, Jeff Watson, and Ginny Mills also moved on and I'll miss them.

Speaking of vacant positions, our move to a Thursday lunch has created a conflict for Bill Van Hoesen as our reservation coordinator. As of this writing, we're scrambling to find a replacement for him as well. Anyone interested?

In mid-January I attended the Florida Council's Winter Leadership Forum in Orlando. I wish I could say there was plenty of time for sightseeing, but I left here Friday morning and returned late Saturday night. In between those two points were a lot of meetings and discussion with other chapter leadership from around the state. Briefings from MOAA gave us insights into where we are as an organization and what we can do to improve it. A briefing by a lawyer on elder care caught my attention and educated me about the benefits available through the VA. I might try and find a local speaker on that subject because the benefits package is constantly changing and complex to navigate. Finally, I met and heard from the new MOAA president, Lt Gen Dana Atkins, USAF (Ret). In the wake of VADM Ryan's retirement he'll have some huge shoes to fill. However, as he's a fellow Oregonian, I'm confident he'll rise to the challenge. He's excited to lead our association and continue to accomplish great things.

Berry "OUT"

## Am I eligible?

This year's political races are interesting to say the least. Do you know if you're registered to vote? Do you know which, if any, primary runoff you can vote in? Check it out via the State of Florida's voter web site to ensure your voice is heard:

<http://registration.elections.myflorida.com/CheckVoterStatus>





# Feb. 2016, Scholarship Fund

By Dave Parisot, Chairman



Here we are already into the second month of 2016. It seems we just celebrated New Year's. In this article I want to provide a brief recap of donations to the Scholarship Fund for calendar year 2015 by various categories.

Since rejuvenating the Century Club, we had 17 members donate \$1,700 to this fund-raiser. Please see the list at the end of this article. These donations are sincerely appreciated. Hopefully each of you will renew your Century Club donation in 2016 as Clyde Locke did in January. These 17 members, however, are but a small portion of our Chapter membership. Please consider a Century Club donation in 2016.

In March of 2015 we also brought back the 50/50 raffles at our monthly meetings. Our income for the Scholarship Fund for 2015 totaled \$470. On four of the raffles the winning member donated their share of the 50/50 back to the Fund. We did not have a 50/50 in May (50th Anniversary lunch) or December (Opus One program). Thank you to all raffle ticket buyers.

Another source of donations was from Memorials in remembrance of deceased NWFMOA members or family members. In 2015 our Memorial donations totaled \$2,740 in memory of Dottie Ryan (wife of Bill Ryan), Bill Cullen (husband of Ruth Cullen) and Jean Lombardo (wife of Sam Lombardo). Along with our deepest sympathy we extend our grateful appreciation for your donations to the Scholarship Fund.

In 2015 we instituted a Business Donor Program to recognize those businesses that have graciously donated to the scholarship program. This program brought in \$2,700 in monetary donations plus many donations of "in-kind" products and services for our raffles at the 50th Anniversary luncheon in May and the Military Ball in December. These raffles netted a total of \$975. A list of our Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze donors is shown below. We are very appreciative of the support from these local businesses.

The fund-raising programs listed above total \$8,585 for 2015.

Here's the complete list of Century Club members for 2015/2016 along with our Business Donors:

## **2015 B/Gen Frank Glunn Century Club Donors:**

(\$100 minimum donation)

**March 2015: Winfred Boyer; Mel Bryant; Dan Brown; Dave Parisot; Fred Westfall. April 2015: John Feldman; Eileen Arpke; Olive Clyde Locke; Larry Bush.**

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what our hope and vision will be. I always write a bullet or two down on an index card and tape it on my refrigerator (I open it many times a day). They say if you keep repeating something and visualize it that it's half the battle. The Bible says "Without vision the people will perish" (Proverbs 29:18); and remember that line from South Pacific "If you don't have a dream, how you gonna have a dream come true?"

A good way to remember is to have something similar in another area of our life. I think my GPS is my vision tool. I need to type in where I want to go, remember why I'm going there and to dedicate my total focus to driving with energized awareness. Finally I know there will be traffic, pot holes, storms and setbacks, but with the right attitude we can navigate the tough times and see our seeds bear fruit. What gets one through the delays is seeing the final address and time on the top of the screen. I know I'll get there, it's just staying the course so I can nail the finish! Human history is full of those who remained focused on their vision-that's why we see in many businesses and offices "Our Vision Statement." We hold them to it: likewise our personal vision requires we hold ourselves accountable.

I've already started planning some trips, offered to volunteer my services to those in need, set my weight loss number, and writing goal. I use to ask individuals I counseled, "At the end of the day when you put your head on the pillow, what do you remember most?" Military leaders say "the sense of accomplishment and making a difference for others." Our lives are meaningless without a vision. You periodically see those people who wonder aimlessly, passively and apathetically. Our happiness is derived from seeing our steps towards the vision. Our value as a person is also tied to it. So let's continue to collaborate and make our personal and professional beginnings a step up from last years.

# Scholarship Fund (cont.)

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May 2015: Samuel Lombardo. July 2015: Beryl Brenner.  
August 2015: Dr. Howard Fisher; Tom Churan. October  
2015: Frederick Rall. November 2015: Dick Prater.  
December 2015: Carol Baker; Karl Eschmann. January  
2016: Clyde Locke.

**2015 Business Platinum Donor** (\$750 minimum donation):  
April/November 2015: Eglin Federal Credit Union

**2015 Business Gold Donors** (\$500 minimum donation):  
April 2015: ZT Motors of Fort Walton Beach; Resort  
**Quest Vacation Rentals; Michles & Booth Law Firm.**  
May 2015: Wild Willy's Adventure Zone (In-kind).

**2015 Business Silver Donor** (\$250 - \$499): April 2015:  
**Holiday Inn Resort (In-kind);** November 2015: Marriott  
**Town Place Suites (In-kind);** May/December 2015:  
**Shalimar Pointe Golf Club (In-kind);** December 2015:  
**Indian Bayou Golf & Country Club (In-kind).**

**2015 Business Bronze Donor** (\$100 - \$249): November  
2015: Merrill Lynch Wealth Management; May/  
December 2015: Tommy Mattonie's Coastal Café (In-  
kind); Tammy's Journeys (In-kind); Mary's Kitchen (In-  
kind).

Please support our local businesses that have contributed to our scholarship program.

**NWFMOA Scholarship Fund, Inc.:** "Helping to build future military officers and leaders."

## SCHOLARSHIP DONATION FORM

Please accept this gift of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to support the NWFMOA Scholarship Fund (Donations of \$100 or more will be recognized in the B/Gen Frank Glunn Century Club).

Donor Information (if not printed on check):

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Gift is tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

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Please inform the following of this gift:

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, ST ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Make payable to: **NWFMOA Scholarship Fund**, and mail to:  
David Parisot, President; 56th 11th St, Shalimar, FL 32579

NWFMOA Scholarship Fund, Inc is a 501c(3) corporation. Donations are tax exempt as provided by law. Registration # CH20374. A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the FL Dept of Agriculture & Consumer Services by calling toll free (800) 435-7352 within the State of Florida or via their website of [www.800helpfla.com](http://www.800helpfla.com). Registration does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation by the State.



*Got a Chapter question?*

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*Email: [info@nwfmoe.org](mailto:info@nwfmoe.org)*

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| Rank                             | Service                          | MOAA Mbr. No                            | Email Address   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular | <input type="checkbox"/> Reserve | <input type="checkbox"/> National Guard | <input type="checkbox"/> Active Duty <input type="checkbox"/> Retired |

**This application is for:**

Life Member  New Member  Renewal  Auxiliary  Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

**Make checks payable to NWFMOA** or to Northwest Florida Military Officers Assn., Inc. Check here if you do not want your  name,  phone number or  email address listed in printed chapter directories. **Membership Includes a subscription to *The DEFENDER* for the dues period.** We are a charter member of MOAA and recommend that our members belong to the national organization. Our association is also a member of the Florida Council of Chapters, itself an affiliate of MOAA.

\*\*The spouse of a deceased life member is automatically an auxiliary life member.

**Membership Application/Renewal**

**New Members joining this year receive membership through December 31 next year for \$25.00.**

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|------------------------|--------|-------|--------|
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| 96-100                 | 50.00  | 66-70 | 275.00 |
| 91-95                  | 75.00  | 61-65 | 295.00 |
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| 81-85                  | 150.00 | 51-55 | 360.00 |
| 76-80                  | 195.00 | -50   | 395.00 |

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Pay half of the above rates