



THE DEFENDER

A monthly publication of the Northwest Florida Military Officers Association
www.nwfmoa.org

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Serving All Branches of The Uniformed Services

March 2024

Lunch Meeting & Discussion

When: Thursday 7 March 2024
Time: Gathering 1130, Lunch 1200, Program to follow
Place: Fort Walton Yacht Club
180 Ferry Road, NE, FWB
Program: Sean Hollonbeck:
War Horse Project.

MAKE A RESERVATION

- Reservations are Required
- Wear a name tag
- Bring proper change: \$16

Reservation deadline is Saturday at noon prior to meeting. Go online at <http://nwfmoa.org> and select the link where it says "Click here to make reservations", or email Fred Westfall at nwfreservations@gmail.com, or call 850-609-8075 if you are attending.

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Our March Lunch features Dr. (Col) Sean Hollonbeck, USA (Ret), War Horse Project

Before founding the War Horse Project, Dr. (Col) Sean Hollonbeck had a lengthy medical career with the U.S. Army. He enlisted in the Illinois Army National Guard at age 17 and participated in the Air Force ROTC program at the University of Illinois. After that, he earned his medical degree from the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine and was commissioned into the U.S. Army Medical Corps after graduation.



He served three tours with Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and two tours with Operation Iraqi Freedom, first serving in Iraq in 2003 and going back as recently as 2013. Between his tours, Hollonbeck completed two medical residencies: one as a family medicine resident from 1997 to 2000 at Fort Benning, Georgia, and another from 2005 to 2007 as a joint Army-Navy aerospace medicine resident at NAS Pensacola. His career spanned the [160th SOAR](#), 7th Special Forces, six combat tours, and 22 moves. His assignments have repeatedly brought him face to face with military suicides, PTSD, depression and anxiety suffered from veterans, first responders, children and adults at home and abroad. In the past several years, he expanded those efforts to the Panhandle with his nonprofit [War Horse Project](#), located on the Gulf Coast, an equine nature immersion program for veterans and first responders in Northwest Florida.

Please join us for our **March 7th** Membership Meeting. Click [HERE](#) to make reservations or call Fred Westfall at 850-609-8075.

From the President's Pen

By Fran Hendricks



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65th Anniversary Celebration -- MOAA President to Visit Chapter

Last year while attending the Florida Council of Chapters (FCoC) Leadership Training Seminar in January, I mentioned to Lt Gen Brian Kelly, USAF Retired, and President of MOAA that NWFMOA would be celebrating its 65th Anniversary in 2024 and we would be honored for him to come and celebrate with us. He stated that he would do his best to be there. Fast forward to this year's FCoC Leadership Training Seminar, where I presented Gen Kelly a formal invitation to visit our Chapter in May as we celebrate our 65 years serving the community. Gen Kelly accepted our invitation. His proposed itinerary includes breakfast with the Crispy Warriors, attending our Annual Scholarship Luncheon, visiting the Air Force Enlisted Village to receive the Victory Village briefing, office calls, and giving the keynote address at our 65th Anniversary Reception at the Air Force Armament Museum on the evening of May 2nd. Plenty of opportunities for members of NWFMOA to interact with our National President and for him to see our Chapter up close and personal. More to follow...

NWFMOA Awarded 5-Star Level of Excellence (LOE) Award (2022)

The Chapter was recently notified that it was awarded a 5-Star LOE Award for 2022. This marks the eighth 5-Star Award that NWFMOA has received since 2014. Congratulations to then Chapter President Michael Griffith, his Board, and the entire Chapter. This award combined with the two previously received 5-Star Harris Communication Awards for our newsletter (The Defender) and our Website (thank you Fred Westfall) clearly indicates we had a great and impactful 2022. Congratulations to all!

NWFMOA Award Submissions for 2023

The Chapter recently submitted its submissions for the Harris Communication Awards (Newsletter and Website) and the Level of Excellence Award for 2023. You can read those submissions [HERE](#).

We are now focused on building upon those prior successes while we also celebrate our 65 years of serving the community. NWFMOA... *Comradery with Purpose*.

Here to Serve (H2S),

Fran Hendricks, Brig Gen, USAF Retired
President, NWFMOA

We cordially invite you to join us
in celebrating our 65th year of
Service to our Community
1959 - 2024



How can you join our celebration?
If you donate you will to be placed on the marquee (above)
and listed in the *Defender* for up to **12 months**
Individuals...minimum \$25
Businesses...minimum \$50

Each donor will also receive a commemorative, numbered RMO!



[Click here to donate to our
65th Anniversary Celebration](#)

Below is an example of the banner. Click it to see it on our webpage.



Donors so far include:

- Advanced Fire Protection Services, Inc
- Cut-Off Barber Shop
- Hurlburt First Sergeants Council
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- Kevin Kirby and Victoria Hansen
- Chris and Richard Hallion
- Fred Westfall
- Dave Parisot
- Fran Hendricks
- Hopefully, many more

[Click on the link above to donate and get your name on the banner.](#)

Test Your Knowledge

Take the quiz for a chance to
← win a free lunch.

This month the quiz is about some important military history. When you click on the link below, you will see a single question and a place to give your answer and name. If your answer is correct, you will be entered into the drawing at the monthly meeting (you have to be present to win your free meal). You may answer the question multiple times but only the correct answer will count for the drawing (so answering the question correctly 5 times will not give you more chances to win). We don't tell anyone that they got it right or wrong until we disclose the winner at the meeting. At the meeting, we state the answer and how many got it right. Then we pull the one winning entry from the hat.

Last month the winner of the quiz was **Mike Griffith** who was not present. The next winner was **Dave Parisot** who gave up his ticket because he eats free in March. The next ticket drawn was **Karl Eschmann**. Congratulations Mike, Dave and Karl!

Click the link below to get to the quiz. The winner will be announced at the next meeting. Starting next month there will be only 1 name drawn. The person must be present to win.

[CLICK HERE](#)

Time To Pay Your Dues

It is time to pay your 2024 dues. Please make a check for the amount payable for the next year or beyond.

- Not sure if you owe dues? Click [HERE](#). If your MOAA ID is listed, you owe dues.
- Don't know your MOAA ID? Click [HERE](#).
- If you owe dues, click [HERE](#) to fill form and send it along with your check to

Treasurer, PO Box 1213, Shalimar, FL 32579.

George Colton
Treasurer

Never Stop Serving

Chaplain's Corner

By: Chaplain Thomas Azar



An Unchecked Chess Life

When I was a child, I thought and lived like a child, but I soon learned that to have a meaningful life I had to step up my game. We kids played checkers while our parents played chess. I would stand by the board and watch them, trying to figure out the strategy of their multilevel moves.

Eventually my dad taught me to play chess. Unfortunately, I had a “checker’s mindset”—if I captured more pieces than I would be the winner. However, dad told and showed me life was like chess- it’s not how much you accumulate that makes you a winner, but possessing what’s most important spiritually and morally. The endgame centers on whether you focused your faith on the ‘king.’

A life well lived is about investing daily in the king. Sadly, the world is replete with ‘checker people’ trying to play chess, or denying there is a king beyond their pawns.

If you have a move, but choose not to, it will affect your endgame. There is no going back or do-overs. No mulligans in chess or life. If you get sidetracked aiming for pawns, you will have wasted precious time that will cost you.

Chess is a paradigm that contributes to my making life choices. It helps me utilize the right content- which is Scripture; for the changing context- of living my daily life; so I can have the best approach- a life of loving service that honors the king.

The military calls this tactics and strategy. In war and peace, a good leader ponders the endgame. Remember the barking sergeant, “Don’t major in minor things!”

In like manner, as people of faith, we are taught our choices on earth affect our eternal life. Focus on the King.

No one goes through life unscathed. Things happen that get one’s attention- death of a spouse or close friend, loss of health, divorce, financial hopes dashed, etc.

I go to the mountains or walk along the beach to pray and meditate. I need to look honestly at the “other pieces” in my life and how they were situated around the “king.”

We are pilgrims living a temporal life that one day will end. “No one gets out of this world alive” is a profound truism.

So what is your best move? Focus on a meaningful vertical relationship with Almighty God, “the king of the universe” and horizontally with our fellow human beings.

Often after a funeral, friends would ask me, “He or she was very well off, I wonder what they left?” I responded that “they left everything behind! Look, do you see a U-Haul attached to the hearse?” They focus on ‘pawn’ issues, collecting more stuff and ignoring the life that follows.

My mother guided us children to read the Bible daily as our guidebook; to be involved with like-minded believers, to worship, participate in youth groups, Sunday school, and to be charitable to programs that help those less fortunate. Mom played chess on the board of life.

There are parents who send their children to church, and there are parents who go with them to church. The former group often have a checkered lives.

Humanity is on a slippery slope. Parents and grandparents might want to make a few ‘chess’ moves with their families and friends. It’s time to look ahead and make sure all are focused on the ‘king.’ Speak God’s truth with love to our multi-generational families; offer guidance to neighbors and friends. Wall street, Hollywood, Silicon Valley and Washington DC are just pawn shops. They have no king but themselves.

Jesus said, “His kingdom is not of this world” and gave us our life purpose, “Love God with all our mind, heart, soul and strength, and love our neighbor as thyself.” Now that’s kingly advice you can take to heaven.

OUR MISSION

The mission of NWFMOA is to benefit the members of the uniformed services, their families and survivors and to advocate a strong national defense, while providing needed support to the community and its members.

Never Stop Serving

Got a Chapter question?
Change in personal info?
Comment?
Don't know who to ask?
Email: info@nwfmoa.org
We'll get an answer for you.

Memories

- A look into the past -

Memories is a new feature this month. It is a reader-submitted article about their military experiences from when they served on active duty. This month's article was submitted by NWFMOA Board member, LTC Kevin Kirby, USA (Ret). As he put it "I know that the majority of the membership of NWFMOA is from Air Force sources with Eglin, Hurlburt, and Duke Field being in close proximity... but in your request for possible articles I submit the enclosed as a possible candidate. It is related to my experience in IV Corps (Delta) Vietnam during 1970-1971 as a young First Lieutenant in the Army. It is Army based, so may not be of interest to all those 'Blue Suiters.' (LOL)." If you would like to submit an article to appear in the *Defender*, email it to defender@nwfmoa.org or nwf.defender@gmail.com. Word format is preferred.

The Army Aviation support provided to 5th Special Forces Group (ABN) and Border Command and Control Region (BCCR-1) Vietnam

The mission of 5thSF GRP in BCCR-1 as assigned by Military Advisory Command – Vietnam (MAC-V)

Beginning in 1965 the Military Advisory Command Vietnam (MAC-V) assigned the mission of Vietnam border security to the newly arrived forces of the 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne). The area of Operations stretched from the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) at the 17th parallel, south past the Vietnamese capital at Saigon, then West along the Cambodian Border to the west coast at Hai Tien. The 5th SF GRP mission was to establish small camps on the border to try and control movements of North Vietnamese Army (NVA), the Viet Minh, and the Viet Cong ("V.C.") guerillas crossing the Vietnamese Border with primarily Cambodia (some border shared with Laos up by the DMZ.) These camps varied in size from a 12 person SF detachment at the larger camps, to sometimes a 3 to 5 person SF Advisory team at the smaller camps. The smaller camps were manned by Vietnamese Popular Force/ Regional Force ("Ruff Puffs") recruited from the immediate local area surrounding the camp. In the North by the 17th parallel Montagnard Tribe personnel were recruited to man some of the smaller camps. In the larger camps the Army of Vietnam (ARVN) company sized forces were provided by the South Vietnamese Government and Army. Also, at selected larger camps there was a company of ARVN Rangers or Airborne forces to provide the manning for those camps. These camps and forces conducted patrolling operations along the border, setting up occasional ambushes along well used trails by the communist forces coming out of Cambodia with the intention to conduct combat operations in South Vietnam. The SF Camps in BCCR-1 consisted of the following: a medium sized camp located on the border of Vietnam/ Cambodia just north of Muc Hoa, east of Saigon. This was a five-man team with ARVN Company; a smaller SF camp at Thuong Toi on Vietnam/Cambodia border with a 5 man SF detachment and a Company of Region Force/ Popular Force ("Ruff Puff") recruited from the local area. A small SF detachment located at Chau Duc on the Mekong River with the mission of watching traffic on the river located on the border with Vietnam/ Cambodia. This detachment had a small platoon of ARVN and coordinated closely with a Military Advisory Command Team (MAC-T) and ARVN Company also located at Chou Duc.; a large SF team located at Chi Lang, also known as That Son to the locals. This SF Det was manned by 12 SF Team members, and was responsible for controlling the other camps, teams, and forces in the BCCR-1 zone. There was a South Vietnamese Ranger Company at this location on the Vietnam/ Cambodia border. There were two smaller camps located on the border west of Chi Lang, going toward the Vietnam west coast. These camps had no Vietnamese local names but were known by camp numbers instead. These camps were manned by 3 to 5 man SF detachments, and both had Regional Force/ Popular Force platoons recruited from local area.; finally, is the SF camp at Hai Tien on the west coast of Vietnam, just across the border with Cambodia. This Camp had a 7-man SF Team, with an ARVN Platoon force. They also provided advisory assistance to a Ruff Puff company in the nearby village of Hai Tien, but this unit did not live in or occupy the SF Camp. All the camps were resupplied from a SF

Logistical Unit and SF Company Headquarters located in Can Tho on the Mekong River further south in the Delta. The SF Detachment at the Chi Lang/ That Son Camp would on occasion cross over the border with Cambodia to establish and setup ambushes along the route the PAVN used to move logistics from the west coast to the Mekong River. Their tactical ambush operations and actions were aimed to cut off the movement of weapons and supplies from the west coast of Cambodia around Sihanoukville across Cambodia to the Mekong River. The weapons, supplies, sometimes personnel, and other key logistical items were brought by Junk (Sea going large sailboat) to the coast and unloaded. Then carried usually by foot, cart, or water buffalo overland to the Mekong. There it was loaded into sampans (small boats) to be taken south into the Delta Region of South Vietnam and ultimately the PAVN and Viet Cong units scattered throughout the region. The SF detachment at Chou Duc on the Mekong worked closely with the Military Advisory team also located there with an ARVN company to try and interdict the sampan traffic coming south. They would occasionally work with South Vietnamese Navy Patrol Boats that would come upriver to Chou Duc from the Navy Base near Can Tho to assist with the interdiction. When patrol boats were not present, the forces at Chou Duc would use sampans and other boats they had access to creating a blocking position in the river to stop all the southbound river borne traffic and search for weapons, supplies, personnel, and other logistics items intended to resupply the PAVN and VC forces further down in the Delta region of South Vietnam.

Army Aviation assets that were attached to 5th SF GRP to assist in the BCCR-1 Mission

Both U.S. Army Aviation and the helicopter, in particular, came of age during the conflict in Southeast Asia. For the first time in warfare, the skies of the combat zones resonated to the ‘Whop, Whop’ of the Huey UH-1 helicopters and the ‘Whomp, Whomp’ of the Chinook CH-47. These two helicopters reshaped the battlefield. For the first time these versatile machines were able to project troops into remote areas and provide the support needed to fight a hostile and challenging tactical environment. The UH-1 initially began to arrive in Vietnam in significant numbers in late 1964 and redefine the use of ‘utility’. The conflict also saw the arrival of the AH-1 ‘Cobra’ the sleek gunfighter helicopter that basically reveled in its namesake. When the twin rotor CH-47 entered the fray, it truly became a game change. As a larger amount of the Army Aviation resources in country, began arriving in 1966, the 1st Aviation Brigade, was created, activated, and controlled most of the Army Aviation resources in country to provide support to the MAC-V as well as the United States Army – Vietnam (USAR-V). The 1st Aviation Brigade commanded and controlled all U.S. army Aviation units in Vietnam that were not part or assigned directly as a subordinate unit to a U.S. Army Division or separate Brigade involved in ground tactical operations, The 1st Aviation Brigade assigned the mission to subordinate 164th Aviation Group to directly support the area of the IV Corps Region (The “Delta”) of South Vietnam. Subordinate to 164th AVN GRP was the 214th Aviation Battalion. This Battalion was designated to provide Army Aviation resources and assets to support specifically the BCCR-1 mission, as well as MAC-V teams located in the South Vietnamese Provinces adjacent to the border region. The 214th Aviation Battalion was based with its headquarters in Vinh Long, on the Mekong River in central IV Corps, or the “Delta” Region in South Vietnam. From here they could dispatch and control the subordinate Aviation Company’s assigned for them to command and control. These units in the 1970 period consisted of the following:

- Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 214th AVN Bn – No aircraft Assigned.
- 114th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) – UH-1H Bell Helicopters (18 ea)
- 135th Assault Helicopter Company (AHC) – UH-1H Bell Helicopters (18 ea)
- 175th Attack Helicopter Company (AtkHC) – OH-6 “Loach” Scout Helicopter (6 ea) AH-1A “Cobra” Attack Helicopters (12 ea)

- 199th Reconnaissance Aviation Company (RAC) – 0-1 / L-19 “Birdog” Cessna Fixed Wing Recon Aircraft (24 ea)

A primary mission that the 214th Aviation Bn supported for BCCR-1 was to use assets of the 114th AHC to provide resupply of the various camps. Also, to move mail, resupply, personnel, and other official documents between camps. Another important aspect was to provide movement of Long-Range Recon Patrols (LRRP) from the various camps these missions were made up of 1 to 2 SF Advisors, and also 6 to 8 members of the South Vietnamese Army members from those camps out to Landing Zones either along the border or sometimes deep inside Cambodia to conduct reconnaissance. During these patrols the 199th RAC would send up a 0-1 with an Operations SF member of that camp to serve as overwatch and Radio Relay back to the camp as well as the local Tactical Operations Center in IV Corps area. Many times, the terrain or intense vegetation encountered on the ground prevented direct radio contact with the camp or the supporting tactical operations center. Also, to provide an opportunity for the SF Operations member the opportunity to conduct reconnaissance from the air and observe the area of responsibility looking for possible enemy locations and routes of infiltration to be engaged by ground force tactical operations and ambush later. The 175th ATK Helicopter Company would provide fire teams made up of a scout helicopter and two AH-1 gunships to fly missions along the border looking for enemy activity crossing the border and engage those PAVN and VC units with integral guns and

rockets. These patrols were conducted at different times, and in different parts of the BCCR-1 area of responsibility so as not to set a pattern that the PAVN or VC would expect them to occur. The 335th ASH also assisted in conducting similar support as the 114th ASH provided. The 335th also focused on supporting the MAC-V teams in the provinces adjacent to the border region. These MAC-V teams provided military training and assistance to ARVN and Regional Force/Popular Force (“RUF-PUFs”) units located in major towns and villages in their respective provinces.

The involvement of these Army Aviation resources during the “Cambodia Incursion” during April to August 1970

My own experience with History is somewhat interesting as I ramble a little about my personal experiences. Living and becoming part of History can be both an exceptional event, but also terrifying and exciting event as I relate from my personal involvement in creating and living History from my time in Southeast Asia (Vietnam & Cambodia) during 1970 and 1971. During late March to Mid-April 1970, we were briefed and advised on the President Richard Nixon’s and the Secretary of Defense desire and directive to conduct the “Cambodia Incursion” to find and engage North Vietnamese Army (NVA) and Vietnamese Communist Insurgent (“V.C.”) supply bases, bunker complexes, and Command Centers located just inside the border of Cambodia across from South Vietnam. My Army Aviation Reconnaissance unit (199th RAC) was at the time attached from 1st Aviation Brigade in Long Bien (164th AV GRP and 214th AV Bn) to the 5th Special Forces Group element in Can Tho. The 5th occupied the SF Camps along the Vietnam and Cambodia Border known as Battle Command and Control Region One (BCCR-1). We initially in early 1970 flew missions along the Border in support of those camps searching for and reporting any activity we found in IV Corps Tactical zone, from Southwest of Saigon out to the west Coast by Hai Tien, Republic of South Vietnam. In early April we were briefed and instructed to cross BCCR 1 into Cambodia to search for, find and report, and begin process for destruction of those NVA/VC facilities. Late April we begin our operation in earnest, carrying an SF Intel Analyst as an observer in our aircraft to verify and report our findings to district tactical control centers. Based on our reported observations, USARV and MAC-V higher headquarters began coordinating for Air Force and some Naval Aviation assets to conduct air strikes on those complexes found. Afterward we were directed to go back in “low and slow” and conduct Bomb Damage Assessments (BDA’s) to collect data on the results of the strikes and damage inflicted. Beginning in late April U.S. and South Vietnamese ground forces begin operations to move in on the ground and find and further destroy those complexes found. We

ended up providing directions from above to those ground forces to direct them to those complexes we could observe from the air. In some cases, they found additional complexes that we could not see due to vegetation cover and concealment, camouflage, and just plain hidden (small entry hole not observable from the air). These ground forces remained just inside Cambodia continuing ground operations until early

June 1970. Then they were withdrawn back across BCCR1. We continued Air Recon Operations well into September 1970 in support of 5th SF Grp occasionally directing Air Force Tactical Air strikes (B-52, F-4, A-7, F-100, and A-37) and Naval Aviation Strike Aircraft (A-6, A-7, and OV-10 “Black Pony’s”) on any renewed activity in the BCCR1 and Cambodia Border zone we observed or found. As a follow-up to the Air Force and Naval Aviation strikes on selected targets, the gunships of the 175th ATK Helicopter company were also brought into the area of operations to engage targets of opportunity and try to destroy targets not taken out by the airstrikes conducted by the Air Force and Naval Aviation assets.

The involvement of these Army Aviation resources after the Cambodia Incursion” and after August 1970 in support of BCCR-1

After conclusion of the Cambodia Operation and withdrawal back behind the border Tactical Operations, especially in BCCR-1 took on a different focus. In the BCCR-1 zone of operations were 3 of the 7 sisters mountains. 3 mountains were located south of the border, 4 mountains in the range were north of the border in Cambodia. These mountains were several hundred feet to several thousand feet in height extending from the surrounding flat lands and paddies of the typical Delta terrain. The PAVN and VC had established small “sanctuaries” and operational locations in the caves located in these mountains. The three mountains located within South Vietnam and in BCCR-1 were Nui Cam, Nui Cai, and Nui Ba Din. Nui Cam was the highest of the three at about 2,500 feet, the other two were about 1,700 and 1,500 feet. Nui Ba Din had at its southern end an area called the “Rock Pile”. This large area of exposed rocks and caves was one of the suspected locations for enemy hiding places and supply location for items heading south to PAVN and VC forces located throughout the Delta. Again, as in Cambodia, foot traffic, carts, and water buffalo were used as a means of transportation. The SF unit at Chi Lang/ That Son would call in Air Force B-52 bomber strikes on the “Rock Pile” to try and inflict casualties on any enemy forces taking cover there. The 175th ATK Helicopter Company would also occasionally hit that same area with gun and rocket fire again to inflict casualties. The 199th RAC would almost daily provide at least one O-1 to take an SF Intel analyst from either Chi Lang or Chou Duc to fly over the three Mountains in South Vietnam of the “Seven Sisters” Mountain Range to try and observe any movement or signs of activities that would warrant tactical operations or interdiction to mitigate the threat.

Each SF Camp in BCCR-1 had a small airstrip located just outside the wire of that camp. The smaller camps had basically a dirt strip that was about 1,000 – 1,500 feet in length and could accommodate the O-1s of 199th RAC to land and load up a SF Observer for visual recon of the camps area of responsibility. At the two larger camps at Chi Lang/That Son and Chou Duc they had larger airfields. Chou Duc had a former French airfield just south of town. It was a hard surface paved runway with a parking area, also paved, at the west end. That airfield could accommodate Air Force fixed wing resupply aircraft such as the twin engine DeHavilland C-7 “Carabao” and the twin engine C-123 “Provider”. The runway was approximately 2,500 feet in length. At Chi Lang/That Son there was a Perforated Steel Plate (PSP) runway that had been built by the engineers and Seabees. This was also approximately 2,500 foot in length, and it also had a PSP parking ramp located at the east end of the airfield. Occasionally an Air Force C-7 would land with resupply of ammunition, fuel, and other items from the SF Logistics support unit in Can Tho. Then the 114th AHC or 335th AHC would take on the mission of moving that material, personnel, or other cargo to the smaller camps in BCCR-1 that the Air Force Cargo aircraft could not land at those small dirt airstrips.

In early October 1970 the 199th RAC and our higher headquarters 214th AVN Bn, were notified that the units were to be withdrawn back to the states as part of the beginning reduction and draw down of U.S. Forces in Vietnam. We in the 199th RAC were instructed to turn our aircraft (L-19/-)1 “Birdog”) over to the South Vietnamese Air Force (VNAF). We were instructed to train the new pilots on operations and how to fly the aircraft. These were South Vietnamese Officer pilot recruits that could not speak enough English to go back to flight training in the U.S., so were to be trained in country. We did manage to accomplish this difficult task even though none of us knew enough Vietnamese language to provide detailed instruction. We got it done.

As we stood down and some began packing and preparing to return the United States as part of the 1970 drawdown of forces, we received orders from MAC-V through the 1st Aviation Brigade that our attachment to the 5th Special Forces in BCCR-1 was terminated. Those of us that had voluntarily extended to remain in country for 1971 were given new orders assigning us to the 221st Reconnaissance Aviation Company (RAC) now under the 13th Aviation Battalion, 164th Aviation Group, 1st Aviation Brigade. About a dozen of us who had volunteered to remain in country were then moved to the 221st RAC Headquarters who had moved from previous location in Can Tho on the southern branch of the Mekong River, to occupy the former 199th RAC facilities in Vinh Long. I was further attached as one of the two sector pilots to support Advisory Team 44 in Vinh Binh Province on the East Coast in the Mekong Delta. I moved to the airfield at the provincial capitol at Tra Vinh City by the east coast of the Delta Region of South Vietnam. I took over an L-19/ O-1 “Birdog” from CPT Vern Campbell, who had completed a tour in Vietnam with the 221st RAC and attachment to MACV Advisory Team 44 and was rotating home. But that is another story during 1971.

Recommended further reading:

Harrison, Marshall, *A Lonely Kind of War, Forward Air Controller, Vietnam*, Presidio Press, 31 Pamaron Way, Novato, CA 1989, ISBN: 0-89141-352-9

Howard, Ian, Dr., *Interservice Rivalry and Airpower in the Vietnam War*, Combat Studies Institute Press, Fort Leavenworth, KS.

Karnow, Stanley, *Vietnam, A History, The First Complete Account of Vietnam at War*, Penguin Books, 40 West 23rd Street, New York, NY 1984 ISBN: 0-14-00.7324 8

McNab, Chris and Andy West, *The Illustrated History of the Vietnam War*, Thunder Bay Press, Advantage Publishing Group, 5880 Oberlin Drive, San Diego, CA, 92121-4794, ISBN: 1-57145-266-4

Moore, LTG Harold G, (RET), and Joseph L. Galloway, *We were Soldiers Once...And Young, I Drang – the Battle that Changed the War in Vietnam*; Ballantine Books, A Presidio Press Book, The Random House Publishing Group, New York, 1992 ISBN: 0-345-47581-X

Petersen, Peter B, LTC, *Against the Tide, An argument In Favor of the American Soldier*, Arlington House Publishers, New Rochelle, NY 1974 ISBN: 0-87000-270-8

Schulzinger, Robert D., *A time For War, The United States and Vietnam, 1941-1975*, Oxford University Press, New York, Oxford, 1997, ISB: 978-0-19-512501-6

Small, Melvin, *Antiwarriors, The Vietnam War and the Battle for America’s Hearts and Minds*, SR Books, New York, NY, 2002, ISBN: 0-8420-2896-X

Summers, Harry G., Jr., COL USA, *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context*, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania, Nov 1983.

Ward, Geoffrey C., and Ken Burns, *The Vietnam War, an Intimate History*, Penguin Random House Publishing, New York, NY 2017, ISBN: 9780307700254. (based on the film series by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick).

Willbanks, James H., *Vietnam: The Course of Conflict*, U.S. Army Command and Staff College Press, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, KS, 2018, ISBN: 9781940804480

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Defender is a monthly publication of the Northwest Florida Military Officers Association. The purpose of this publication is to communicate with, inform, and educate chapter members. The national MOAA, this local chapter, and this publication are totally nonpartisan.

Officers Call

**Our next officers call will be on February 29 (then May 30) starting at 1700,
[Doc's Oyster Bar, 303 Glen Ave, Valparaiso, FL](#)
(behind the Compass Rose).**



PUBLIC RECORD

In Memoriam

Joy Downs, Surviving Spouse, 1/26/2024

New Members

Robert Black, Col, USAF (Ret)

Frank Goldstein, Col, USAF (Ret)

William Hunter, Col, USAF (Ret)



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Do what you can to support our national organization. To learn what's going on and to find out what you can do go to: <http://www.moaa.org/takeaction/> We all will benefit from your efforts.

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Here is another option...

Looking for a NWFMOA Chapter shirt. In addition to ordering a shirt, you can also buy your own polo shirt (short or long sleeve) and take it to [American Athletic Uniforms, Inc](#) ([90 Eastview Ave, Valparaiso, FL](#)) to have it embroidered with our patch and your name. Cost of embroidery (Patch + Name) is \$15.





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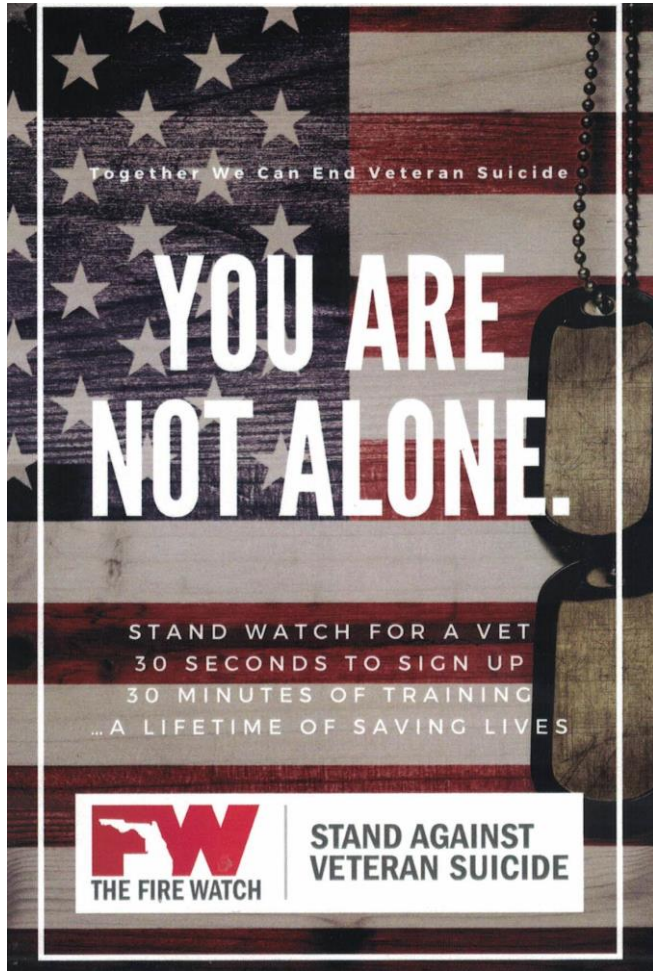


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The Watch Stander program is Florida's fight to end veteran suicide. Creating a life-saving community network that is there to support our local veterans in their time of need. Sign up today with 3 short steps.

- 1 Commit To Help.**
Sign up to be a Watch Stander. It takes only 30 sec to sign up and you will be training on the warning signs to help a veteran in crisis. Visit TheFireWatch.org to register.
- 2 Identify The Signs.**
Watch a 30 min training video that will educate you on the challenges veteran face daily, and how to recognize a veteran slipping into crisis.
- 3 Stand Watch.**
Stand Watch and be there to help when your moment comes.

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STAND WATCH. SAVE LIVES.

Community Outreach

Valentines for Veterans

By Fran Hendricks



Our 2nd Annual Valentines for Veterans

NWFMOA carried on its newfound tradition of Valentines for Veterans. This special community outreach program which the Chapter instituted in 2023, was the original idea of General Ron Folgeman, Air Force Chief of Staff. By resurrecting this program, the NWFMOA has become the facilitator for bringing Longwood Elementary School and the Air Force Enlisted Village (Bob Hope Village) together for this annual celebration on Valentine's Day.

Once again, this year the students from Longwood Elementary hand delivered their Valentines to the residents of Bob Hope Village. Under the watchful eye of their teachers and Principal Lisa Tucker, the students walked from their campus to the Bob Hope Village to personally present their handmade Valentines to the anxiously waiting residents. The students made over 300 Valentines...they wanted to make sure everyone received one. From the smiles, laughter, and especially the hugs, this was once again a resounding success.

In addition to receiving Valentines from the students, the residents were serenaded by the Emerald Coast Chorus. As an indication of the importance of this event to the community and the school district, Dr Lamar White, Okaloosa County School Board, was also in attendance.

Special thanks to Tom Azar, Ray Alexander, Dick Solt, Dave Parisot, Fred Westfall, Rod Gerdes, Mel Claxton, Bob Allen, Kim Wintner, and Fran Hendricks for attending. We also unveiled our new NWFMOA Chapter Banner...great job Jim Shoff!



View all the pictures of the Valentines for Veterans by clicking [HERE](#).

Special Feature

Chapter President, Fran Hendricks presents Major Emil Pagliari, CAP, and owner of The Shack Restaurant on Hwy 98, Fort Walton Beach, with two coins from Florida Council of Chapters President, Pat Kluever. One coin is the Florida Council of Chapters MOAA coin and the other is the Mayport MOAA Chapter coin. These coins were presented as a token of appreciation to Emil for his restaurant hosting Frank "Tank"

Michael, MOAA National visit in February 2023 and for hosting Pat Kluever and the FCoC Leadership team's visit in November 2023. Emil has also been a contributor to the NWFMOA Scholarship Fund. Emil is 90 years young and until recently, was flying his own private plane. He epitomizes "The Right Stuff".



On February 10, 2024, I attended drill competition hosted by the Fort Walton Beach AFJROTC at the Commando Hangar at Hurlburt Field. This was their first annual drill competition for six local Air Force JROTC units. AFJROTC units from Niceville, Choctawhatchee, Walton, Fort Walton Beach, Gulf Breeze, and Pensacola High Schools participated in the drill competition. The event started at 8:30AM and finished at approximately 3:00PM. Each team was judged on several drill components including armed and unarmed regulation, armed exhibition, color guard regulation and color guard specialty.



Following the opening ceremony which included the FWB H.S JROTC Color Guard presentation of the Colors with soloist senior year Cadet Angelina Romano singing the National Anthem, each JROTC unit demonstrated their drill performance of the tasks listed above (Cadet Romano sang the National Anthem at last year's Scholarship Awards Luncheon). Following the opening ceremony, Colonel Allison Black, Commander of the 1st Special Operations Wing, addressed the assembled cadets with her thoughts what the JROTC programs provide for the cadets and what the cadets provide to the local community.

This was a JROTC conducted event with the evaluation and scoring of each individual event performed by senior year cadets from the participating schools. I was particularly impressed with rifle drill teams performances with their rifle exercises without verbal commands – such precision! Many of the drill performances took me back to my days of my enlisted basic training at Lackland AFB in 1968.

The FWB AFJROTC plans to continue hosting this event annually in the upcoming years. I see potential for the NWFMOA Chapter and Scholarship Fund to be a sponsor to defray some of the expenses if future years.



Opening ceremony at JROTC Drill Competition in the Commando Hangar at Hurlburt Field on Feb. 10, 2024



Dave Parisot, President of the NWFMOA Scholarship Fund, Inc., (center) discussed our Scholarship Programs with JROTC cadets of Niceville High School at the Drill Competition at Hurlburt Field on Feb. 10, 2024

Scholarship Fund

by Dave Parisot



Our scholarship program events are continuing with scholarship applications due on March 1st. We are again offering eight scholarships for local JROTC cadets entering college and ROTC and two scholarships for current ROTC cadets entering their junior or senior year of college who graduated from local high schools. After receipt, the applications will be individually scored by the six of us on the Scholarship Fund Board of Directors. Factors for grading on the written application are each applicant's academic record (e.g., GPA, class standing, SAT/ACT test scores), activities and leadership, honors and awards, community service, work experience, financial need, recommendations by their JROTC Senior Instructor, and "Why I should receive this scholarship".

The written application factors comprise 60% of the score. The remaining 40% of their final scores are assessed during in-person interviews with each applicant by the Scholarship Fund Board members. Factors for the interviews are military appearance and bearing, enthusiasm/attitude, knowledge of current events, and potential for a commission and military leadership. The interviews will be held in mid-March.

This year's Scholarship Awards Luncheon will be held on Thursday, May 2nd, at the Fort Walton Yacht Club, with social period at 11:30AM and the program/luncheon to start at noon. We anticipate that the MOAA President and CEO, Lt Gen Brian Kelly, USAF, Ret., and the MOAA Chapter Affairs Director, CAPT Frank Michaels, USN, Ret., will be attending this event in conjunction with our Chapter celebration of 65 years of community service.

In last month's article, I stated that three of our previous scholarship awardees will be commissioned this spring. I found out a couple weeks ago that there will be four commissioned in May/June 2024. With five of our scholarship winners commissioned in 2023 and four for 2024 (nine in a two-year period), our program has a high 'dividend' rate of over 50% of our scholarship awardees being commissioned.

The 50/50 drawing at the February 1st luncheon had ticket sales of \$113 with \$57 to the winner and \$56 to the Scholarship Fund. The winner was Dr. Wayne Pullen who donated part of his winnings back to the Fund. Thank you, Wayne, and to all who purchased tickets.

A recent recurring donation to the BG Frank Glunn Century Club was made by Col. Rod Gerdes, USMC, Ret. My thanks to each of you for your generous donations. Our scholarship awardees will also appreciate your financial support.

Below is the complete list of our **Endowed Scholarships**, our **Gold Century Club** members (\$500 cumulative minimum donation) and our **BG Frank Glunn Century Club** members (\$100

minimum donation) for the most previous 12 months, along with our **Business Donors**. Your support is greatly appreciated. All of these donations are used to fund our scholarships. [Note: (D) means deceased and (R) means Renewal of membership.]

Endowed Scholarships: **Lt Col Jim and Mrs Una Heavener Memorial Scholarship** (D) (via their estate, effective 2018); **Dave Parisot** in memory of his wife, **Chong Cha (Kim) Parisot** (effective 2017); **Dr (Lt Col, USAF, Ret.) Howard and Mrs. Irene Fisher Scholarship** (effective 2022); **Dr. (Lt. Col., USAF, Ret.) Fred and Mrs. Jan Westfall Scholarship** (effective 2023); and, **Col. (USAF, Ret.) Karl and Mrs. Charlotte Eschmann Scholarship** (effective 2024).

Gold Century Club: **Bill Ryan** (Feb 2016); **Ruth Cullen, (D)** (Oct 2016); **Dave Parisot** (Feb 2017); **Janet Taylor** (Mar 2017); **Chris Beam** (Mar 2017); **Bob Garcia** (D) (July 2017); **Rod Gerdes** (Nov 2017); **Larry Bush** (Nov 2017); **Dr. Howard & Irene Fisher** (Nov 2017); **Eileen Arpke** (Feb 2018); **Fred & Jan Westfall** (Apr 2018); **Clyde Locke** (D) (Apr 2018); WWII, Korea, and Vietnam Veteran **Sam Lombardo** (D) (July 2018); **Dennis Phillips** (Aug 2018); **Karl & Charlotte Eschmann** (Oct 2018); **Carol Baker** (Jan 2019); **Ann Adelsperger** (Feb 2019); **Don Litke** (Aug 2019); **Fred Boyer** (D) (Aug 2019). **Dr. Keith & Elizabeth Kulow** (Nov 2019); **Al Bills** (Nov. 2019); **Kay Dent** (Nov. 2019); **Dr. Roger Riggenschach** (Dec 2019); **Robert "Pete" Peterzen** (Dec 2019); **Nick Marotta** (Oct 2020); **Kathy & Jesse Bush** (Dec 2020); **Patt & Caroline Maney** (Dec 2020); **Kevin Kirby** (Apr 2021); **Scott & Janet Berry** (May 2021); **Douglas Hardin** (D) (Sept 2021); **Patrick Boab** (Dec. 2021); **Bob Allen** (Feb 2022); **Bobbi Hanson Garcia** (Mar 2022); **Joy Houck** (Mar 2022); **George Colton** (May 2022); **Bob Secrest** (May 2022); **Brig. Gen Fran & Mrs Connie Hendricks** (Oct 2022); **Les Matheson** (Feb 2023); **Dan Brown** (April 2023); **Tess Bass** (August 2023); **Bob Gramm** (Dec 2023); and, **Larry Tashlik** (Dec 2023) [Note: 42 total members]

BG Frank Glunn Century Club (past 12 months) (R=Renewal): March 2023: **Kevin Kirby** (R); **Rod Gerdes** (R); and **Les Matheson** (R); April 2023: **Dennis Phillips** (R); **Dan Brown** (R) (In memory of Col. Don Panzenhagen); **Al Bills** (R); **Larry Bush** (R); May 2023: **Chris Beam** (R); **Bob Secrest** (R); and, **Dr. Howard and Mrs. Irene Fisher** (R); June 2023: **Dave Parisot** (R) (In memory of Maj. Bill Van Hoesen); August 2023: **Dan Brown** (R); **Christine Hallion**; **Kevin Kirby** (R); **Dick Solt** (R); **Dave Parisot** (R) (In memory of Col. 'Skip' Harrington and Col. Bill Byerley); **Tess Bass** (R); October 2023: **George Colton** (R); November 2023: **Pat Johnson**; **Pete Peterzen** (R); **Dave Parisot** (R) (In memory of Chong Parisot); **Keith & Elizabeth Kulow** (R); **Tess Bass** (R); December 2023: **Les Matheson** (R); **Jeff Watson** (R) (In memory of Maj. John Besten, USAF, Ret.); **Karl and Charlotte Eschmann** (R); **Bob Gramm** (R); **Brig. Gen. Fran & Connie Hendricks** (R); **Larry Tashlik** (R); **Kay Dent** (In memory of Troy Dent and Larry Kettter); and, **Janet Ryan Taylor** (R) (In honor of Major Bill Ryan); February 2024: **Rod Gerdes** (R).

2023 Business Platinum Donors: (\$1,000+): Dec. 2022: **Bass, Byrd & Associates at Merrill Lynch of FWB** (R); **Florida Power & Light**



2022/2023 Business Gold Donors (\$500 - \$749): Dec. 2022: **Eglin Federal Credit Union (R); Step One Automotive Group (R); Residence Inn & Suites by Marriott of FWB (In-kind) (R); TownePlace Suites by Marriott of FWB (In-kind) (R); David Scott Lee (Crestview) Buick/GMC (In-kind) (R).**

2022/2023 Business Silver Donors (\$250 - \$499): Dec 2022: **Shalimar Pointe Golf Club (In-kind); Rocky Bayou Golf Club (In-kind); Indian Bayou Golf & Country Club (In-kind); International House of Pancakes (IHOP) of FWB (In-kind);**

2022/2023 Business Bronze Donors (\$100 - \$249): Dec 2022: **Buffalo's Reef of FWB (in-kind) (R); Mary's Kitchen of FWB (in-kind) (R); Painting With a Twist of FWB (in-kind) (R); Repeat Street Thrift Store of FWB (R) (in-kind); Tammy's Journeys of FWB (In-kind) (R); Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen of FWB (In-kind) (R); Samuel's Roadhouse of Crestview (In-kind) (R); The Shack Waterfront Restaurant & Marina of FWB; Conexion Newspaper of Navarre; Lisa Jo Spencer, P.A. of Mary Esther.**

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

NWFMOA Scholarship Fund

“HELPING TO BUILD FUTURE MILITARY OFFICERS AND LEADERS”

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**To make a contribution to the
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Legislative Corner

MOAA's primary reason for being is to protect our hard earned and promised benefits. To that end, MOAA National maintains a list of bills they are advocating passage by elected Congressional officials. When MOAA brings its full weight to bare on a specific bill, it gets everyone's attention. That full weight is reliant on each of MOAA's 600,000+ members to contact their respective Senators and Congressional Representative. MOAA even goes as far as drafting the correspondence for you. All you must do is send it electronically to your elected official(s). To do so, go to our website (nwfmoo.org), and click the "Take Action" button.



It will take you to MOAA's Active Legislative Campaigns. There are presently 24 and each has a pre-drafted letter ready for you to send. All you must do is click on "Write" and follow the prompts and hit "Send". Very easy to do and extremely helpful for the specific bill.

To further highlight the Active Legislative Campaigns, we will highlight one every month as our Advocacy in Action, show the text of the already prepared correspondence, and ask for you to take immediate action by visiting the NWFMOA website (nwfmoe.org) and clicking on the Take Action button.

Advocacy in Action (24-01) ... Major Richard Star Act

Dear @legislator_greeting,

I extend my sincere appreciation for your co-sponsorship of S.344/H.R.1282, the Major Richard Star Act. Your support demonstrates a commitment to our combat-injured veterans and their well-deserved retirement benefits.

I kindly urge you to include the Star Act in your official request for the FY 2025 NDAA. With over two-thirds of Congress backing this crucial legislation, it is evident that there is widespread bipartisan support to aid our heroes who have made immense sacrifices for our nation.

Our combat-injured veterans have served with honor and bravery, earning their retirement pay through extraordinary dedication. While co-sponsoring the Star Act is a commendable first step, I urge you to leverage your influence to encourage fellow lawmakers to prioritize and champion this bill's passage. It is imperative that the Major Richard Star Act becomes law, either as standalone legislation or as a part of the FY 2025 NDAA.

By actively advocating for the inclusion of the Star Act, you will contribute significantly to the well-being of our combat-injured veterans and demonstrate your unwavering support for those who have sacrificed so much for our country.

Thank you for your dedication to this important cause, and I trust that you will continue to champion the rights and benefits of our brave servicemen and women.

Sincerely,

Your Name will appear here

(Request you add Member, NWFMOA below your...we want our two Senators and Congressman to know NWFMOA is proud to be part of MOAA's powerful voice)

Surviving Spouse Corner

(From the MOAA weekly news email)

Lawmakers have received more than 12,000 messages from MOAA's [Legislative Action Center](#) on behalf of three bipartisan bills to improve surviving spouse benefits – legislation critical to MOAA's ongoing work to ensure these members of our uniformed services community get the support they deserve.

If you've sent one (or more) of those messages, thank you – your grassroots efforts keep these issues on the [minds of staffers](#) and give MOAA's advocates a louder voice when we reach out to legislative offices on Capitol Hill. But whether you've been previously involved in these campaigns or you're new to the movement, now is the time to act – the more focus MOAA can put on these bills, the greater the chance of their inclusion in the FY 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which is already coming together in congressional meeting rooms and hallways. You can learn more about that process [at this link](#).

Please consider sending (or resending) a prewritten message to your House member and senators using the links below. Personalize the message to make an even greater impact, and keep up with [MOAA's Advocacy News page](#) to see the progress of these bills and others during this election year.

Caring for Survivors Act

What: Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) for surviving spouses works out to about 43% of what a 100% service-disabled veteran would receive from the VA. Federal survivor programs offer beneficiaries 55% of a federal worker's final pay under similar calculations. This bill would put DIC on par with the federal benefit.

Why: The current system is unfair to the survivors of uniformed servicemembers, many of whom supported these members through deployments, military moves, and other hardships not faced by the bulk of federal dependents.

Take Action: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Support the Caring for Survivors Act](#)

Love Lives On Act

What: This bill would remove restrictions on when a surviving spouse could remarry and retain their benefits, to include Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. Current law prevents spouses who remarry before age 55 from receiving this benefit, as well as access to educational assistance and other programs.

Why: This arbitrary timeline is not imposed on most surviving spouses of other federal employees. Surviving spouses of servicemembers should not face the threat of financial ruin as they move forward in their lives.

Take Action: [Urge Your Legislators to Support Remarriage Legislation for Surviving Spouses](#)

Respect for Grieving Military Families Act

What: The Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) recoups the final month's pay of a retired servicemembers immediately upon that member's death. This action can create financial challenges for new surviving spouses; this legislation would end the practice and set up a procedure for spouses to gradually repay the amount.

Why: This recoupment can destabilize a surviving spouse's finances at the worst possible time, leading to potential overdraft fees. A simple fix – the bill is [less than three pages long](#) – would make a world of difference during a time when survivors need the most support.

Take Action: [Urge Your Legislators to Support the Respect for Grieving Military Families Act](#)



The Council Communiqué

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P.O. Box 1213, Shalimar, FL 32579

AN INVITATION TO YOU: The membership of NWFMOA extends a sincere invitation to join us in our social cultural, professional and service activities that extend for the local to national levels.

Today's Date _____

Last Name First Name Initial

Spouse Phone

Address City State & Zip Code

Email Address

Rank Service MOAA Member Number

Regular Reserve National Guard Active Duty Retired Former

This application is for:

Life Member New Member Renewal Surviving Spouse Other _____

Make Checks payable to NWFMOA or to Northwest Florida Military Officers Assn. Inc. Check here is you do not want your name, phone number, or email address listed in the 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

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Pay half of the above rates

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Important Things To Remember

What

What to Click

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Update your contact information	http://nwfmoa.org/info_update.html
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Is Your Personal Information Up to Date?

If any of your vital information has changed, like if you've moved and have a new mailing address, or a new phone number or email address, please use the Update Your Information link on our NWFMOA website.

The link is http://nwfmoa.org/info_update.html

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