



The Council Communiqué

Florida Council of Chapters
Military Officers Association of America

July-August 2020

Issue 159



President's Message

COL Mike Borders, USA., Ret.

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Submit Input to:
Polly Parks, Editor
pparks@igc.org

Greetings to all. Well, we continue to 'live in interesting times, and the old refrain has certainly turned into something akin to a curse. The good folks at MOAA National, as well as on the FCoC Board of Directors, are well aware of the challenges facing the chapters as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. I can only say that we must all continue to take steps and make decisions based on the best information available.

In the meantime, the FCoC board has been working in a virtual fashion as have some of you. I have attended a few Zoom chapter meetings, as well as a few at the MOAA National level.

In a few weeks, FCoC VP Pat Kluever and I will have an informal Zoom meeting with the Area Vice President's (AVP's) to discuss a range of issues. This will set the stage for our

formal (bylaw mandated) October FCOC board meeting. The date for that has not been set yet, but will be in the latter half of the month. While it is a board meeting, I invite all chapter presidents to participate. Stay tuned for the date.

In our spare time, we have also been updating the FCoC "Blue Book." This is our SOP (sort of) and includes important info. It had been some time since it had been thoroughly reviewed. VP Pat Kluever has coordinated this effort. Once complete, we will let you know when and how you will be able to access it on the FCoC website.

MOAA National has cancelled the October convention in Kansas City. Normally, Levels of Excellence (LOE) awards would be presented at that time. We do know who the winners are, and I congratulate each and every one. See the list on following page.

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See more elsewhere from Bob Bienvenue, but you will soon see movement on the NDAA and receive requests to TAKE ACTION. As usual, there are key differences in the Senate and House versions that will need to be resolved in conference. The biggie is that the Senate version does NOT include language putting the brakes on the DoD's plan to eliminate 18K medical billets and close nearly 50 medical facilities. Don't sit on your hands. Get involved and TAKE ACTION.

I want to offer a big CONGRATS to Patricia Green of the Central Florida Chapter (Orlando) and to Renee Brunelle of the Tampa Chapter. Both have been selected to serve on the MOAA National Surviving Spouse Advisory Board. This speaks volumes about their dedication to such an important area, not to mention their personal and professional qualities. We are very proud of them both.

I know some of you are curious about the January Leadership Forum (workshop) in Orlando. We have not taken it off the books as of yet. Pat Kluever and I recently met with the Rosen hotel staff to review the bidding. We understand the obvious concerns and challenges. For now, please keep it on your calendars for 8-9 January. We will keep you posted.

Thanks for all that you do to keep our chapters, the council, and MOAA relevant and strong. You are doing it because you believe in the *Never Stop Serving* motto. It is appreciated.

Cheers,
Mike

FCoC and
23 Chapters
Garner
Level of
Excellence
Awards

Congratulations!

Alias	Council/Chapter Name	LOE Award for 2019
FL00	Florida Council of Chapters of the MOAA, Inc.	5 Star
FL03	Cape Canaveral Chapter	5 Star
FL04	Calusa Chapter	4 Star
FL08	Clearwater Chapter	4 Star
FL14	Kingdom of the Sun Chapter	5 Star
FL15	Lake & Sumter Counties Chapter	5 Star
FL18	Northeast Florida Chapter	5 Star
FL19	Northwest Florida MOA, Inc.	4 Star
FL22	Pensacola Chapter, MOAA	5 Star
FL23	St. Petersburg Area Chapter, MOAA	5 Star
FL24	Military Officers Association of Sarasota, Inc.	4 Star
FL27	Tampa Chapter, MOAA	5 Star
FL28	Treasure Coast Chapter	5 Star
FL30	The Military Officers Club of Volusia County	4 Star
FL31	Charlotte Harbor Chapter	5 Star
FL32	MOAA of Citrus County Chapter, Inc.	5 Star
FL33	Lee Coast Chapter, MOAA	5 Star
FL35	Suncoast Chapter	4 Star
FL36	Indian River Chapter MOAA	5 Star
FL39	Halifax Area Chapter	5 Star
FL40	South Central Florida Chapter of the MOAA	5 Star
FL42	Sun City Center Chapter	5 Star
FL48	Palm Beach - Martin Counties Chapter of MOAA	4 Star
FL51	Historic Mayport Chapter	4 Star



In Memoriam Year 2019

MEDITATION

God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who gave us birth, you are ever more ready to hear than we are to pray. You know our needs before we ask. Show us your grace that as we face the mystery of death, we may see the light of eternity. Speak to us once more your solemn message of life and death. We praise you for all your servants who, having lived this life in faith, now live eternally with you. Especially we thank you for all your servants, whom we name now. (Pause and name those from your chapter) We praise you for the gifts of their lives. We thank you that for them death is past and pain ended. Help us now to believe where we have not seen, trusting you to lead us through our years. Bring us at last with all your saints into the joy of your home. In your holy name we pray. Amen

Ancient City (St. Augustine - Northeast Area)
Earl "Hap" Thompson, LTC USA

Bay County (Panama City - Northwest Area)
Donald Bebe, LTC, USA
Paul Jackson, LTC, USA

Broward County (Deerfield Beach - Southeast Area)
Charles Combs, CAPT, USN

Jack Corken, Lt Col, USAF
Vera Ross, SSM
Linda Winestock, SSM

Cape Canaveral (Patrick AFB - East Central Area)
James Allan, LTC, USA
John Banks, 1LT, USA
Thomas Blake, Col, USAF

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Bonnie Bleiler, Spouse of Walter Bleiler, LTC,
USAR
Joseph Bosco, LT, USN
William Cahill, Cap, USAF
Betty Christianson, SSM
Julius Conti, Col, USAF
Susie Cullity, SSM
Marshall Dickson, Col, USAF
Esmeralda Donovan, Spouse of Kenneth
Donovan, COL, USA
Richard Evans, CAPT, USN
Suzy Gibson, Spouse of Bernard Gibson, LCDR,
USN
John Golob, Maj, USAF
Bernard Greenwell, Jr, LTC, USA
Margaret Greenwell, SSM
Barbara Grine, SSM
Nancy Harper, SSM
James Harrington, LT, USNR
Norman Heller, CW2 USA
Barbara Howk, SSM
Gaston Jennett, LCDR, USNR
Dennis Kaiser, LTC, USA
Ronald Kane, Col, USAF
Anne Keith, SSM
Donald Kester, Col, USAFR
Edith Kidd, SSM
Don Lippert, Maj, USAF
Gibby Marshall, Col, USAF
Gordon Masterson, Brig Gen, USAF
George McGee, CW5, USA
Elsbeth McInnis, SSM
Enrico Meneguzz, MAJ, USA
Gwendolyn Michaud, SSM
John Newsome, Maj, USAF
Patricia Ostendrop, Spouse of Alan Ostendrop,
Maj, USAF
James Peterman, LTC, USA
Doris Puckett, SSM
Robert Reid, Lt Col, USAF
Marion Riedel, Spouse of William Riedel,
CAPT, USCG
Stanley Schmucker, COL, USA
Richard Schneider, MG, USA
Alfred Schumann, CAPT, USN
Winifred Schumann, SSM



William Shapbell, Jr, CAPT, USN
David Souder, Lt Col, USAF
Carol Steuart, Spouse of Richard Steuart, LTC,
USA
George Sweeney, LtCol, USMC
Linda Tisdale, SSM
Clark Weaver, Lt Col, USAF
Margaret Woodward, SSM
William Young, RADM, USN

Cape Coral (Cape Coral - formerly Calusa -
Southwest Area)
Neil Kempf, COL, USA

Central Florida (Orlando - East Central Area)
Paul Wilson, Col, USMC

Charlotte Harbor (Punta Gorda - Southwest
Area)
John Bittner, MAJ, USA
James Bowden, COL, USA
Robert Dickinson, COL, USAR
James Dundas, LT, USN

Clearwater (Dunedin - West Central Area)
Keith Kurber, 1stLt, USMC
Dorothy Smith, Spouse of George Smith
Violet Smith, SSM

Gainesville (Gainesville - Mid-Central Area)
William Moore, CDR, USN
Peter Perkins, COL, USA

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Robert Reeves II, CAPT, USN
D. Mason Wells, CAPT, USN

Halifax Area (Daytona Beach - Northeast Area)
James Montgomery, Capt, USAF

Historic Mayport (Atlantic Beach, Northeast Area)
Herman "Bud" Abelein, Jr, CAPT, USN
Stanley Reinhart, BG, USA
Richard "Denny" Tomlin, Col, USMC

Indian River (Vero Beach - East Central)
Cecil Doran, CW04, USNR
Thomas La Rocca, Capt, USAFR
Philip McCarthy, LTJG, USN
Amelia Merry, SSM

Kingdom of the Sun (Ocala - Mid-Central Area)
Norman DeNoon, CDR, USN

Lake & Sumter Counties (Lady Lake - Mid-Central Area)
Scott Eseman, CAPT, USN
Thomas Lenahan, Capt, USAF
Stephen Rule, LTC, USAR
Paul Welch, CDR, USN

Lee Coast MOAA (Sanibel Island - Southwest Area)
John Madaras, Jr, CPT, USA

Military Officers Association of Sarasota (Sarasota - Southwest Area)
Clifford Bermann, LT, USN
Lloyd Herman, Maj, USAF
Marvin Meadows, Lt Col, USAF
Kay Tracy, Spouse of George Tracy, LT, USN

Military Officers Association of Southwest Florida (Naples - Southwest Area)
Pat Beshara, Spouse of George Beshara, Lt Col, USAF

Military Officers Club of Volusia County (Orange City - East Central Area)
Joseph Leone, 1LT, USA
Robert Roberson, CW4, USA

MOAA of Citrus County (Lecanto - Mid-Central Area)
Thomas Marr, LCDR, USN
Donald Stevens, Lt Col, USAF

Nassau County (Fernandina Beach - Northeast Area)
Paul Gosnell, Lt Col, USAF

Northeast Florida (Jacksonville - Northeast Area)
Cager Campbell, CDR, USN
Crawford Easterling, VADM, USN
Bonnie Elliott, Spouse of Orville Elliott
John Griffith, CAPT, USN
Edwin Megonegal, Lt Col, USAF
Timothy O'Laughlin, CAPT, USN

Northwest Florida Military Officers Association (Fort Walton Beach - Northwest Area)
William Colgan, Col, USAF
Dudie Jones, Spouse of James Jones, Col, USAF
Marge Mann, SSM
Gayle Norgaard, Lt Col, USAF



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Palm Beach-Martin Counties (Jupiter - Southeast Area)

Ronald Gambolati, COL, USA
Lawrence Harjehausen, LCDR, USN
John Morrison, LTC, USA

Pensacola MOAA (Pensacola - Northwest Area)

Sue Andrews, SSM
Paul Dickson, LCDR, USN
Rhetta Giuli, SSM
Paula Judd, CDR, USN
Marcelle Mullen, SSM
Howard Rappold, CW4, USA
Paul Shrader, LtCol, USMC

Santa Rosa (Milton - Northwest Area)

Walt Reese, CAPT, USN

South Central (Sebring-Southwest Area)

Charles Filler, LTC, USA
James Lashley, CW4, USA
James LeVangie, LCDR, USN
Jack Reeves, COL, USA

South Dade (Princeton-Southeast Area)

Nils Linfor, Jr, CDR, USCG

St. Petersburg Area (St. Petersburg - West Central Area)

Basil Burrell, CWO4, USCG
John Graham, CW2, USA
Anne Isley, SSM
Asa Myers, SSM
Samuel Palmer, Col, USAF
Robert Reed, CDR, USN
Fred Schlager, CWO4, USMC
Violet Smith, SSM

Sun City Center (Sun City Center - West Central Area)

Thom Brown, LT, USNR
Roy Conklin, COL, USA
Jack Craig, LTC, USA

Spencer Faircloth, Lt Col, USAF
Daniel Fisher, CPT, USA
Bernard Meisel, COL, USA
Frank Sanyor, LTC, USA
William Shanks, Col, USMC
George Whitfield, MAJ, USA

Suncoast (Port Richie - West Central)

Joseph Daigneault, CAPT, USN

Suwannee River Valley (Lake City - Northeast Area)

William French, Lt Col, USAF

Tallahassee (Tallahassee - Northwest Area)

Sandy Ballas, SSM
MaryEllen Bryson, Spouse of Walter Bryson, Col, USMC
Dale Doss, CAPT, USN
Rodney Letchworth, LtCol, USMC
Nellie Mims, SSM
Jack Rosenau, Lt Col, USAF
James Ryan, LTC, USA

Tampa (Tampa - West Central Area)

Thomas Bowen, BG, USA
Hester Daly, SSM
Helga, Estep, Spouse of Ronald Estep, COL, USA
Cliff Greenside, 1LT, USA
Harry Livingston, LTC, USA
Raymond Norman, Col, USAF
Onalee Norman, Spouse of Raymond Norman, Col, USAF
Priscilli Sarver, SSM

Treasure Coast (Fort Pierce - East Central Area)

Zaida Armstrong, Spouse of William Armstrong, CW2, USA
William Jenkins, RADM, USCG

Note: SSM is Surviving Spouse Member. Apologies if service branch or rank is incorrect.

Legislative Affairs

Lt Col Bob Bienvenue, USAF, Ret., Legislative Chair, rbienven@sprynet.com



MOAA Legislative Update:

<http://www1.moaa.org/legislative/>

Legislative Update August 2020

Take
Action
Now!

Get Ready for Summer Storming!!

NDAAs in Conference

Prior to the vote on the House version of the 2021 NDAA, OMB issued a [Statement of Administration Policy](#) which stated "If H.R. 6395 were presented to the President in its current form, his senior advisors would recommend that he veto it." Among the provisions "strongly objected" to by the Administration were MOAA advocacy goals including the permanent termination of the reduction in military medical end strength and the permanent stop to restructuring Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs).

Notwithstanding the Administration message, on July 21, the House passed HR 6395 by a bipartisan vote of 295 -125. The following members of the Florida delegation voted NAY: Gaetz (R; FL-1), Yoho (R; FL-3), Posey (R; FL-8), Steube (R; FL-17), and Mast (R; FL-18).

On July 23rd, the Senate passed the Senate version, S-4049, their version of the FY 2021 NDAA by a bipartisan vote of 86-14, Both Rubio and Scott voted Yea.

The two versions of the NDAA will now advance to a joint conference committee, where representatives of the two chambers will negotiate behind closed doors to reconcile the differences. While it is hoped that defense appropriations pass by September 30, based on congressional schedules, the NDAA and its conference report is not expected until November.

What's In and What's Not

- A provision to increase military pay by 3% tied to the Employment Cost Index is included in both the House and Senate versions of the NDAA.
- The House version has language to halt military medical end strength cuts and the realignment of military treatment facilities (MTFs), **the Senate version does not.**

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- The Senate NDAA version includes provisions to consider family discounts at child development centers (CDCs) for families with two or more children at a center. The House version includes provisions to reassess fee assistance for families with consideration of cost fluctuations by location, as well as an assessment of the priority system and waitlist at CDCs.
- Both the House and Senate also recommend substantial increases to the authorized amount of spending on military privatized housing support to better facilitate hiring of housing staff and to support needs for maintenance and repair work.
- The House version of the NDAA seeks an updated business case analysis for the proposal to consolidate the commissaries and exchanges after the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found significant problems in the proposed merger. Unfortunately, **the Senate version stayed silent on this** issue.
- The Senate version includes an amendment which would add bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinson's-like symptoms to the list of veterans' diseases associated with exposure to Agent Orange. Unfortunately, the **House NDAA does not include a similar amendment.**
- The House included a provision in Section 602 that provides a Basic Needs Allowance for low-income regular members based on income and number of household members. **The Senate did not.**
- Amendments to provide all World War II veterans VA health care services **were not included in either version.**
- A proposed House amendment extending the cap on interest rates (that currently covers service members and their immediate families) under the Military Lending Act to all consumers, including veterans and their families **failed in Rules Committee.**

What's Next: *SUMMER STORMING*

MOAA has launched their Summer Storming 2020 with an email message from President Lt Gen Dana Atkins, USAF (Ret):

This summer, as senators return home to engage their constituents, we need you to be ready to visit virtually, call, or email your Senate offices to generate support for the provisions proposed by the House (Sections 715 and 716) in the FY 2021 NDAA.

You play a critical part this summer, but you should be aware this is a year-long campaign. We may need you to engage further to

- 1) *get the Senate's support for those provisions in the final version of the NDAA,*
- 2) *pass the floor votes in both chambers, and*
- 3) *get a signature by the President.*

This full court press is being called to advocate for the inclusion of the provisions in the House Bill halting the military medical end strength cuts and the realignment of military treatment facilities.

Here is the link to the Summer Storming web page: <https://www.moaa.org/SummerStorm>
Follow all the links embedded on that page and you can **send a message** to our senators, find the **Issue Paper** titled "Congress: Support Critical House NDAA Language Protecting Access to

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*Medical Care for Military Beneficiaries” and even a **script** to guide a telephone call to our Senators’ offices.*

Please take the time to send that message to our two senators to request they strongly urge their colleagues who will sit on the Joint Conference Committee to ensure those provisions favorable to the military community are carried over into the final Bill.

And here is a suggested message to send to your representative as well since some of their colleagues will also sit on the Joint Conference Committee:

Dear Representative

The House passed version of the FY 2021 NDAA (HR 6395) contained several provisions that will benefit the military family:

- *A 3% pay raise based on the BLS Employment Compensation Index;*
- *Language in sections 715 and 716 to halt military medical end strength cuts and the realignment of military treatment facilities (MTFs) and to require the Defense Health Agency to conduct thorough analysis and planning for any patient care transitioned out of MTFs;*
- *Requires an updated business case analysis for the DoD’s proposal to consolidate the commissaries and exchanges after the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found significant problems in the proposed merger.*

The members of our organization advocated extensively for those provisions and are very grateful, on behalf of the currently serving servicemembers, military retirees and their families, survivors and children, for this content in bill.

*Unfortunately, the provisions to “re-set” the plans for military medical cutbacks were **not** included in the Senate Bill.*

I am writing to request you strongly urge your colleagues who will sit on the Joint Conference Committee to ensure those provisions are carried over into the final Bill.

DoD’s DSLO successfully works with Florida on legislation benefitting school age military children

A loophole, identified by DoD’s Defense-State Liaison Office (DSLO), in Florida’s support to military families with students transferring into the state’s school districts was rectified with **SB-662, Education and the Military**, signed into law by Governor DeSantis. Military families being transferred on official orders were not allowed to register their children for school until they were physically located in the school district, putting them at a disadvantage during Florida school districts “controlled open enrollment process.” This year’s legislative session addressed that by passing **SB-662, Education and the Military** which amends Florida Statutes section 1003.05 to provide that a student “*whose parent is transferred or is pending transfer to a military installation within the state while on active military duty pursuant to an*

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official military order shall be allowed preferential treatment in the controlled open enrollment process of the school district.”

The bill was introduced by Senator Tom A. Wright, Florida Senate District 14. The SW Area Defense-State Liaison Office (DSLO) representative, Eric Sherman, worked with the Senator and <https://www.excelined.org/> to secure passage.

We look forward to engaging with DoD's [Military Community and Family Policy DSLO](#) in promoting other state level legislation to remove unnecessary barriers and significantly improve the quality of life for military families.



Vice President's Message

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

My first regular article in the Communiqué will be to address the critical role of our team of Area Vice Presidents (AVPs). The position of AVP is the leadership link between Chapters and the Council. In general terms, the responsibilities of the AVPs are to assist their Chapters and to be the liaison between the Chapters and the Board of Directors via the President and/or Vice President of the Council.

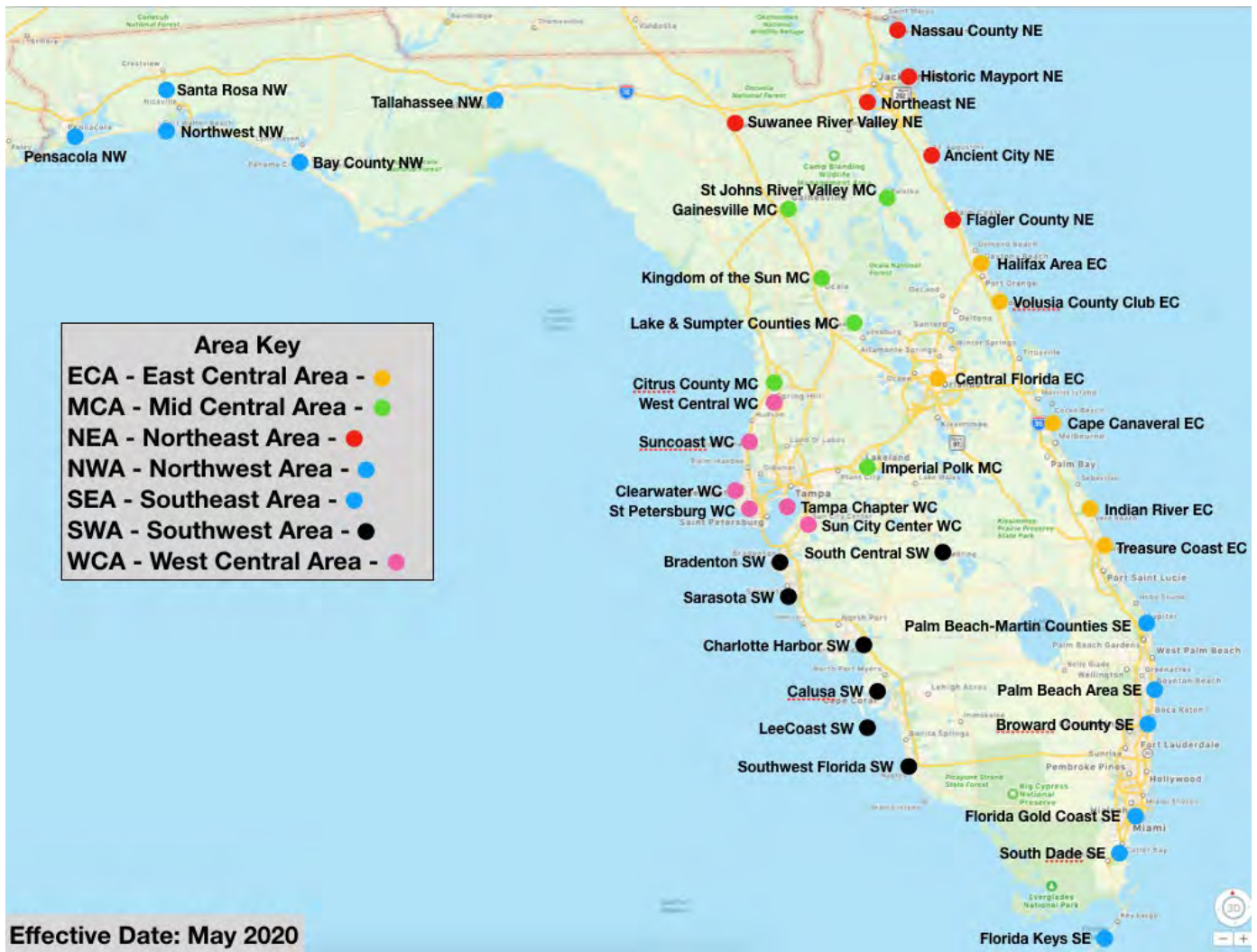
The Florida Council of Chapters (FCoC) is organized into seven geographic areas, each one of which has an AVP. The following are the established areas of responsibilities: Northeast, Northwest, East Central, Mid-Central, West Central, Southeast and Southwest.

The last page of the Communiqué always contains the titles, names, and contact information for Council officers and committee chairs, including the seven AVPs, and it is a major “go-to” for the latest Council contacts.

FCoC President Mike Borders and I depend on this crew of seven dedicated officers to be our eyes and ears into the 42 Florida chapters that we support. Keeping our Florida chapters healthy and vital is the Council's most important mission and our seven AVPs are critical to our ability to successfully carrying out that mission. AVPs tell us what is working and we share best practices among the group to further inform Florida chapters. AVPs alert us where chapters need assistance and we can call on other experienced Council leaders and/or MOAA National

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to help out. AVPs also let us know who in their area chapters are the movers and shakers who might be able to serve in future leadership positions on the Council; critical to filling out our Council succession plan. Typically, major Council events are planned two years ahead of time and the succession plan is vital to understanding and informing those future leaders at the right time on events planned during their tenure.

Our current team of AVPs represent a wide variety of career and Florida MOAA chapter experience. They have each stepped up to this leadership position and I personally thank them for their service to our Florida Council of Chapters.

Finally, please support the Summer Storming effort detailed by Legislative Affairs Chair Bob Bienvenue in this month's column - Thank You!

Pat



Surviving Spouse Corner

Patricia Green, Surviving Spouse Liaison/Personal Affairs

As Mike notes in his President's Column, Renee Brunelle of the Tampa chapter and myself have been selected to serve four-year terms, beginning in October, on the MOAA National Surviving Spouse Advisory Board. The board assists General Dana Atkins in fulfilling oversight responsibilities for MOAA's surviving spouse programs and resources for surviving spouses within councils, chapters, and satellites. The council makes recommendations to General Atkins and MOAA leadership on MOAA policies regarding surviving spouse issues, advocacy issues, and surviving spouse membership. Renee and I pledge to do our best to represent the interests of our Florida members as well as the national membership of this important organization.

On July 21, there was a Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter Meeting on GoToMeeting, a videoconferencing system. What a great turnout! In addition to five national staff, there were 74 virtual members on line from all stretches of the US States and Territories.

Mark Belinsky of National MOAA defined three areas for benefit improvement that will be the focus on lobbying efforts.

1. The continuation of SBP to surviving spouses after remarriage. The current rule is age 57. It is hoped to reduce the age to 55.
2. To increase the surviving spouse share of the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) to 55%.
3. To reduce the current DIC 10 year marriage rule to five years of marriage.

Over the past months, I have been asking readers for input and suggestions. Recently I heard the story of a surviving spouse whose disabled spouse recently died. The retiree entered the hospital with a respiratory issue (assumed to be part of the disability). The problem was that the death certificate declared the cause of death as corona virus. This means that the retiree did not die from a military duty related disability. Therefore the spouse is not eligible for continuation of DIC. Please be alert to this unintended consequence of the recording of corona virus statistics.

If you are a Surviving Spouse representative of your Chapter, please contact me by email. Note your name, your Chapter name, and your preferred method of contact. Add any issues or problems you want discussed or researched. Be sure to put MOAA in the Subject space. My contact information is at the end of the COMMUNIQUE Leadership listing.

Treasurer's Report

By Marilyn Leehan, Treasurer, Florida Council of Chapters

A few words from your FCOC Treasurer:

The last two months have been quiet as far as Treasury activities; a good time to get caught up and plan for the future. Thanks to all of you, another quarterly incentive award has been earned and MOAA has direct-deposited that \$100 into our operating account.

FCOC VP Kluever has been busy updating our Administrative manual and each of us were charged with reviewing the section pertaining to our position.

I feel honored to serve you all as a part of this outstanding leadership team.

Stay safe,

Marilyn Leehan



Florida Legislative Update

By MAJ Lorraine Holland, USA (Ret), FCOC Florida Legislative Chair

Gov. Ron DeSantis has signed several veteran-friendly bills from the 2020 Florida Legislative Session. Following is a summary of those changes:

HB 171 – Postsecondary Education for Certain Military Personnel: The act requires the Board of Governors and State Board of Education to adopt a uniform set of rules to award academic credit for college degrees and technical training certification based on service members' and veterans' prior military training and experience. The newly enacted legislation helps veterans and members on active duty to achieve their degrees quicker and without having to take unnecessary course requirements.

HB 205 – Unlawful Use of Uniforms, Medals or Insignia – Effective Oct. 1, 2020, the act adds a provision to an existing law on stolen valor that misusing a military uniform or decorations for the purposes of obtaining employment or seeking election to a paid public office is now a violation of law.

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HB 877 – Ad Valorem Tax Discount for Spouses of Certain Deceased Veterans Who Had Permanent, Combat-Related Disabilities. Proposes amending the State Constitution to authorize the surviving spouse of a deceased combat-related disabled veteran 65 and older to carry over certain discounts on ad valorem taxes on homestead property until the surviving spouse remarries or sells or otherwise disposes of the property. At present, the exemption ends upon the death of the eligible veteran. HB 879 implements HB 877 by placing the legislation as a proposed Constitutional Amendment before Florida voters on the November 2020 ballot.

HB 1249 – Transfer of Tax Exemption for Veterans: The act adds a provision to an existing law requiring that veterans who were honorably discharged with a service-connected total and permanent disability or their surviving spouses who are entitled to receive ad valorem exemptions on property taxes for one property, may receive a pro-rated reimbursement of taxes paid on any property they buy between Jan. 1 and Nov. 1 of any year.

HB 5001 – General Appropriations Act: The \$92.2 billion budget provides a three percent pay raise for state workers, effective Oct. 1, 2020. Highlights within the appropriation for the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs:

\$9 million in non-recurring General Revenue to help complete the costs of the Lake Baldwin State Veterans' Nursing Home in Orlando and the Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home in Port St. Lucie. Both are scheduled to open in late 2020.

An additional \$1.8 million to finish the grant application to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for federal dollars to

complete the Lake Baldwin State Veterans' Nursing Home.

One hundred and four new positions to staff the Lake Baldwin State Veterans' Nursing Home and Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home.

Five new positions for the FDVA Benefits and Assistance Division to connect veterans with earned services, benefits and support.

Florida Veterans Legal Helpline – \$500,000. Through the Florida Veterans Legal Helpline, attorneys with Bay Area Legal Services provide compassionate and effective legal assistance to veterans throughout the State of Florida.

University of South Florida Alternative Treatment Options for Veterans \$200,000. Researching alternative treatment therapies to help relieve veterans suffering from PTSD.

K9s For Warriors – \$600,000. Based in Ponte Vedra. Works to provide PTSD service dogs at no cost to those in their program in order to help veterans restore their physical and emotional independence.

Five Star Veterans Homeless Housing and Integration – \$250,000. Based in Jacksonville. Provides a residential environment to help veterans get back on their feet. The program is targeted at veterans who are between 22 and 55 years of age and suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injuries, Depression, Anxiety and other related mental health issues.



Chaplain's Message

By Lcdr Terry Robertson, USN, Ret. terryrobertson49@gmail.com

Since it's that time of year when we begin making plans for next year and thinking about our stewardship of the gifts God has given us, I thought this story would be especially appropriate:

A sobbing little girl stood near a small church from which she had been turned away because it "was too crowded." "I can't go to Sunday School," she sobbed to the pastor as he walked by. Seeing her shabby, unkempt appearance, the pastor guessed the reason and, taking her by the hand, took her inside and found a place for her in the Sunday school class. The child was so touched that she went to bed that night thinking of the children who have no place to worship.

About two years later, this child lay dead in one of the poor tenement buildings and the parents called for the kind-hearted pastor who had befriended their daughter. As the little girl's body was being moved, a worn and crumpled purse was found which seemed to have been rummaged from some trash dump. Inside that purse, they found 57 cents and a note scribbled in childish handwriting, which read, "This is to help build the little church bigger so more children can go to Sunday school. For two years she had saved for this offering of love. When the pastor tearfully read that note, he knew instantly what he would do.

Carrying this note and the cracked, red purse to the pulpit, he told the story of her unselfish

love and devotion. He challenged his congregation to get busy and raise enough money for the larger building.

But this isn't the end of the story! A newspaper learned of the story and published it. It was read by a realtor who offered them a parcel of land worth many thousands. When told that the church could not pay for it, he let them have it for 57 cents. Church members made large donations. Checks came for far and wide. Within five years the little girl's gift had increased to \$250,000.00—a huge sum for the turn of the century. Her unselfish love had paid large dividends.

The next time you're in Philadelphia, stop by Temple Baptist Church, with a seating capacity of 3,300. Then take a look at Temple University, where hundreds of students are taught. Have a look, too, at the Good Samaritan Hospital and at a Sunday school building which houses hundreds of people, so that no child in the area will ever need to be left outside during Sunday school time.

In one of the rooms of this building may be seen the picture of the sweet face of the little girl whose 57 cents, so sacrificially saved, made such remarkable history. Just goes to show you what God can do with 57 cents.

Can we be any less generous when called on to carry out the work God has given us to do?



Florida Department of Veterans Affairs Update

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

VA, Elizabeth Dole Foundation offer Covid Respite Relief for Veteran Caregivers

AUGUST 5, 2020 – The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in partnership with the [Elizabeth Dole Foundation](#) (EDF) today announced the launch of a new foundation program granting family caregivers access to no-cost, short-term aid to help those caring for wounded, ill or injured Veterans or service members in their homes during the coronavirus pandemic.

Under the [Respite Relief for Military and Veteran Caregivers](#) program, caregivers of Veterans can apply to receive approximately 24-hours of respite care from a [CareLinx](#) professional to help with bathing, companionship, cooking, exercising, grooming, light housekeeping, medical and medication reminders, mobility assistance, transportation and other activities.

“Caregivers charged with caring for our nation’s Veterans face new challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic,” said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. “They have become increasingly isolated and are

Continued on next page



Florida Honors Purple Heart Recipients

Gov. Ron DeSantis signed the annual Florida Purple Heart Day Proclamation. The Florida Legislature unanimously passed legislation in 2012 establishing Aug. 7 as Florida Purple Heart Day to recognize recipients of our nation’s oldest award given to combat-wounded veterans.

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hindered from getting reliable, outside help. This program provides caregivers compassionate and needed relief during this stressful time.”

Respite Relief for Military and Veteran Caregivers will initially be available in select regions of California, **Florida** and Texas. The EDF will work to expand the program to other regions of the country later this year. The [Association for the Advancement of Retired Persons](#) will also be supporting the effort by sharing information about the program with their members in the selected states.

Applicants to the Respite Relief for Military and Veteran Caregivers program will be selected and awarded by the Elizabeth Dole Foundation. Apply at [hidden heroes](#).

The 2020 edition of the [Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide](#) is now available in print, courtesy of the Florida Veterans Foundation. The 32-page full color guide, with new legislative and COVID-19 updates, is also available online [here](#).

To request an individual copy of the Florida Veterans' Benefits Guide, please email FrazierM@fdva.state.fl.us.

To request guides in bulk of 50 copies or more, please email Sferrazza-RiosL@fdva.state.fl.us.



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Cape Canaveral Chapter

By CPT Donn A. Weaver USA (Ret), Chairman Public Relations & Marketing

MOAACC's GDF Presents Florida Tech with \$1,000 for Obstacle Course Maintenance

The Military Officers Association of America Cape Canaveral Chapter (MOAACC) presented a \$1,000 check to the Florida Institute of Technology (FIT) for maintenance on the Air Assault Obstacle Course on July 22. The check was from MOAACC's Good Deeds Foundation (GDF).

The Air Assault Obstacle Course is part of FIT's Challenge Course Complex located in Fellsmere, Florida. The complex is a unique asset among colleges across the nation and provides a variety of military specification courses, including not only the Air Assault Course, but a Leadership Reaction Course, Marine Course, High Rope Course, and a Small Unit Tactics "Airsoft" Course. FIT's ROTC has priority for use of the courses, but it is also used by area high school ROTC programs, and units from Patrick AFB and the Coast Guard. Other organizations such as Scouts, corporations, and even Olympic athletes, have used the facility in the past for a small fee, which serves to defray operating and maintenance costs.

The Air Assault Course and other courses are used to build leadership skills and confidence, as well as prepare Florida Tech ROTC cadets for Air Assault School. Due to COVID-19, course



L-R: LTC Jimmy Crook, Professor of Military Science at Florida Tech; Dave Beach, Asst Director for FL Tech Outdoor Operations; COL Steve Bond, USA (Ret), MOAACC Vice President; MOAACC's CPT Donn Weaver, USA (Ret).

usage is currently down and that means revenue for upkeep and maintenance is also down. Dave Beach, the Assistant Director for Florida Tech's Outdoor Operations, thanked MOAACC for the generous donation, stating it will go a long way to off-set costs incurred due to the COVID-19 situation.

MOAACC is leading an effort to organize other service/veteran organizations and corporations in the community to ensure this unique asset remains available for use by the area's aspiring military officers, military students, and military units.

Good Deeds Foundation Provides Grants to Brevard JROTC Units



Center left: MOAACC President MAJ Tim Pishdad, USA (Ret) presents check to seminar leader LTC Brian Whalen, USA Ret. (center right).

On Friday, July 31, Rear Admiral Wayne Justice (USCG Ret.), Treasurer of the Cape Canaveral Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAACC) Good Deeds Foundation (GDF), presented a symbolic check for \$13,500 to nine JROTC Instructors attending the “en mask” pre-school reopening JROTC planning meeting at Rockledge High School. Each of their units received a \$900 check. GDF will distribute the remaining 6 JROTC checks before school reopens on August 24, a delay caused by COVID-19. In addition, checks for \$550 will be presented to two Sea Cadet and two Civil Air Patrol units which also dedicate their programs to guiding young people, from a variety of schools, to learn about military matters, leadership, discipline, and what it takes to be a good citizen.

For many years the MOAACC GDF has provided support to the 15 Brevard JROTC units representing the Army (8), Navy (2), Air Force (4) and 1 Marine Corps Unit at Palm Bay. There are many expenses involved in a school’s running a successful

JROTC Program. Fundraising is crucial to ensure that all events, awards, support to cadets in need and many other costs, not covered by the schools or Service Branches, are met. Last year’s fundraising was the most successful in the GDF’s six-year history, enabling their generous donations to the JROTC Units.



MOAACC members in attendance (L-R) Steve Bond; Tim Pishdad; Dan McIntyre; Wayne Justice

MOAACC Gives Covid-19 Grants

In mid-June, MOAACC learned about a unique program sponsored by MOAA National to provide up to \$500 to veterans in urgent need of assistance due to direct impact from the COVID-19 pandemic. Given MOAACC's links to the entire veteran community in Brevard, we were quickly able to identify three candidates in urgent need of help. Although not MOAACC members, action through MOAA National over the next several weeks, got them the funds they needed and proved to be one of the more active and rapid response programs in the country according to MOAA National.

Working as a team, MOAACC leaders realized that the Veterans Memorial Center was the best place to identify candidates and Donn Weaver was asked to spear-head the effort.

After the candidates were awarded the grants, Weaver had the chance to interview all three of the Cape Canaveral Chapter nominations for the MOAA National COVID-19 Relief Program about the impact of the funds they received from MOAA.

We reported to MOAA National "On behalf of the Chapter, the largest in the country, we appreciate the program and your efforts to work closely with us to review and approve the three cases."

TESTIMONIALS:

BRIAN: " The MOAA grant allowed me to pay electric bills that left unpaid would have led to turning off our power. My wife has been a diabetic for 50 years and I am now also affected. Both of us are over 60 years of age. Avoiding the average of 94 F temperatures in Brevard County in the summer is critical to our health. Because I was able to tell the Landlord the money was coming as of last week, he allowed us to use some rent money to pay the electric bill and delayed our full rent until a VA claim check and the MOAA money arrived. My wife and I were previously homeless. Until MOAA came through we were facing the same problem yet again. Thank you."

PATRICK: " I was at my wits end as far as finances go after losing so much income in my part time job during the COVID-19 shutdown of the Veterans Memorial Center from March to June 2020. For my wife of a few months and me, it was like a miracle to be approved for the MOAA Grant. It gave us the financial breathing room to be able to put food on the table, cover some utilities and convince the landlord that the remainder of the July rent would be paid. I am very happy that I was chosen to receive the grant and appreciate it more than I can say."

BOB: "Thank you for the consideration of the MOAA Grant. It will help my family and assist us in maintaining our basic needs. Thank you for taking the time and working with the MOAA Cape Canaveral Chapter to consider me and my family for the Grant. It is a very difficult time when your limited pay unexpectedly gets cut due to COVID-19 closures and you can't maintain your affairs. Again, Thank you"

Last Name	First	Sponsor	Service
Cornish	Ryan	LT Watkinson, William	Navy
Gostel	Camryn	CAPT Julius Gostel	Navy
Hayes	Jared	SMSgt Aaron Hayes	Air Force
Hopkins	Alexis	Capt Kimberly Hopkins	Air Force
Hunt	Liam	MSgt David Hunt	Air Force
Kerchner	Pearson	LTC Alan Catron	Army
O'Brien	Christopher	LCDR Timothy O'Brien	Navy
Oates	Patricia	Col Fred Galey	Air Force
Orth	Abigail	Lt Col Gerald Timm	Air Force
Witherspoon	Eric	Maj Mark Witherspoon	Air Force

CONGRATULATIONS to this year's ten MOAACC Scholarship winners, a collection of highly motivated and well-deserving students. Their majors range from STEM programs to Business to Nursing. One recipient coincidentally joined the Air Force the day we notified her of being a winner stating she decided to "give back this great country" by being a part of the service!

Thanks to all who have donated, which without that generosity, this program could not exist.—Joe Tichich

Citrus County Chapter

By COL Mark Bodenheim USAR (Ret), Membership Director, Citrus

The Citrus County Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) was awarded the 2019 national MOAA Five Star "Colonel Marvin J. Harris" Communications Award named in honor of Colonel Marvin J. Harris, USAF (Ret), Director of Public Relations from 1996 until 2011. Each year, national MOAA holds a communications award contest to identify those councils and chapters that do an outstanding job communicating with their members and community. Pictured on left is COL Mark Bodenheim, USA (Ret), receiving the national MOAA five star award certificate with chapter flag medals from chapter president, CAPT Terri Harrison, USN (Ret). The chapter received the highest possible award for COL Bodenheim's creation of a modern format digitized newsletter.



Kingdom of the Sun Chapter

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

Time to Stuff that Bus!

The major summer project for the Kingdom of the Sun (KOS) Chapter in Ocala, FL is our annual "Stuff the Bus" program. This year our KOS "Stuff the Bus" 2020 Chapter team is headed by COL Craig Ham for a second year. Other KOS team members include Lt Col Carol Walker working remotely on

A cart full of backpacks for Legacy Elementary School on July 29, 2020. L-R : Morgen Schooley, School Counselor; COL Craig Ham, KOS-MOAA VP; Marie-Elena Curty, Assistant Principal



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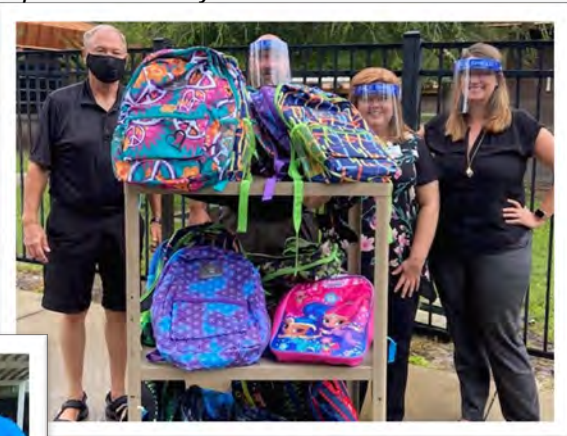
requests for company support, and Linda Byrd (SSM) handling money issues for Stuff the Bus. At this time, the KOS team has raised nearly \$6,000 cash for backpacks for needy Marion County school children. The KOS team will be delivering loaded backpacks to elementary schools starting in late July and into August. The first school to receive 25 loaded backpacks was Romeo Elementary on July 27, 2020; Sparr Elementary, Marion Oaks Elementary, and Fort McCoy School on July 28, 2020; Legacy Elementary on July 29, 2020. Next up is South Ocala Elementary. There were 230 fully loaded backpacks ready to go at the start, and the team is busy packing another 100! Unfortunately, the Stuff the Bus team could not get permission to set up pick-up points at various retail locations for the collection of school supplies. COL Ham has secured a trailer to deliver the remaining backpacks to the different school locations in Marion County. The Marion County School Board has approved a start date of Monday, August 24, 2020, for both traditional in-class learning and online classes chosen by their parents.



A cart full of KOS backpacks at Sparr Elementary school on July 28, 2020. L-R: Gay Street, Principal Sparr Elementary School; COL Ham, KOS-MOAA VP; Melicia Cooper, Assistant Principal Sparr Elementary School



Below: Delivering the first round of KOS "Stuff the Bus" backpacks to Romeo Elementary School on July 27, 2020. L-R: Caroline Spitznogle, School Secretary; Kristin Davidson, Receptionist; COL Craig Ham, KOS-MOAA VP.



Above: KOS backpacks "stacked as high as the eye can see" at Fort McCoy School on July 28, 2020 L-R: COL Craig Ham, KOS-MOAA VP; Eric Ostanik, Assistant Principal; Dossella Elder, Assistant Principal; Jordam Surdam, Principal

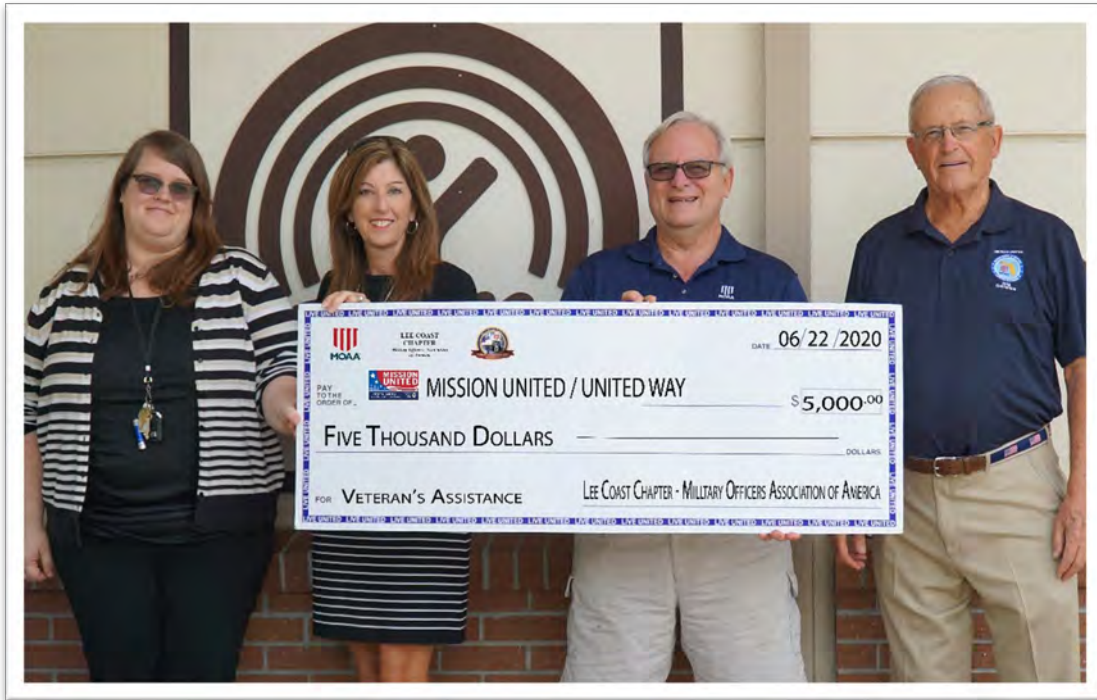


Above L-R: Hazel Almaguer, Guidance Counselor; Jennifer Griffin, Guidance Counselor; Lisa Dreher, Principal; COL Craig Ham, KOS-MOAA VP

Lee Coast Chapter

By Marilyn Leehan

Lee Coast Chapter Foundation Grants \$5,000 to Mission United



L to R: Danielle Brown, Mission United Coordinator – 211; Linda Hafner, VP – 211; Terry Robertson, President Lee Coast MOAA and Roger Triftshouser, Past President & Mission United Board Member

On 6-22-2020 the Lee Coast Chapter Foundation granted \$5,000 to Mission United for continued direct assistance to Veterans. Lee Coast Chapter, under the leadership of Past President Roger Triftshouser, brought "The Blue Print" to the Lee, Hendry & Glades County United Way to establish this tri-county Mission United program. Roger continues to serve on the board and Lee Coast Chapter Foundation Board member, Gary Bryant serves United Way as the Mission United Stakeholder Meetings facilitator.

As expected during this time of Covid, calls to the United Way's 2-1-1 have increased and the following statistics were reported for January-April 2020 at the May Mission United Stakeholder Meeting: 667 total Veteran Callers; with tax assistance, rent, electric, food and water being the top 5 needs; and \$24,286.32 expended to 30 households assisted. Top 5 Agency Coordination of the 59 care coordination cases were: Lee County Veteran Affairs, Jewish Family & Children Services, Lee Co. Human & Veteran Services, CareerSource SW Florida and Florida Dept. of Veteran Affairs attending to the top 5 needs: rent, electric, homeless services, food and transportation.

Sarasota Chapter

By Alan Forrester, Director (Marketing/Publicity)

Scholarships to 11 Students Totaling \$22,000



Above L to R: Cadet Aeryn Sachs; Cadet Noah Fischer; Cadet Juliana Rendle.

Sarasota, Fla. - Three seniors at [Sarasota Military Academy](#), cadets Juliana Rendle, Noah Fischer and Aeryn Sachs, were recently selected to receive scholarships from the [Sarasota Military Officers Foundation](#) (SMOF). These three students are part of 11 students.

Fischer will receive the \$2,000 JROTC Scholarship; Rendle will receive the \$2,000 Merit Scholarship and Sachs will receive the prestigious Kay Blythe Tracy Award in the amount of \$2,000.

The Sarasota Military Officers Foundation awards JROTC and merit-based scholarships to qualified, high-achieving high school seniors in the Greater Sarasota area. In 2020, the Foundation awarded eleven scholarships; of the eleven, SMOF awarded three JROTC scholarships and eight Merit scholarships throughout the entire county. Additionally, an SMA cadet was selected to receive the inaugural Kay Blythe Tracy Award, established after Tracy's passing in 2019.

"We are always positively overwhelmed by the quality of applicants who participate in our scholarship program. Although we are not able to host our annual banquet to recognize the incredible cadets receiving scholarships this year, we want to congratulate them for their hard work and successes," said Claire Power, Director and Chair of the Sarasota Military Officers Foundation Scholarship Committee.

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The applications were reviewed by the scholarship committee established by SMOF.

“Kay Tracy and her husband George volunteered as advocates with Guardian Ad Litem in Sarasota. Kay was a retired university professor, an incredible volunteer, a remarkable woman and a member of the scholarship committee for many years. Giving back to the community and creating opportunities for the next generation was one of her passions,” said Power. “After Kay’s passing in 2019, the Board authorized the creation of this scholarship. We looked for an extraordinary applicant for this award, and found it in Aeryn Sachs. Congratulations to all of our scholarship recipients, we look forward to watching you continue to succeed and positively impact the world around you.”

In addition to creating scholarship opportunities for high school seniors and cadets in the community, the Sarasota Military Officers Foundation also donates to the State College of Florida Veterans program, the University of South Florida Veterans program and the Manatee Technical College East & West campuses Veterans programs. To learn more about the scholarships or the Sarasota Military Officers Foundation, contact Claire Power at bcpower@comcast.net or visit <https://www.sarasotamoaa.com/>.



Sarasota Mayor “ZOOMS” with MOAS

While the physical luncheon at Michael’s on East was canceled due to Coronavirus situation, the chapter was pleased to host a ZOOM video presentation with Mayor Jan Ahearn-Koch who was originally scheduled to attend our May Scholarship luncheon.

The mayor, a leader in our community’s battle with the virus, provides some insights into the city’s process leading up to the initial “lockdown” and the more recent action to require the wearing of masks when in public within the city limits. She responded to questions that ran the gamut from homelessness within the city to school reopening, and city/county relations.

Mayor Ahearn-Koch has an extensive background in academia and service. In 1986, she graduated from the American University in Paris with a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs. She went on to receive her Master of Arts in International Affairs from Columbia University’s Graduate School of International and Public Affairs in 1989. She also holds a Benjamin Franklin diploma from the Institut d’Etudes Politiques.

Jan Ahearn-Koch was elected to the Sarasota City Commission in 2017, and in November 2019 was unanimously appointed Mayor by her fellow commissioners.

South Central Florida Chapter

By COL Mike Borders, President

Chapter Contributes \$5,000 to Veterans Council



L to R: MOAA chapter Treasurer David Grey, chapter member Charlie Martin, chapter President Mike Borders, Highlands County Veterans Council President Harry Marsh, MOAA chapter member Freddie Carino, and MOAA chapter Vice President Glenn West, with the \$5,000 grant donation check.

For the fourth time in three years, the South Central Florida Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) was one of a few chapters around the nation awarded the MOAA Foundation grant in the amount of \$5,000. The chapter was awarded an additional \$5,000 for COVID relief.

The chapter uses the funds to support the Veterans Assistance Fund through the Highlands County Veterans Council. This fund provides food and financial assistance to needy veterans in the community.

With this year's grant, the chapter has provided a total of more than \$17,000 to the Veterans Council over the last three years, not counting the additional \$5,000.

"Helping our brother and sister veterans who are less fortunate is all about taking care of our own and leaving no veteran behind," said Colonel Mike Borders, U.S. Army (Ret), the South Central Florida Chapter president. "The first three iterations of the program proved invaluable, and we want to continue our support and assistance."

As an active member of the Veterans Council, the local MOAA chapter plays an integral role in the operation of the assistance fund and will continue to help as long as there are veterans in need.

SCFC “Snowbird” Gives Back in Ohio



Mahoning and Shenango Valleys (Ohio) Chapter member Janet Oglesby (standing) observes (from left) student veterans Kera Mayfield and Randall Gillum play video games with chapter members Maj. Carl A. Nunziato, USA (Ret), and Maj. Rick Williams, USA (Ret), at the Carl A. Nunziato Veterans Resource Center at Youngstown State University. (Photo courtesy Mahoning and Shenango Valleys Chapter)

MAJ Carl A. Nunziato, USA (Ret) is a snowbird member of the South Central Florida chapter.

*By MOAA Military Officer
Contributing Editor Blair Drake,
Reprinted with permission.*

Student veterans at Youngstown State University (YSU) in Ohio have a state-of-the-art space on campus dedicated to serving their unique needs. The Carl A. Nunziato Veterans Resource Center, one of the few stand-alone buildings for

student veterans in the nation, includes a lounge, televisions and video games, a community room, restrooms, computer labs, and a kitchenette stocked with donated snacks. It also offers VA counselors who can come to the center from Cleveland Veteran Center to meet with students.

It opened in September 2014 thanks to the efforts of several veteran alumni who led the campaign to raise \$1.4 million for the center's creation. Among them, its

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namesake: Maj. Carl A. Nunziato, USA (Ret), a Life Member of MOAA and member of the [Mahoning and Shenango Valleys Chapter](#). In 2018, YSU renamed the center — originally called the Veterans Resource Center — in Nunziato's honor.

Nunziato, a native of Youngstown who earned his commission as a second lieutenant through the YSU ROTC program, served two tours in Vietnam, during which he lost both of his legs after getting hit by a mortar during an enemy attack. He spent two years recovering at Walter Reed before earning his degree from Case Western Reserve University School of Law in Cleveland and then returning to his hometown where he worked for nearly 30 years in the banking industry.

Nunziato isn't the only MOAA member who has had an integral role with the center.

Coast Guard CWO Don Oglesby was a charter member of Mahoning and Shenango Valleys Chapter when he passed away in March 2014. Oglesby had presented the MOAA medal to the YSU ROTC cadet since 2010. Memorial donations in Oglesby's honor that the chapter then matched were used to create the video game area for the center. Today, the chapter continues to upgrade the entertainment center as necessary, and many chapter members have made personal donations to the center and to a scholarship fund for veterans and currently serving military members.

The Carl A. Nunziato Veterans Resource Center is managed by chapter member Maj. Patrick "Rick" Williams, USA (Ret), who has served as associate director of the Office of Veterans Affairs at YSU since 2013. The center has made the services Williams' office provides more visible to the student veteran population.

"Formerly, my office was tucked away on the top floor of an administrative building, and nobody knew where I was," he said. "When the Veterans Resource Center opened on campus, I moved into a 6,000-square-foot, two-story building dedicated to the success of our roughly 350 military-connected student population."

Williams, who served 26 years in the Army and was a military science professor at YSU, said the center helps current and prior military members and eligible dependents achieve their academic goals and navigate their education benefits.

"While we can't take care of every aspect of the college experience, we try to project ourselves as a 'one-stop shop' for veterans," he said. "The majority of veterans on campus would tell you they love having a place on campus to get all their answers to veteran-related issues."

Suwannee River Valley Chapter

By Maj Paul Wengert, USAF (Ret), Immediate Past President

From farm boy to combat veteran...CWO Herb Hicks

Editor's Note: This lightly edited article is part of a series in the local Lake City Reporter which introduce MOAA Suwannee River Valley chapter members to the local community and detail what a military career can entail

CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER HERBERT "HERB" HICKS *From farm boy to combat veteran. He Persevered – Succeeded and Served*

Herb Hicks was born in 1934 in Glen Saint Mary, Florida. Growing up on a farm in rural Baker County, he would be plowing a field behind a mule and see the planes from Cecil Field flying overhead. He thought, "one day I'm going to do that." During high school he came to realize that he wanted to be a Navy pilot. He believed that the best way to do that was to enlist in the Marine Corps Reserves to begin the process. He was trained in aircraft maintenance and came to realize that he had to have a college education to become a pilot.

He found another way to achieve his goal of flying. Since the Army did not require a college degree to become a pilot, Herb joined the U.S. Army in 1953. Following basic training, and technical training in diesel mechanics, Herb was assigned to The Presidio in San Francisco and then volunteered for Korea but was sent, instead, to a UCL harbor craft unit in Bordeaux, France. While in France he *twice* applied for pilot training and was not accepted. First, he was told he had too much time left on his tour and subsequently told that he had too little left on his enlistment! *He was just 22 years old – and he was not deterred!*

When he returned to the states in 1956, after completing his 3 year enlistment, he entered the Army Reserves in Jacksonville, working as an aircraft mechanic. He met and married his life-long love, Earnestine. Herb returned to active duty with the Army in 1957 and was assigned to the Army Aviation School as an aircraft mechanic and instructor at Fort Eustis,

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Top to bottom: U-6A fixed wing,; Piasecki H-21; Chinook; and unidentified Army fixed wing.

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Virginia. In 1961 he was assigned to Fort Richardson, Alaska as an aviation technical inspector. He packed his family into a station wagon and drove to Alaska. Then, in 1962 fate began to turn in Herb's favor and his dreams of flying were becoming a reality.

Perseverance had paid off and Herb's 3rd application to Army flight school was approved and he drove his family back to Florida; he was off to Fort Wolters, Texas, for basic flight training in helicopters and then to Fort Rucker, Alabama for advanced training. When asked how he felt about it being helicopters, rather than fixed-wing aircraft, he said "I didn't care, I just wanted to fly." It had taken 3 tries and 11 years from his first application to reach his goal.

Upon completing flight school, Herb was commissioned as a Warrant Officer 1 (W1) and a year later was promoted to W2). He was assigned to Fort Belvoir, VA in CH-21 Shawnee ("Flying Banana") helicopter in support of the Pentagon. In 1965 he went to Korea for a year. During that tour he had the worst experience of his career. On a mission transporting US Army Green Berets along the DMZ, the engine failed minutes after takeoff. Herb was able to successfully crash land the helicopter without any injuries, despite the aircraft being a total loss.

Fort Sill, Oklahoma was next and the forming up of three CH – 47 Chinook helicopter units for Viet Nam and he was shipped out to Viet Nam in June, 1967, assigned to the Aviation unit at Dong Ba Thin. Returning from Viet Nam 15 months later, he was again assigned to Fort Eustis, VA. More good news came in 1968 when he was selected to attend *fixed wing flight school* at Fort Stewart, Georgia and became qualified in O1-E Bird Dog and U-6 Beaver aircraft and later completed the

multiengine course (U – 8F Seminole) at Fort Rucker, Alabama. He was now qualified in *both rotary and fixed wing aircraft; a very rare accomplishment.*

1970 -71 saw a return to Viet Nam, flying fixed wing classified radio intercept missions out of Can Tho, RVN. Herb rotated back to the US in 1971 to attend the Advanced Warrant Officer course at Fort Rucker and then was assigned to Fort Bragg in Military Intelligence. In 1972, he was assigned to flying duty in a helicopter unit in Manheim, Germany for 3 years flying CH – 47's, followed by a 5-year assignment to a Chinook helicopter unit at Hunter Field, Savannah, Georgia

Following a second Korea tour, Herb retired in 1986 after 35 years military service; 21 duty assignments including 5 overseas tours. He accumulated 8,560 flying hours; 1600 of which were combat hours.

Chief Warrant Officer Hicks' awards include Legion of Merit (the 7th highest military award), Bronze Star, 24 Air Medals, Meritorious Service Medal with Oak Leaf cluster, Army Commendation Medal with 5 Oak Leaf Clusters, Meritorious Unit Commendation, Viet Nam Service Medal, Viet Nam Campaign Medal, National Defense Service Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, Army Achievement Medal, with Oak Leaf cluster, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Armed Forces Reserve Medal and the Master Army Aviation Badge.

Herb's family's story is one of service to country, that patriotism is a family tradition. All 5 brothers served in the military; 3 in the Army and one each in the Navy and Coast Guard (3 during World War II and 2 during Viet Nam).

Tampa Chapter

By LTC Robert F. Sawallesh, USA (Ret); Director, Operation Helping Hand

Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office Presents \$7,163.61 to Operation Helping Hand

From left to right are
 Captain David M.
 Arthur, HCSO,
 Department of Patrol
 Services – District III;
 Mr. William Szydowski,
 Lutz, Op HH Treasurer;
 Sheriff Chad
 Chronister, HCSO; LTC
 Jim Griffin, USA (Ret)
 Hyde Park, Op HH
 Chairman; and LTC
 Robert Sawallesh, USA
 (Ret) Valrico, Op HH
 Director.



On July 23, 2020, Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister proudly presented a check for \$7,163.61 to Operation Helping Hand. Members of the Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office donated the money which will be used to assist the active duty wounded and injured and their families at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa, Florida.

Looking for Eyewitnesses: Laos Rescue, Oct 12, 1966

Neil Constantino, a retired USAF pilot from the Vietnam era, based in Tampa, and published author is researching another book. He is looking for eyewitnesses to a crash and subsequent rescue on October 12, 1966.

"We lost three aircraft and one pilot in less than 30 minutes ...I was not an eyeball witness but heard the entire event real-time and I have been trying to locate those were witnesses and know the details."

He can be contacted at 813-784-4669 or neil.cosentino@icloud.com.

Neil
 Constantino's
 first book of
 stories of his
 Air Force
 career.



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

The MOAA Florida Council of Chapters (FCOC) is comprised of 44 Chapters with nearly 8,000 members and their families. FCOC is one of MOAA's largest Councils. MOAA has a membership of over 380,000 members in all 50 States.

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

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

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

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

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FCOC

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

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

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pparks@igc.org
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Military Officers Association of America



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The
Communiqué
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A current issue of **The Council Communiqué** can be found at the Florida Council of Chapters Web Site: <http://www.moaafi.org/>, drop down menu Events/News. Opinions expressed by writers are their own, and may not express the positions of FCOC or the MOAA.