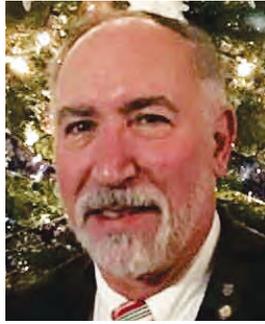




# From the President's Pen

By Nick Marotta

First, as I mentioned last month, we have an opening on the NWFMOA Board of Directors for a surviving spouse liaison. You do not need to be a surviving spouse to fill this position. If you are interested please contact me or any board member, we'd love to have you.



Nick Marotta

Second, we still need a Second Vice President. The primary duties of this position will be membership. As I wrote in last month's column, membership is key to maintaining this organization. If interested, please let me, or any board member know. I'd like to have this position filled.

I'd like to address a few items of concern from the 2018 survey.

Item 1. More support for those affected by the widow's tax. This is one of 3 issues MOAA is addressing with its Storming the Hill program. In addition, the March 2019 issue of Military Officer has four pre-addressed mailers regarding the Widow's Tax. The mailers are addressed to the majority and minority leaders of the House and Senate. We can do our part by participating in this mail-in.

Item 2. Make cash flow positive. At the most recent board meeting we did address this issue. We will be raising the price of the meal to \$14 starting at the 11 July 2019 meeting. If you are thinking that July 11 is not the first Thursday, you are correct. The first Thursday is July 4. We are also looking at a few other ideas to save some more money; details to follow.

Item 3. More young, but retired members. We are in need of a Second Vice President; however, each and every chapter member is now a chapter membership recruiter. Invite your friends, acquaintances, anyone eligible to join. Spread the word. Keep in mind, a member does not have to be retired, only someone who served as an Officer.

## 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.

Item 4. Change meeting time, date; change food line time. These were a couple of items lumped together. These were discussed, but not enough interest to change. If more members voice concern over time and date change we will reconsider.

Item 5. More community involvement and membership participation. NWFMOA recently submitted for a grant to be involved with One Hopeful Place, chapter participates

Continued on page 5



**Military Family Appreciation Day**

**Presented by:**  
**Step One Automotive Group**

*A special event for all Military and their families at the FWB Landing!!*

**April 13, 2019**  
**11 am - 6 pm**

*This event is **FREE** for all active duty Military, Veterans, and their families.*

**It's a full day of family-friendly fun!**

- Live music and entertainment
- Children's play area with inflatables
- Military services exhibitors
- Food and drinks from Sonny's BBQ
- Variety of food vendors

Drawings for incredible prizes, including a BOTE Paddle Board

**For more info call the FWB Chamber at 850-244-8191**

Children's Play Area  
**Sponsored by:**  **EGLIN FEDERAL CREDIT UNION**

**By Chaplain Tom Azar**

My wife and I attended a birthday party of a beautiful woman we have known well. Her throat was covered in a large bandage; she had recently undergone two serious surgeries. As people of faith we have compassion for all—neighbors, friends and yet the busy metabolism of our daily life can often diminish how much true compassion we are able to share. In other words it's hard to give quality compassion when we do not have quantity insights and time.

This young woman recently gave birth to a beautiful daughter—a healthy, energetic, a reflection of both parents. She began feeling tired, dizzy and weak. Her obstetric appointments revealed a swelling in the thyroid— she had Graves' disease. As she continued to care for her family the symptoms increased. The endocrinologist recommended, took and discovered the results of her biopsy— cancer.

After several conversations with doctors and family they prayerfully decided not to go to a regular surgeon or even the cancer surgeon but to a specialist who exclusively operated on cancerous thyroids. Just as generals decide the best people and platforms, her medical team recommended Tampa Hospital.

She drove down with her husband, met with the doctor and surgical team the day before. Next morning she was ready. They rolled her from pre-op into the operating room; the anesthesiologist at the last minute told her and the surgeon that her thyroid was extremely toxic and recommended against proceeding.

They rolled her out; she dressed and drove back to Fort Walton. Discouraged over the delay she realized if a regular doctor performed the surgery she may not be alive today. Her surgeon told her a toxic thyroid could rupture and spread throughout her body.

She spent the next three months adding and increasing her medications in order to reduce the toxicity so the specialist could operate. The regiment worked and she returned to Tampa where they removed her entire thyroid, part of her para-thyroid and lymph glands.

In this season of Easter and Passover people of faith cherish our relationship with our religious friends, the places we worship and the special services that we attend.

But the rituals, leaders, denominational labels and other religious trappings are secondary. They are outward signs that unless rooted in a genuine internal relationship with God, do not save by themselves.

The basis of true Godly faith and the expressions of it rest with our unique intimate love relationship with our Creator and Redeemer. All religions echo Jesus paramount benchmark—His answer to the religious lawyer who asked “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” “Love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.” It's all about our vertical love with God that's expressed horizontally with people.

Why would anyone settle for institutions and leaders that do not honor and obey God? They cannot give us the true healing, guidance and reconciliation we need in order to be right with God and spend eternity in heaven? In war as in sickness we encounter God abruptly, face to face and with the realization I am not in control.

When individuals put too much emphasis on man-made institutions, rituals or persons without a reborn heart, then they are trusting in what they can see. True faith as St Paul says “is of the things we cannot see.”

Today several major denominations are facing tremendous upheaval from immoral lifestyles and criminal practices that are contrary to Holy Scripture.

Would we send our loved ones to second rate hospitals, schools or businesses? No one could forgive a physician who failed to diagnose correctly and resulted in the death of a family member.

The last few months have been most tumultuous. I have cared for thousands of individuals like many pastors, priests, and rabbis over the past four decades, but when your own family member contracts cancer it shakes your foundations to the core. Yes, that beautiful woman is our daughter and she is alive today because of right choices. She and her husband spent hours researching for the best person and place—her physical life depended on it. Are we researching for the right spiritual persons and places that reflect God's standard? Do we give the same serious approach to our spiritual life?

We are all each other's brothers and sisters so let's help one another research so as to make the right spiritual choices because a weaker choice will have eternal repercussions.

It takes prayer, humility and courage to not settle for second choice, and that is what Easter people strive for.

# Community Outreach

By Dave Parisot

## **Military Family & Veterans Appreciation Day; MOAA Community Outreach Grant to Support One Hopeful Place Homeless Veterans; 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of 1st Air Commando Group of WW2**

Our NWFMOA chapter continues to be active in our community. On Saturday, April 13th we will have an information booth at the **Military Family and Veterans Appreciation Day** at the Fort Walton Beach Landing on Brooks Street from 11:00AM to 6:00PM. As usual, we need 4 to 5 volunteers to work the booth. Please contact Dave Parisot at (850) 613-6545 or [dparisot@cox.net](mailto:dparisot@cox.net) if you are willing to do a 2-hour shift from 11AM – 1PM, 1 – 3PM, or 3 – 5PM.

We have submitted an application to the **MOAA Foundation for a Community Outreach Grant** for \$5,000 to purchase furniture for the Phase 2 expansion of One Hopeful Place (FWB) to house homeless military veterans. If the grant is approved, the funds will be used to purchase beds, mattresses, and dressers for the new dormitory rooms. We will then call on our members to assist with the unpacking and assembly of the furniture items at a future date. Hopefully we will have a positive response from the MOAA foundation by early May. Last year NWFMOA received a grant of \$3,000 to help fund the annual Homeless Veterans Stand Down.

On March 12th, the Greater FWB chamber of Commerce hosted a reception at the newly renovated Gulfview Hotel



**Lt Col Dick Cole, age 103, sole-surviving Doolittle Raider and surviving member of the 1st Air Commando Group, is pictured with Maj Dave Parisot March 12th at the 75th anniversary of the 1st Air Commando Group at the renovated Gulfview Hotel.**

Continued on page 5

# Pirates (cont.)

Continued from the front page

Mike Thomlin is the manager of the Florida Public Archaeology Network's Destination Archaeology Resource Center and a Research Associate at the University of West Florida. He received his B.A. in History and a M.A. in history/Public History from the University of West Florida. Mike has spent over a decade working as a museum professional in public archaeology, is a Certified Guide with the National Association for Interpretation, and has worked on a variety of heritage interpretative and heritage tourism projects across the state. Most recently he is working on a collaborative project to designate the Florida Panhandle into a National Heritage Area. He currently serves on the Trail of Florida Indian Heritage Board of Directors as Vice President, St. Michael's Cemetery Board of Directors, and the Gulf Coast Science Festival Advisory Committee. Mike has a passion for maritime history and is a certified computer nitrox/scientific diver. His research interests include public history, maritime history, public archaeology, museum studies, and heritage interpretation. His is published author with articles appearing in *Legacy*, *Coriolis*, and *the Journal of the American Revolution*.

*The Presentation: Pirates! The Last Scourge of the Gulf:* Two centuries ago, a massive wave of piracy struck the Gulf of Mexico and terrorized shipping along the Gulf coast. Florida was especially dangerous for travelers. Jean Lafitte and Charles Gibbs, two of the most notorious pirates from this period, had close ties to the Florida panhandle. One case of piracy even wound up in the court of West Florida in Pensacola and made newspaper headlines across the nation. This talk examines some of the broader aspects of piracy during the early 1800s in the Gulf and Caribbean. It also focuses on the current archaeological evidence for possible pirate ships from this period that wrecked beneath the waters of the Gulf.

Please join us Thursday April 4th at noon at the Yacht Club. Also, be sure to make your reservations early as we are expecting a full house again. Reservation can be made online at [www.nwfmoo.org](http://www.nwfmoo.org) or via email to Fred Westfall [nwfredreservation@gmail.com](mailto:nwfredreservation@gmail.com). I hope to see you all there!

## **SUPPORT MOAA**

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.

## President's Pen (cont.)

Continued from page 2

in Veterans Stand Down, in 2018, \$3,000 was provided to this through a MOAA grant. Each and every member is encouraged to participate, feel free to jump in. Can you speak? We could use members as guest speakers. I'm sure we have a few 'sleepers' out there who would wow us with their experiences and expertise.

Item 6. Don't rush to change an already top notch organization; I like it the way it is. We will not rush to change; however, a little tweak here and there will help us operate at our best.

We as an organization will continue to look at the survey results, and you are always free to tell it like it is. If you don't like something, tell us.

How many members are aware MOAA sends out a weekly newsletter email? I get mine on Friday. If you are not getting the weekly email, you can go to the MOAA website and change your settings to start receiving it. Go the 'account' sign in and look for a tab saying "opt in/opt out", once in that area enter your email and set your preference for MOAA information. Also, go to the chapter website NWFMOA.org and you can view the same information. On the home page, there is a button that flashes 'Take Action' and 'Click Here'. If you click that button, you will get the same information as the email.

Once again in April, MOAA will be 'Storming the Hill'. MOAA will be flooding the offices of every Senator and Representative with a unified message. The three items that will be advocated during this event are The Widow's Tax, Military Pay and Benefits, and Tricare Benefits.

On Monday May 27, Eglin AFB will be hosting its annual gate to gate run. I plan to participate (walking). If any member would like to join me (walking) let me know, it will be a fun event. This is another great opportunity to get public visibility and participate in chapter events.

Continued on page 7



## Community Outreach (cont.)

Continued from page 4

to honor three military veteran legends. These three are the remaining members of the **Air Force's 1st Air Commando Group**. They are Lt Col Richard "Dick" Cole, USAF, Ret., SMSgt William Cartwright, USAF, Ret., and SSgt Patt Meara, USAF, Ret. Lt Col Cole, at age 103, is also the sole-surviving member of the Doolittle Raiders (see accompanying photos). This event commemorated the first Allied aerial invasion on March 5 and 6, 1944, in Burma. The 1st Air Commando Group was the forerunner of what we know today as U.S. air Force Special Operations Command. Chapter members seen in attendance were MG **Richard Secord**, Lt Col **Howard Fisher**, Col **Eddie McAlister**, Lt Col **Bernie Frakes**, Maj **Charles Merkel**, Maj **Dave Parisot**, and Honorary Member **Jerry Williams**.



SSgt Patt Meara, USAF, Ret., and SMSgt William Cartwright, USAF, Ret., are surviving members of the 1st Air Commando Group formed during World War 2 in 1944



Col Terri Coles, USA, Ret., MOAA Senior director for Council and chapter Affairs, was the speaker at the March member luncheon.

# Scholarship Fund

by Dave Parisot

As I write this, the Scholarship Board of Director members are evaluating and scoring the seven scholarship applications we received this year from local JROTC cadets. Later this month (March) four of the seven will have in-person interviews with Board members to determine which cadet will be awarded our **Lt Col Jim Heavener Memorial Scholarship** of \$4,000. Each of the other six applicants will be awarded \$2,000 scholarships. The seven cadets will be our guests at the NWFMOA luncheon on May 2nd when the scholarships will be officially awarded. Please make plans to attend and honor these outstanding JROTC cadets. Information on the applicants will be in the May 2019 issue of The Defender. Mark your calendars now to attend the May 2nd Scholarship Luncheon to honor and congratulate this year's scholarship winners.

In addition to our scholarship winners, the members of the Gold Century Club and our Platinum and Gold Business Donors will also be our luncheon guests on May 2nd. This is just a small way to recognize and thank them for their financial support of the Scholarship Program.

**Ken Zepp** is a new member of the BG Frank Glunn Century Club Century Club renewals in March 2019 are **Nick Marotta**, **Les Matheson**, **Rod Gerdes**, and **Al Bills**. At the 50/50 raffle in March, our speaker from MOAA, **Col (Ret) Terri Coles**, drew **Ken Zepp's** ticket. Ken won \$97 and \$97 went to the Scholarship Fund. Ken added \$3 to his winnings and joined the Century Club! Thank you to all who purchased raffle tickets

Here is the complete list of **Gold Century Club** members (\$500 cumulative minimum donation since 2015) and **BG Frank Glunn Century Club** members (\$100 minimum donation) for the most previous 12 months of 2018 along with our **Business Donors**. Your support is greatly appreciated. Remember, all of these donations are used to fund our scholarships to JROTC cadets.

**Gold Century Club:** **Bill Ryan** (Feb 2016); **Ruth Cullen** (Oct 2016); **Dave Parisot** (Feb 2017); **Janet Taylor** (Mar 2017); **Chris Beam** (Mar 2017); **Bob Garcia** (July 2017); **Rod Gerdes** (Nov 2017); **Larry Bush** (Nov 2017); **Dr. Howard Fisher** (Nov 2017); **Eileen Arpke** (Feb 2018); **Fred Westfall** (Apr 2018); **Clyde Locke** (Apr 2018); WWII, Korea, and Vietnam Veteran **Sam Lombardo** (July 2018); **Dennis Phillips** (Aug 2018); **Karl Eschmann** (Oct 2018); **Carol Baker** (Jan 2019); and **Ann Adelsperger** (Feb 2019).

**BG Frank Glunn Century Club** (past 12 months):  
March 2018: **Al Bills** (Renewal). April 2018: **Bob Gramm** (Renewal); **Fred Westfall** (Renewal); **Clyde Locke** (Renewal); May 2018: **Dann Matizza** (Renewal); **Dennis Phillips** (Renewal); **Larry Bush** (Renewal); June 2018: **Rod Gerdes** (Renewal). July 2018: **Larry Tashlik**; **Scott Berry** (Renewal); WWII Vet **Sam Lombardo** (Renewal) (In memory of Jean Lombardo); **Don Litke** (Renewal) (In memory of Kay Litke); **Joy Houck** (In memory of Major Stanley Houck); August 2018: **Doris Day**; **Ruth Cullen** (Renewal)(In memory of Bill Cullen); **Dennis Phillips** (Renewal). September 2018: **Christine Hallion**; **Joe Stevens**; WWII Vet **Bill Colgan** (Renewal); **George Colton**; October 2018: **Bob Garcia** (Renewal); **Karl Eschmann** (Renewal) (In memory of B/Gen Bud Day and Kay Litke); **Chris Beam** (Renewal); **Douglas Hardin** (Renewal) (In memory of Gen. Bill Kirk). November 2018: **Pete Peterzen** (Renewal); **Dr. Howard Fisher** (Renewal); **Bob Secrest**; December 2018: **Kathleen Bush**; **Jean Dutton** (Renewal); **Larry Bush** (Renewal); and **Dave Parisot** (Renewal) (In memory of Chong Parisot); **Kay Dent** (In memory of Troy Dent and Larry Ketter); January 2019: **Dick Prater** (Renewal); **Clyde Locke** (Renewal); **Charlie Brown** (Renewal); and **Dennis Phillips** (Renewal); **Wayne (Dave) Davis** (In honor of Doris Day); **Janet Taylor** (Renewal) (In honor of Maj Bill Ryan); **Carol Baker** (Renewal) (In memory of Col. David Baker). February 2019: **Dr. Roger Riggensbach** (Renewal) (In memory of Ashlyn Rhodes); **Ann Adelsperger** (In memory of Lt Col R. Wayne Adelsperger); **Fred Boyer** (Renewal); **Eileen Arpke** (Renewal); **Dann Mattiza** (Renewal); March 2019: **Nick Marotta** (Renewal); **Les Matheson** (Renewal); **Rod Gerdes** (Renewal); **Al Bills** (Renewal); and **Ken Zepp**.

**2018 Business Platinum Donor** (\$750 minimum donation): July 2018: **Shalimar Cheers Pub**.

**2017/2018 Business Gold Donor** (\$500 - \$749): January 2018: **Merrill Lynch (Beam, McLaughlin & Associates)** (Renewal); December 2018: **Eglin Federal Credit Union** (Renewal)

**2017/2018 Business Silver Donors** (\$250 - \$499): November 2018: (Renewal); **Indian Bayou Golf & Country Club** (In-kind, Renewal); December 2018: **Rocky Bayou Golf Course** (In-kind, Renewal).

Continued on page 7

# Scholarship Fund (cont.)

Continued from page 6

**2017/2018 Business Bronze Donors** (\$100 - \$249):  
February 2018: **David Beaulieu, Agent for New York Life Insurance**; November 2018: **Gator Lakes Golf Course** (In-kind, Renewal); **Mary’s Kitchen** (FWB & Destin) (In-kind, Renewal); **Buffalo’s Reef Restaurant** (FWB) (In-kind, Renewal); **Shalimar Cheers Pub** (In-kind, Renewal); **Shalimar Pointe Golf Course** (In-kind, Renewal); December 2018: **Popeye’s Louisiana Kitchen** (FWB) (In-kind, Renewal); **Tammy’s Journeys** (FWB) (In-kind, Renewal); **Painting With A Twist** (FWB) (In-kind, Renewal); **Destin Party Boat Fishing** (In-kind, Renewal); **Slick Mick’s Deli & Grille** (FWB); **Connect with Flowers** (Shalimar) (In-kind, Renewal); **Destin Party Boat Fishing** (In-kind, Renewal).

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

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

# President’s Pen (cont.)

Continued from page 5

I like giving a monthly scam alert tip. For this month, it’s gift cards. If you get a call from someone claiming to be from the IRS, a utility company, a credit card company, or anyone demanding money and it has to be paid with a gift card, hang up, it’s a scam. Gift cards are for gifts not for payments. Trust me the real IRS does not want an iTunes card.

Finally, I’d like to add this is my third month of being President of the NWFMOA Chapter. What an experience, considering at my second meeting we had a MOAA Director visit! I appreciate every chapter member; let’s keep the momentum going with this fine chapter. Talk to me, email me, phone me.

## SCHOLARSHIP DONATION FORM

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

Donor Information (if not printed on check):

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

 **Got a Chapter question?** 

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 Spouse    Phone

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 Address                                      City                                      State & Zip

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address

Rank                      Service                                      MOAA Mbr. No

Regular       Reserve       National Guard       Active Duty       Retired

**This application is for:**

Life Member     New Member     Renewal     Surviving Spouse     Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**Membership Application/Renewal**

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

**Membership Renewal**  
 1yr—\$25.00, 2 yr—\$48.00, 3 yr—\$65.00

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96-100	50.00	66-70	275.00
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86-90	110.00	56-60	335.00
81-85	150.00	51-55	360.00
76-80	195.00	-50	395.00

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