

From the President's Pen

By Scott Berry

Adios (again)!

I've recently completed a remedial course in how to read a calendar upon realizing that my "swan song" column in last month's issue was 30 days premature.



Scott Berry

So here I go again. I was getting a little nostalgic so I dug up my first column as chapter president back in 2015. I wrote about my "M.A.P." for the future. **The M was for MEMBERSHIP.** At the time, membership was in a downward spiral and had been for some time. I wanted to change that but faced many obstacles. One of these, as Gen Manor mentioned in a subsequent discussion with me, is that younger people (I'll be arbitrary and say below 45 years old) are not the "joiners" as most of the chapter membership are 65+. Mandatory Officer Club membership doesn't have the hammer it used to. I could also mention participation in Combined Federal Campaign but I digress.....

The A was for ADVOCACY. That is fundamental to Mother MOAA's mission and I wanted to encourage more involvement and inertia from us at the grassroots level. Attending monthly meetings, loudly stating "harrumph, harrumph" with fellow meeting attendees about the sorry decline in many of our common values, then returning home without taking any action is in no way an ingredient of advocacy.

PUBLIC RECORD

New Members:

Ed Drury, Major, USAF (Ret)
Michael La Garde, Lt Col, USA (Ret)

In Memorium

Marian Van Damme, Surviving Spouse, 11/26/2018.
Betty J. Danford, Surviving Spouse, 11/20/2018.
Anne Singleton, Wife of Paul Singleton, LtCol, USAF, 12/5/2018.

Finally, **the P was for PARTICIPATION.** Fifteen attendees at a monthly meeting at Westwood were considered successful and the chapter had thrown money on the bar to attract members to Officer Calls with similar (dismal) results.

So fast-forward to the present and I look at how far we've come and what kind of organization I'm handing over to my successor. Well, I think we've done a pretty darn good job. The downward trend in membership has turned into a positive one and we're on a gradual but also steady growth. Participation has skyrocketed averaging 60+ at meetings and SRO at Officer Calls. Advocacy is harder to evaluate but Dave Parisot has led the charge in educating the public about who we are and what we stand for through booths at military appreciation day events and a float (I use that term very loosely) for the Billy Bowlegs Torchlight Parade. The Scholarship Fund is booming and JROTC cadets are seeing the benefit of that. Some chapter members are in the news for their support of political candidates and incumbents who share our values. Also, an increasing number of members have queried me about how to contact our representatives. So I rate that as positive although without the quantitative metrics of the other two areas.

Now please clearly understand that I am in NO way taking personal credit for all of this. No person in a leadership position ever accomplished the mission by themselves. It's the product of many people working together and bringing to bear their own talents, time, and devotion. And there are many of you out there which I thanked in last month's column and do again here.

On a final note, the opening line in my continuity file (remember those?) to my successor was "The most important responsibilities of the president are leadership and providing a positive momentum to the chapter. All else below supports that in various ways." I'm confident that will happen.

Berry "OUT"

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.

Community Outreach

By Dave Parisot

Two Chapter Members Inducted into Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame

On Tuesday, December 4, 2018, two of our NWFMOA Chapter members were honored in Tallahassee when they were inducted into the Florida Veterans' Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame honors veterans who 'through their work and lives during or after military service, have made a significant contribution to the State of Florida'.

Among the 2018 inductees were **Brig Gen Patt Maney**, USAR, Ret., and **Major Charles (Chuck) Merkel, Jr.**, USA, Ret., PHd. (in History).

Brig. Gen. Patt Maney is a veteran of 37 years in the Army Reserves and is a recently retired Okaloosa County Judge who is credited with founding the Veterans' Court program for the State of Florida, as well as a pioneer in Mental Health Court. Severely wounded in Afghanistan by an IED, Brig Gen/Judge Maney applied his own experiences as a recovering wounded warrior to establish more fair treatment of physically and mentally wounded veterans in the courts system. He also established the Okaloosa County Homeless Veterans' Stand Down program, and was instrumental in establishing the VA's Vet Center in Okaloosa County. Brig Gen Maney was recently sworn in as northern Florida's new civilian aide to the Secretary of the Army in a Pentagon ceremony.

Dr. Charles Merkel, Jr. was recognized for his humanitarian work during his military service, both while active duty with the U.S. Army and as a DoD civilian at Eglin AFB, FL. Major Merkel was a UH-1N pilot while serving with the U.S Army for 20 years. As a DoD civilian, Merkel served as the historian for the 53d Wing at Eglin AFB. Much of his humanitarian endeavors involved working with programs involving children's education and orphanages in Vietnam, the Republic of Korea and Afghanistan. Some of his humanitarian awards include being honored by People to People International for his work with orphanages, Sunday Schools and the Korean people while assigned to Korea on active duty. As a civilian deployed to Afghanistan as part of the 451st Air Expeditionary Wing and the 386th Air Expeditionary Wing, Merkel was awarded the Exemplary Civilian Service Medal (twice); the Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal (twice); and a special award from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) for his work with school districts, church groups, and individuals.

Also inducted into the 2018 Hall of Fame class from our region was Lt. Gen. Gordon "Gordie" Fornell of Niceville, FL.



2018 Military Ball Setup



2018 Military Ball Raffle Table



Dick and Dulce Solt (Left and Right) pose with the new Lt Governor Jeanette Nunez (center)

2019 Annual Dues Are Due

By Chaplain Tom Azar

Another New Year is dawning, and as we take time to reflect we have noticed friends moved or passed away. What gives a man or woman the inner strength to move ahead and to find peace and purpose as we enter the shifting sands in this final season of our life? Do we just float in the latest social currents accepting the haphazard, or do we strive to have a deeper set of core beliefs to guide us?

I have talked seriously with thousands of people and conclude that without faith in a living God, it is hard to live a meaningful and exciting life and bear the difficult challenges.

I have met many strong people in war and peace who faced great hardships but eventually the self-made fuel that supplies their strength soon ran out. The long haul requires outside help and an intrinsic faith, not only for this world but for our life beyond the grave.

The God of the Old and New Testament is an Omnipotent Being full of mercy and concern for each of us, and he's always available to commune with us. How so? Love dominates God's character. He instills love in each and every creature so we can in turn share it with others.

What makes humanity authentic--the reciprocal love between husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, and between friends. These horizontal love relationships are ultimately a reflection of our vertical relationship with our Creator.

Furthermore, we have experienced patriotic love because we served our country. Every day my wife and I hear the Eglin speakers playing revelry, retreat and taps. Together we have watched the flag raised and lowered. We see it fly everywhere and also drape the coffins of our beloved comrades. We salute because it encapsulates and symbolizes our premium values. Take away the flag and we would be lost. Take away God and our purpose, goal and values for life would be hollow branches. As King David wrote in Psalm 28, "He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe." I pray we sincerely seek and share the wisdom of heaven in the New Year.

May 2019 bring you and your family good health, deep peace, beautiful love and complete joy.

If you have not paid your membership dues for 2018, please do so as soon as possible. If you do not know if your membership is expired, you may check your Defender. The expiration date is given in the address section on all Defenders.

You may pay by check or cash; however, checks are preferred and that also gives you a receipt. You can mail the payment to NWFMOA, PO Box 1213, Shalimar FL 32579, or pay me at the January Chapter luncheon (3 January 2019).

The payment fee schedule and application form are provided on the back page of this Defender. Please note that there are savings to be had by extending your membership for multiple years. Also note that surviving spouses pay ½ of the fee for the member.

Officers Call

As we kick off the New Year of 2019, we will be having an Officers Call in February at Slick Micks on Eglin Parkway in Fort Walton Beach. Tentative date is 12 February 2019. It's a Tuesday and won't interfere with Valentine's Day. We will solidify the date at the January Luncheon.

Opus One Thanks You!

By Scott Berry

Nick Marotta and I visited Opus One earlier this month. Thanks to the generosity of December meeting attendees, we gave them \$550. That may be a new record and will be a great benefit to all those who hear them. Thank you meeting attendees!

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.

Changing of the Guard (cont.)

Continued from the front page

Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger's staff and then to the Secretary of the Air Force as Americas Division Chief during the Contra Affair. It was there where I, as a jeep captain, first met Dick (he was a colonel even back then!) and we downed several Cuba Libres together in Venezuela. In his second "military" career, he worked in Saudi Arabia during Operation DESERT STORM with the Boeing F-15S program and eventually spent 12 years there. Dick is the chapter's "poster child" for recruitment. He's aggressively brought new members into the chapter and has been recognized by the Florida Council of Chapters for his efforts.

As the chapter's 2nd Vice President, Nick Marotta isn't a new board member but deserves recognition as the incoming president. He retired from the Air Force in 1991 as a major after a 20 year career in various aspects of engineering. His first ten years were focused on flight test engineering. During the last half, Nick was a test engineer in foreign technology, an engineer at the ground launch cruise missile base in Sicily, and an operation test program manager in tactical survivability. His last assignment landed him at Hq AF Logistics Command. After that, he spent 24 years in the solid waste industry and is now a free lance consultant. In his spare time, Nick and his wife, Cheryl, spoil their three grandchildren, travel extensively, and attend concerts.

So there you have it. I encourage you to attend and demonstrate your show of support for the incoming officers.

December Lunch Resolution

By Scott Berry

Due to an inadequate amount of food, twelve of you attending the December lunch meeting didn't get fed but paid for it. As of this writing seven have contacted me. If you're one of the remaining five, please email or call me and we'll enter a credit for the next time you attend a lunch.

Some board members have met with the Yacht Club to identify this and other issues and get resolution.

I apologize for the whole situation. Contact me so we can try and make things right.

Medicare/TRICARE Costs Increase for 2019

Medicare recently released its new rates for 2019. After staying the same last year, Medicare and TRICARE for Life beneficiaries will see their Part B premium increase slightly this year. The Part B standard premium is set to increase \$1.50 per month, from \$134 to \$135.50.

The new premiums for 2019:

Part B premium: \$135.50 (was \$134)

Part B deductible: \$185 (was \$183)

Part A deductible (inpatient) \$1,364 (was \$1,340)

Premiums for higher-income beneficiaries (\$85,000 and above) can be found on the TRICARE webpage.

Comedy Corner

1. What do New Year's Day Parades have in common with Santa Claus?
2. What is a New Year's Resolution?
3. What happened to the retired military officer who thought about the evils of drinking in the New Year?

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Answers on page 7

Scholarship Fund

by Dave Parisot

Hope all of you had a merry and blessed Christmas holiday and my wishes to all for a happy and prosperous New Year in 2019. The officers and directors for the NWFMOA Scholarship Fund, Inc, for 2019 are: **Dave Parisot**, President; **George Colton**, Secretary-Treasurer; and Directors **Bob Allen**, **Fred Westfall**, **Carol Baker**, and **Scott Bates**. At the chapter meeting on December 6th we recognized and thanked **Les Matheson** for his service on the Board for the past five years. Thanks again, Les.

Our **2018 NWFMOA Military Ball** was held on Thursday, December 13th at the Fort Walton Yacht Club. Due to our Chapter members' generous donations of bottles of spirits and wine for the Scholarship Fund, we put together three crates of "Christmas Cheer" for the raffles. **Shalimar Cheers Pub** was a Platinum Sponsor with a \$1,000 donation, and renewal Gold Sponsors were **Eglin Federal Credit Union** and **Merrill Lynch (Chris Beam, Financial Advisor)** with a donation of \$500 each. Of course, our raffle table would be very bare without donations of gift cards and merchandise from local businesses. Businesses contributing for the 2018 raffle at the Military Ball were **Shalimar Cheers Pub**; **Mary's Kitchen (FWB & Destin)**; **Buffalo's Reef**; **Slick Mick's Deli & Grille**; **Shalimar Pointe Golf Course**; **Gator Lakes Golf Course**; **Popeye's Louisiana Kitchen (FWB)**; **Indian Bayou Golf Club**; **Painting with A Twist (FWB)**; **Tammy's Journeys**; **Indian Bayou Golf Course**; **Connect With Flowers (Shalimar & Niceville)**; **Rocky Bayou Golf Club**; and, **Destin Party Boat Fishing**. We on the Scholarship Committee are very grateful for their donations. Please support these local businesses and thank them for their generosity. Between the sponsorships and raffle we funded one of the scholarships at the Ball. Thanks to all who bought raffle tickets. (See photo with article)

I am very pleased to report that we hit our 2018 goal of 40 members in the Century Club. Let's try to increase that to 45 for 2019. That means if all of the current members renew in 2019, we will only need five new members. Are you willing to make a \$100 donation and be one of the five?

Kathleen Bush is a new member of the **BG Frank Glunn Century Club**. Renewal Century Club donor in December were **Jean Dutton**, **Larry Bush**, and **Dave Parisot**.

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).

BG Frank Glunn Century Club (past 12 months):
December 2017: **Dr. Roger Riggensch** (Renewal); **Dr. Keith Kulow** (In memory of Lt Col David Kulow); **Pete Peterzen** (Renewal); **Les Matheson**; **Dann Mittiza**:
January 2018: **Fred Boyer** (Renewal)(In memory of Mike Flynt); **Clyde Locke** (Renewal); and WWII Vet **Mel Bryant** (Renewal); **Janet Taylor** (Renewal) (In Honor of Major Bill Ryan); **Dr. Roger Riggensch** (Renewal) (In memory of Janice Riggensch). February 2018: **Dick Prater** (Renewal); **Eileen Arpke** (Renewal); **Nick Marotta** (Renewal); **Dennis Phillips**; **Carol Baker** (Renewal) (In memory of David Baker); **Dave Parisot** (Renewal) (In memory of Chong Parisot); 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).

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

Continued on page 7

Scholarship Fund (cont.)

Continued from page 6

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).

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."

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).

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Comedy Corner Answers

1. No one is awake to see either of them.
2. Something that goes in one year and out the other.
3. He gave up thinking.

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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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