



THE DEFENDER

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

Vol. 19 No. 5

Serving All Branches of The Uniformed Services

MAY 2013

Breakfast Meeting & Discussion

When: Wed. 1 May 2013
Time: Open: 0700; Bkst: 0715;
 Meeting: 0800-0900
Place: Eglin Bayview Club
Program: Paul Lux, Okaloosa Cty
 Supervisor of Elections

Eglin Bayview Breakfast

Please:

- Make a reservation
- Wear a name tag
- Bring proper change.
 \$7.00 for Club Members
 \$9.00 for Non-Members

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

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Vote With Your Attendance

By Jeff Watson

Have you ever wondered what the Supervisor of Elections (SOE) does? I wonder how it is that our SOE doesn't have the problems that other Florida counties have. Well, bring your questions and be ready to engage with our talented and popular SOE, the Honorable Paul Lux. Paul has been our Supervisor of Elections for a few years now having succeeded his boss when she retired in 2008. Prior to becoming an elected official, Paul was the deputy Supervisor of Elections since 2009 and prior to that was a member of the United States Army. He has sunk his roots into the sandy soil of Okaloosa County and made this area home for his family and himself. He has a wife and daughter.



Paul Lux
Okaloosa County
Supervisor of Elections

He is a member of the Crestview Area Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce, and the Knights of Columbus, Council 7968 (Crestview Chapter) and was an Honorary Commander at the 46th Test Wing on Eglin AFB. He is also a member of several professional organizations associated with his being the Supervisor of Elections. The most notable would be FSASE: Administrative Rules Committee Chair, FVRS Committee Chair, CVDB Technical Committee, FVRS Technical

Committee, Election Center: Postal Task Force, EAC: Presenter/Participant for "Future of Voting Systems" Symposium and "Facilitating UOCAVA Voting" Conference, Voting System Risk Assessment Board of Advisors. Paul participated in the 2000 Voting Over the Internet (VOI) Project, 2004 Secure Electronic Registration and Voting Experiment (SERVE) Project, and 2008 Okaloosa Distance Balloting Pilot (ODBP) Project. To say he's qualified to speak on election issues is a mild understatement. Join us, listen, and learn.

MEETING LOCATION MAY CHANGE! See inside

President's Message

By Jeff Watson

Whooh! Hoo! As I sat down to the "confuser" tonight to write my article for the President's column I received some super news for the chapter! I told you last month I nominated our chapter secretary, Scott Berry, to be the next Northwest Area Vice President to the Florida Council of Chapters (FCOC).



Jeff Watson

Well, I am "button-busting" proud to say that that our fellow NWF area chapters agreed with my nomination and Scott's nomination is going forward to the FCOC. Congratulations Scott! Unlike Puxatawney Phil, I wasn't confused last month about my weather forecast. It rained some and now we are fully into spring! The azaleas have had their show as have the dogwoods. By the way, if any of you are Master Gardeners, or even just like the local flora, you are welcome to submit an article to Scott on the good things this area has to offer. I'm lucky; I don't have allergies, so –pollen – schmollen!

By the time you get the Defender I hope you will be able to say you had fun at Props! I have set our April Officers Call for Thursday, April 18, 2013, at Props, a pub down by the Brooks Bridge. The idea is for you to come to Officers Call and tell me your war stories; I'm a great listener. Bring your significant other; this is an opportunity for all of us to get to know each other a little better.

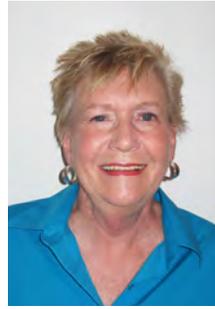
Speaking of getting to know each of us better, have you been saving for the annual FCOC meeting? June is now only a couple of months away but it will be fun gathering our chapter members for some of the activities that are planned. Or if you prefer, the hotel has a pool-side bar and a lot of lounge chairs. It's like being on the beach here – only different. As Yogi Berra once said, "you can learn a lot by just watching." Huh? The two big events to sign up for are (first come, first serve) to attend the Ringling Circus Museum or a boat tour of Sarasota Bay. Pick one and create a memory! For those who like to shop, Judy and I found a Trader Joe's in Sarasota. Why there isn't one here, I just don't know. I predict that someone reading this has the clout to get one to come to the panhandle. Wouldn't that be awesome? If you have never been to a Trader Joe's, registration at the Hyatt

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Personal Affairs

By Gayle Norgaard

DD-214's are NOW On-line.



Gayle Norgaard

The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following web site for veterans to gain access to their DD-214's on-line:

<http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

This may be particularly helpful when a veteran needs a copy of his DD-214 for employment purposes. NPRC is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files.

Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents.

Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the on-line web site. Because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records center mail room and processing time. Please pass this information on to former military personnel you may know and their dependents.

Future Meeting Location Change--Maybe!

Food operations at the Bayview Club have been assumed by a private contractor. Because of contractual uncertainties, menu, price, and room availability may change. We're looking at other locations. Please pay attention to the meeting location as shown on the front page of each *Defender*. It may change from month to month. We'll keep you posted!

Idio(t)-syncracies

What if there were no hypothetical questions?

Auxiliary Corner

Survivors of service members who die from a service-related injury or illness are entitled to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), a monthly tax-free payment from the VA. DIC is currently \$1,215 a month and is intended to replace lost future income. Surviving military spouses also might be eligible to receive Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) benefits. Military retirees who enroll in SBP elect to have premiums deducted from their monthly retired pay to provide their survivors a monthly annuity after their death. Otherwise, military retired pay stops the day of the death of a retiree. SBP also is authorized for survivors of service members who die on active duty. Currently, about 57,000 surviving spouses receive both SBP and DIC. Of these, 94% of the service members had purchased SBP and 6% are active duty deaths.

If the survivor receives DIC, the SBP annuity is reduced dollar for dollar up to the DIC amount--an unfair penalty commonly known as the SBP-DIC offset. Some 33,000 survivors presently have their SBP entirely offset by DIC. Congress changed the law in 2004 allowing SBP annuitants who remarry after turning age 57 to retain both SBP and DIC. After DoD denied payment of SBP to remarried survivors, three of them sued and won. Remarried spouses over the age of 57 now receive both SBP and DIC concurrently, leaving un-remarried survivors with the offset. It is grossly unfair to penalize military survivors if a retiree dies from a service-related illness or injury or on active duty. Their lives were cut short because of service to our country.

MOAA will sponsor "AMAC Storms the Hill Event 2013" July 16-17 in Washington, D.C., to facilitate educating the 113th Congress and their staffs on the SBP/DIC issue. Following a congressional breakfast, we will storm the Hill to gain support and cosponsors for H.R. 32, which would repeal the offset for all military survivors. We welcome those surviving spouses from across the country who would like to participate. This is our opportunity to make an impact on Capitol Hill about the SBP/DIC offset issue. Please plan to join us! Find agenda and registration information at www.moaa.org/amacstorming.

Contact your representatives and ask them to support and cosponsor this bill to eliminate the SBP/DIC offset. You may call the Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121, and ask to be connected to your congressional representatives.

(Source: MOAA's *The Affiliate*)

Legislative Musings

Contributed by Bill Van Hoesen



Bill Van Hoesen 1-percent military pay-raise cap for 2014. If enacted, that will be the first time since 1998 the military raise will be capped below the average American's.

"Is that so bad?" you might ask. "It's been a pretty good run for the past decade, and that's only a fraction below the average American's 1.8-percent raise. It seems a pretty small sacrifice, given the country's fiscal problems. And federal civilians face a multiyear pay freeze and mandatory furloughs."

OK, now you got me started. I don't want to hear about "shared sacrifice" with any civilians. Federal civilian employees are great, and what's being done to them isn't right. But we haven't sent droves of them into combat multiple times. In contrast, we've raised the bar dramatically on what military people must endure to earn their pay. If a civilian with 10 years experience decides to quit in protest, we have the option to hire someone with the same amount of experience to replace them. Replacing a 10-year service member means recruiting three or four new people and hoping one will stay, train, and compete successfully for 10 years to grow into the job.

America has a long history with military pay-raise caps and it's not pretty. Pay comparability was touted as a fundamental principle of the all-volunteer force when we moved to that concept in the early 1970s. But we started capping military raises almost immediately — which crashed retention by the end of that decade. Comparability was restored with two double-digit raises in the early '80s and retention got better. Lesson learned, right? Wrong. We capped military raises most years over the next two decades until the Joint Chiefs complained of renewed retention problems. Congress gradually plussed up military raises over the past decade to restore comparability and retention. Now, with the new budget crunch, the whole cycle is starting again. As in the past, we rationalize retention as fine and we're just shaving a little in the

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Treasurer's Update

By Dan Cobbs

This is a reminder for those Chapter members who are delinquent in their dues. You need to please pay your dues for 2013. The Treasurer's records indicate 63 members are delinquent. If you are in doubt please e-mail me at treasurer@nwfmoa.org or call me on my cell phone at 685-9415.



Dan Cobbs

NWFMOA Life Membership Dues **

| Age | Dues | Age | Dues |
|---------|--------|-------|--------|
| 101+ | Free | 71-75 | 240.00 |
| 96-100 | 50.00 | 66-70 | 275.00 |
| 91 - 95 | 75.00 | 61-65 | 295.00 |
| 86 - 90 | 110.00 | 56-60 | 335.00 |
| 81 - 85 | 150.00 | 51-55 | 360.00 |
| 76 - 80 | 195.00 | -50 | 395.00 |

Auxiliary Members Pay 1/2 of the Above Rates

For those who have paid their dues, I would like to take a moment to suggest you consider being a lifetime member of the Northwest Florida Military Officers Association. Being a lifetime member guarantees you will receive *The DEFENDER* without interruption and your spouse will automatically become an auxiliary life member when you become deceased.

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

Next month I will be recognizing those NWFMOA Chapter members who are life members.

Your used cell phones can feed a veteran for up to a year!



Veterans represent 11% of the adult civilian population, but 26% of the homeless population.

100% of the proceeds are used to feed veterans in need.



It is our patriotic

privilege to help

our veterans.

Would you like to become a collection site?

Meals of Honor.com

Bring your unused cell phones and depleted ink cartridges to our next meeting on May 1st.

Volunteer Spotlight

Paul Singleton



Stepped up to say invocation at monthly chapter meetings!

State Your Age and \$ave – Part IV

Contributed by Bill Van Hoesen

TRAVEL :

Airlines:

Alaska Airlines: 10% off (65+)

American Airlines: various discounts for 65 and up (call before booking for discount)

Continental Airlines: no initiation fee for Continental Presidents Club & special fares for select destinations

Southwest Airlines: various discounts for ages 65 and up (call before booking for discount)

United Airlines: various discounts for ages 65 and up (call before booking for discount)

U.S. Airways: various discounts for ages 65 and up (call before booking for discount)

Rail:

Amtrak: 15% off (62+)

Bus:

Greyhound: 5% off (62+)

Trailways Transportation System: various discounts for ages 50+

Car Rental:

Alamo Car Rental: up to 25% off for AARP members

Avis: up to 25% off for AARP members Best Western: 10% off (55 +)

Budget Rental Cars: 10% off; up to 20% off for AARP members (50+)

Dollar Rent-A-Car: 10% off (50+)

Enterprise Rent-A-Car: 5% off for AARP members

Hertz: up to 25% off for AARP members Holiday Inn: 10%-30% off depending on location (62+)

National Rent-A-Car: up to 30% off for AARP members

Over Night Accommodations:

Cambria Suites: 20%-30% off (60+)

Clarion Motels: 20%-30% off (60+)

Comfort Inn: 20%-30% off (60+)

Comfort Suited:20%-30% off (60+)

Econo Lodge: 20%-30% off (60+)

Hampton Inns & Suites: 10% off when booked 72 hours in advance

Hyatt Hotels: 25%-50% off (62+)

InterContinental Hotels Group: various discounts at all hotels (65+)

Mainstay Suites: 10% off with Mature Traveler's Discount (50+); 20%-30% off (60+)

Marriott Hotels: 15% off (62+)

Motel 6: 10% off (60+)

Myrtle Beach Resort: 10% off (55+)

Quality Inn: 20%-30% off (60+)

Rodeway Inn: 20%-30% off (60+)

Sleep Inn: 20%-30% off (60+)

NOW, go out there and claim your discounts - - - and remember ---

YOU must ASK for your discount --- no ask, no discount.

Legislative Musings (cont.)

Continued from page 3

interests of the national economy. But budget crunches also bring force cuts and nobody cares about retention when we're shrinking the force.

So once we start capping raises, we don't stop. Until we stop shrinking the force — and then wonder why people keep leaving. It's like driving by looking in the rearview mirror. We see no problems there, so why not keep our foot on the gas? There are never any Pearl Harbors, 9/11s, or Kim-II-Whatevers in the rearview mirror.

In the meantime, we rationalize it's only temporary. But it's not temporary for the people affected.

When today's retirees are asked to pony up more for health care out of "shared sacrifice," we conveniently overlook that anyone who retired from the military between 1985 and 2005 already was made to forfeit an average 10 percent of retired pay — every year for the rest of their lives — because of the pay-raise caps imposed on them in the '80s and '90s.

Congress fixed the retention problem by plussing up raises over the past 10 years for the new service members. And they foot-stomped the comparability principle in 2003 by tying future military raises to private-sector pay growth as measured by the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Employment Cost Index.

But Congress did nothing to make up losses imposed on hundreds of thousands who had retired under the depressed pay tables. So make no mistake, a new set of pay caps won't be a small sacrifice, and it won't be a temporary sacrifice for the current force. We've seen this movie before. The script includes a new and substantial lifetime penalty for the very people who already have borne 100 percent of our national wartime sacrifice for the past decade.

Don't open that door. (Source: Col. Steve Strobridge, USAF (Ret), Copyright, *Military Officers Association of America*)

Logical Puns

Venison for dinner again? Oh deer!

The Apple Doesn't Fall Far from the Tree...

"We just couldn't have been prouder than we were to witness Richard's graduation from the elite Airborne Course up at Fort Benning, GA, last week." This was how Col Leo Weeks, USA (Ret), NWFMOA member, and his wife, Agnes, described their visit to Fort Benning to witness the graduation of their grandson, Specialist Richard Weeks, USA, who is 24, from the grueling three week course of intensive airborne training at Fort Benning. The end result was Richard's winning the coveted "Wings of the Airborne Soldier." As Leo described it, "It was enough to bring tears to your eyes!"

The Samuel A. Weeks family, originating in South Amily, ME, has a long history of service. As active members of the United States military since brother Delmont's entry into active service in 1924, there has been a continuous representation of this branch of the Weeks family serving in the active Army with some 128 cumulative years of service.

Richard's graduation from the Airborne course is an especially noteworthy event within the history of this military family. Although members have served continuously since 1924 and have participated in every war from WWII through Gulf War II, only cousin Norman Weeks had worn the wings of the airborne soldier until Richard's recent achievement.

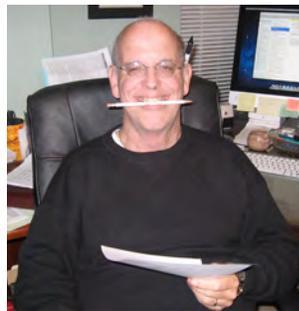
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Words Can't Say It All



May 12th, 2013

Secretary's Scrawl By Scott Berry



Scott Berry

Happy Mother's Day! Perhaps a little premature in terms of the actual date but probably overdue given the selfless love and caring that mothers provide.

To set the record straight for those who think my picture is shown in the dictionary under "ego maniac," I did not author,

suggest, coddle, or schmooze any of the words about me in the President's Message. They were all of Jeff's doing. So I guess the cat is out of the bag. Getting certified as an Okaloosa County Master Gardener has been on my bucket list for some time. It's a four hour class for 15 weeks followed by 75 hours/year in volunteer work so it pays the same as the position of NWFMOA secretary. At the "earthiest" level, I've learned it's soil--not dirt, landscape--not lawn, and turf--not sod. The project I'll present as part of the final exam will be on orchids and to a lover of orchids it's medium (or media for those who didn't take Latin)--not soil--and certainly not dirt. My desire to learn more about orchids germinated--not grew--from the Rex Stout detective stories I read in my "vegetative"--not adolescent--years. The primary character, Nero Wolfe, was an eccentric, rotund, and irascible bachelor whose passion for orchids overruled his day job as an astute detective. I'll leave it to others to determine the parallels between the fictional character and myself.... But in all serious, the Okaloosa County Extension Service offers a wealth of information for the home owner. You can call them and ask about all sorts of information from gardening to insects to agriculture.

Yes, it's also true I've thrown my hat in the ring to be the Northwest Florida Area Vice-president for MOAA. That will make my volunteer plate more than full and so I'm looking for someone to step forward and be the *Defender* editor. I've enjoyed it yet see it as time for someone else to try their hand at it. The job is not nearly as daunting as it might seem. I tried to fill the huge shoes left by my predecessor and I assure my shoes aren't nearly as big. Please call me if you have questions. Thanks for considering this.

Berry "OUT"

President's Message (cont.)

Continued from page 2

Regency in Sarasota is now open! Did I tell you that Scott Berry will be inducted (I hope)? Hint. Hint.

Reminder: the Taxman cometh! If you are reading this – you are either good to go or you are toast!

Okay, the heel clicking has worked so far – the economy has improved since last month as Congress has given the federal workers a reprieve from some of the effects of furlough. We are down from 22 days to 14 days. Maybe by next month, the number will be down to 7, or 3, or 0. Keep clicking! And smile – Bobby McFerrin would like that (you know, “Don’t worry; be happy”).

In closing, I want to thank all of you for your membership! Have a great month and plan to come to the monthly breakfast meeting. For now – we are Adjourned!

Pew Perspectives

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

The Apple Doesn't Fall (cont.)

Continued from page 6

Following Richard's current planned training program, he will attend several more special forces training courses--including Ranger and other military courses as well as intensive studies in the Arabic language--and will become fully qualified as a Special Forces soldier by 2014. When asked by his grandfather if there were any downsides to his current training program, he responded, “Yes, it doesn't appear that I will be able to serve in Afghanistan before they close that out in 2014. I would like to have had a chance to serve there.”

Leo Weeks and his wife Agnes live in Navarre, FL, and he teaches at the University of West Florida's Department of Government in Pensacola. When asked how he felt about his grandson Richard's recent graduation, he answered, “This was the highlight of the year for us! We're really happy with Richard's progress in the Army and especially with this latest achievement at Fort Benning. He epitomizes everything that is good about the youth of our country today and we couldn't be more proud of him!”

WE SALUTE YOUR SERVICE.

Now it's our turn to serve you! Come Live With Us!

Those of us at Westwood Retirement Resort would like to say to all our veterans, “Thank you for your service. Thank you for protecting our freedom.”

And should the time come that you wish to make the move to a retirement community, it would be our honor to serve you. At Westwood Retirement Resort you can enjoy the best years of your life and have access to our on-campus Healthcare Center for short-term rehab or long-term care.


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| Address | | City | | State & Zip | | Phone | |
| Rank | Service | MOAA mbr. no. | | Email address | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regular | <input type="checkbox"/> Reserve | <input type="checkbox"/> National Guard | <input type="checkbox"/> Active Duty | <input type="checkbox"/> Retired | | | |

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 automatically becomes an auxiliary life member.

Membership Application/Renewal

New Members joining in 2013
receive membership through December
31st of next year for \$25.00.

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

Life Membership Dues**

| Age | Dues | Age | Dues |
|---------|--------|-------|--------|
| 101+ | Free | 71-75 | 240.00 |
| 96-100 | 50.00 | 66-70 | 275.00 |
| 91 - 95 | 75.00 | 61-65 | 295.00 |
| 86 - 90 | 110.00 | 56-60 | 335.00 |
| 81 - 85 | 150.00 | 51-55 | 360.00 |
| 76 - 80 | 195.00 | -50 | 395.00 |

Auxiliary Members
Pay one half of the above rates