



# THE DEFENDER

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

Vol. 27 No. 11 Serving All Branches of The Uniformed Services NOVEMBER 2021

## Lunch Meeting & Discussion

**When:** Thur, 4 Nov 2021  
**Time:** Gathering 1130, Lunch 1200  
Program to follow  
**Place:** Fort Walton Yacht Club  
180 Ferry Road, NE, FWB  
**Program:** Okaloosa County  
Commissioner, Dist 2  
Carolyn Ketchel

### MAKE A RESERVATION

#### • RESERVATIONS ARE REQUIRED

- Wear a name tag
- Bring proper change:  
\$14.00 for everyone

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

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## What's Happening in Okaloosa County?

It is with a great pleasure and honor to have with us this month Okaloosa's County Commissioner for District 2, Carolyn Ketchel.

She has been a resident of Okaloosa County for over 30 years, and brings a comprehensive background in Federal, State and local experience, with an emphasis on social services policy and administration which spans decades. She was named the Social Worker of the Year for the State of Florida in 2015 by the National Association of

Social Workers. Most recently she was awarded the 2020 Presidential Advocacy Award by the Florida Association of Counties. This award recognized her tireless work advocating

for the citizens of Okaloosa County and her work alongside then Rep. Mel Ponder, and in unison with community leaders, to create the Mental Health Diversion Program.

Carolyn was accepted into the prestigious Presidential Management Fellowship program after graduate school. While in Washington, she served on the White House Conference on Families under President Carter, and the Commission to Reform Social

Security under President Reagan. She was recognized for her work on Social Security by President Reagan. Carolyn worked in the United States Congress



Carolyn Ketchel, Okaloosa County Commissioner, District 2

Continued on page 3

# MILITARY BALL!

# ORDER FORM INSIDE (see p 2)

# From the President's Pen

By Michael Griffith

The month of November contains two important holidays. The first of these is Veterans Day, and the second is Thanksgiving.

Regarding Veterans Day, our guest speaker for November will be Okaloosa County Commission Chairwoman Carolyn Ketchel, who will tell us about the unveiling, scheduled for Veterans Day, of statues honoring female military veterans from throughout American history. As far as I know, there is not another memorial like this anywhere else in the USA.

Veterans Day is often a rather dull federal holiday – observed with a day off from work, and occasional parades and speeches by politicians and other officials, saying the same old things about the same old things – patriotism, duty, and of course, the Supreme Sacrifice. This is all worthwhile, but I must admit that sometimes I think that if I hear another speech about the Supreme Sacrifice, I will pitch a conniption. After all, how many of us joined the military saying, “I sure hope I get to make the Supreme Sacrifice.”

Nevertheless, Veterans Day is important, because Americans should know about the history of our country as seen by the people who have fought for it. As veterans, one of the best contributions we can make to this holiday, and to American society, is to tell our own stories. Many veterans are reluctant to talk about their military experiences, especially wartime experiences. The memories are often painful, we don't know if anyone



**Mike Griffith,  
NWFMOA President**

Continued on page 5

## PUBLIC RECORD

### New Members

Glenda Bryant, Surviving Spouse  
Linda Gail Martin, Surviving Spouse  
Mark Flukes, Colonel, USAF (Ret)

### In Memorium

Felix Sambogna, Lt Col, USAF (RET), 9/24/2021  
Dick Prater, Col, USAF (RET), 10/17/2021

## HAVE A BALL

**Ticket Order Form for the  
NWFMOA Annual Military Ball  
to benefit the Scholarship Fund**

**WHEN:** Thursday, 9 December 2021

**WHERE:** Fort Walton Beach Yacht Club

**DRESS:** Mess Dress, Gown or cocktail dress, formal or business suit.

**SOCIAL HOUR:** 1800; Pay-as-you-go bars will be open.

**DINNER:** 1900; **DANCING:** 2000 until 2200 with  
“Purple Monkey Band.”

**Dinner will include:**

**First Course:** Spinach, Mandarin, & Pecan Salad  
with Raspberry Vinaigrette

**Choice of Entrée:**

(1) 10oz Bone in Pork

(2) Chicken Picata

**Sides:** Twice Baked Potato and Green Beans Almondine

**Dessert:** New York Cheesecake

Dinners served with rolls, butter, iced tea, and coffee

**Ticket Purchaser's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHOICE OF ENTRÉE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Number of tickets: \_\_\_\_\_ times **\$60.00** = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ with check enclosed.

(Price includes Meal & Gratuity)

**Spouse/Guest's name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CHOICE OF ENTRÉE** \_\_\_\_\_

When ordering by mail include a check payable to

**NWFMOA**

and send this form to:

**NWFMOA, PO Box 1213, Shalimar, FL 32579.**

Ticket Order Form must be **RECEIVED** by

**Thursday, December 2, 2021.**

Table reservations may be made for groups of six by contacting

**Karl Eschmann at (850) 621-7482 or email: [phanfix@cox.net](mailto:phanfix@cox.net).**

List names of people at your table. If you are to be seated at someone's reserved table please coordinate with the reservation holder.

+++++

You are encouraged to make a charitable contribution to the Scholarship Fund by supplying an additional check made payable to:  
NWFMOA Scholarship Fund.

*All proceeds from raffle ticket sales go to providing scholarships for JROTC cadets.*

**Raffle tickets & Silent Auction are CASH or CHECKS only, please.**

## 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.

# NWFMOA POLO SHIRTS

# Okaloosa County (cont.)

Continued from page 1

as a Subcommittee Director for the powerful Ways and Means Committee.

Carolyn holds a Master's Degree in Social Work in Administration, Social Policy and Clinical Counseling, and has a license in Clinical Social Work. During her years as a Social Worker she has worked on the macro-level, assisting to pass legislation on Social Security, child welfare and foster care. Her public service in Florida includes serving on Congressman Jeff Miller's district staff, and serving as Senator Don Gaetz's legislative director. While working in Tallahassee, she was instrumental in passing legislation to bring a social work program to the University of West Florida.

Carolyn's local service includes directing Catholic Charities throughout Okaloosa and Walton Counties from 2007 to 2012. Carolyn has had a private Christian counseling practice for many years. She is also a long time radio talk show host on WPSM, hosting a show called Christian Perspective with Carolyn Ketchel. Carolyn was the Chairman of the St. Mary's School Board, and served on the Diocesan Commission on Catholic Schools. She received the Christus Medicus Award for her work in social programs from Bishop John Ricard. In 2013, she was appointed to the Florida Gubernatorial Faith-Based and Community-Based Advisory Council by Senate President Don Gaetz. She also served as the Vice Regent of the Choctawhatchee Bay Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution in 2020. In December of 2020 she was awarded The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution Founder's Medal. This prestigious award is known as the Ellen Hardin Walworth Medal for Patriotism, honoring those who displayed outstanding patriotism in the promotion of our American ideals of "God, Home, and Country" through faithful and meritorious service to community, state or nation.

Carolyn Ketchel has distinguished herself as a leader in Northwest Florida with a reputation for integrity and conservative ideals. She has been active in Republican politics for many years, serving as campaign director for two Republican congressional campaigns, and as an Okaloosa County Republican precinct committeewoman. She was elected to the Okaloosa County Commission, taking oath in November 2014; has served as Vice

Continued on page 6



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Right Chest: Name

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## **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.

# Chaplain's Corner

By: Chaplain Thomas Azar

## Thanksgiving's Attitude of Gratitude

When my wife and I watch the evening news, there is always an uplifting story at the broadcast's end about good people serving others in difficult times. These unselfish individual's echo each other— "I'm grateful and blessed; we want to help those less fortunate." Yes, the word 'attitude' is in the word 'gratitude.'

We often hear conscientious and reflective persons say, "Every day is thanksgiving." Ungrateful persons are often unhappy individuals.

Thanks-Giving highlights our reflecting and recalling our "Attitude of Gratitude". If this is new, let me encourage the reader to begin by taking one segment of the many 'streams' that came together to make your 'river' of gratitude". For example, MOAA members can easily focus on our military time.

When we chat with retired HC friends, they are quick to underscore several central players who impacted their style of leadership, outreach, teaching, preaching and even family life.

First, there was respect and support afforded us from the many CC's we worked for. Additionally, their HQ staffs provided personal and mission support for accomplishing the ever-evolving chapel programs at home and abroad.

Secondly, we remember the names of the wing and command pastors who listened, supported and took us under their guiding wings. They also mentored many chaplains and assistants in their private and military vocations.

Thirdly, we remember the religious education teachers, musicians, choirs, ushers, deacons, nursery, youth and those who set up and cleaned up after every program. There were food banks, clothing drives, "Toys for Tots" and Christmas basket, etc, all comprised of individuals who believed in the military core value of "Service before Self".

Fourthly, there were the chapel attendees at religious and holiday events whose very presence made programs succeed. Prayer Breakfasts, Holocaust and Thanksgiving services, marriage and family programs, CC/Chief/1st Sgts meetings made the chapel a vibrant hub and active gathering place for many active and retired families.

Fifthly, there were the behind the scenes individuals who were quiet and prayerful to those experiencing suffering and loss. Their mature faith was informed by the lives of


saints, missionaries, evangelists, spiritual writers and Biblical characters who deeply informed their grace and truth walk with our loving God. They possessed the wisdom and experience to be with those who were facing great loss.

Well, the list goes on and on of members not only under the chapel rubric but to off-base individuals and organizations who enhanced our total mission. Your list may include medics, red and black berets, knuckle-busters, sports and recreation, travel— it's endless when you take time to reflect and recall. You can show gratitude by calling, visiting or writing them; hey, take them out for lunch or coffee.

When you thank front-line religious servants, you are also thanking the hidden figures who contributed to their humble character and unselfish actions; in fact, you are thanking Almighty God who called and nurtured those special individuals who were available and accessible in times of need and celebration.

This exercise is the military aspect of my gratitude list; there are other avenues families, schools, churches, social, etc that are rich with individuals who contributed to your rivers. Our Thanks-Giving homework, if you are so inclined, is to embark on or add to your "Attitude of Gratitude" list. It could be a benchmark for a daily walk closer to those who were generous with their time and talents to each of us and myriads of others. Have a meaningful and blessed Thanksgiving. Keep your eyes on the prize, and the 'gr' in front of 'attitude'.

**? Got a Chapter question?  
Change in personal info?  
Comment?  
? Don't know who to ask?  
Email: [info@nwfmoo.org](mailto:info@nwfmoo.org)  
? We'll get an answer for you.**



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## President's Pen (cont.)

Continued from page 2

really wants to hear about them, and we don't want to appear as boasting about our own heroism, when each of us know people who did more heroic things, endured greater hardships, took greater risks, and made greater sacrifices than we did.

Tell your stories anyway, to whoever is willing to listen. A famous statesman was once asked what he thought history would say about his lifetime and his accomplishments. He replied, "History will lie."

The story of America's history, and the conflicts our country has survived, is too important to be told only by politicians, generals, and the news media. Our families, our friends, our neighbors, and our descendents have a right and duty to know what real veterans have really done and really lived through, and those stories can only be told truthfully and in detail by those who lived through them. If you have not already done so, talk to someone you trust and care about, or write down or make a voice recording of your experiences. You may be surprised to learn how curious your children or grandchildren, for example, are about what you did in Vietnam, the Middle East, the Cold War, and so forth. Your first-hand accounts will bring history alive for them in a way that no textbook ever will, and the accumulated stories of many veterans will help to create a body of truth, as told by eyewitnesses and participants, that cannot be buried under the personal or political agendas of future historians. Your story matters, and it deserves to be told, so tell it to someone when you get the chance.

Another important story that deserves to be told is that of America's first Thanksgiving celebration, and the pilgrims who celebrated it along with their American Indian neighbors. As Thanksgiving approaches, you will see lots of articles and TV shows about the holiday, often tainted by today's contemporary attitudes. To learn more about Thanksgiving, I suggest that we all visit a local library and check out some actual history books that include first-hand accounts by the people who were there. For example, have you ever read the Mayflower Compact? Such things are available at any local library, and are worth the read.

In any case, thank you all for your service, and have a great Thanksgiving.

## Happy Birthday Marine Corps

"Marines' Hymn"

From the Halls of Montezuma  
To the shores of Tripoli;  
We fight our country's battles  
In the air, on land, and sea;  
First to fight for right and freedom  
And to keep our honor clean;  
We are proud to claim the title  
Of United States Marine.

## Today is the Day to Volunteer

By Nick Marotta

As a past Chapter President, I'm assisting the current chapter President in filling positions on the NWFMOA Chapter Board of Directors and Officers. Every member of this chapter at one time in their life volunteered to serve his Country as a Military Officer. With that thought in mind, it may be time to serve again as a board member or officer. Will you accept this challenge?

As it stands right now, we have a tentative slate for 2022. However, the average age of our Board and Officers is 75+ with the youngest being 65! There is an opening for YOU! A few fellow members have served for years, including the secretary position and will gladly step aside and assist the new candidate.

In addition to elected officers and board members, there is another opportunity waiting on the right candidate, editor of The Defender. Ken Zepp has been in this position for four years, and it is a well oiled machine. Unfortunately, January's issue must be his last. Ken will gladly work closely with his successor in order for a smooth transition, but we need a volunteer. The Defender along with NWFMOA.ORG are both recognized as 5 Star works by MOAA. We need to keep it going.

How do you sign up? Easy contact me or Chapter President, Mike Griffith or any Board Member or Officer and say the magic words, I WANT TO SERVE.

Thank you for your diligence in the past for serving and in the future to continue to serve.

# Scholarship Fund

By Dave Parisot

**Donations for Scholarship Fund raffle at 2021 Military Ball:** Our Military Ball is December 9th. We will greatly appreciate any donations for the Scholarship Fund raffle. Needed are gift cards to local restaurants, gift baskets, and bottles of spirits and wine for the ever popular “Crates of Christmas Cheer”. Please bring any donations to the November monthly luncheon or contact Dave Parisot by email at [dparisot@cox.net](mailto:dparisot@cox.net) or by phone at (850) 613-6545. Thank you in advance.

Thank you to Janet (Ryan) Taylor for your recurring donation to the Scholarship Fund Century Club in honor of your father, Major Bill Ryan. Bill is a Chapter member and a former Secretary-Treasurer of the Scholarship Fund. The 50/50 raffle at the October luncheon was won by Chris Beam. Chris graciously donated his winnings back to the Scholarship Fund; so the Fund got \$158. Thank you, Chris. My thanks to all who purchased raffle tickets. My thanks also to Fred Westfall who did the raffle ticket sales in my absence.

## Okaloosa County (cont.)

Continued from page 3

Chairman for 2016, Chairman for 2017, Vice Chairman for 2020, and currently serves as Chairman for 2021. She was inducted into the Okaloosa County Women’s Hall of Fame in 2018 for her Contemporary Service.

Carolyn has been married for 38 years to Circuit Judge Terry Ketchel. They have two sons, a daughter-in-law and two granddaughters. As devoted wife and mother, Carolyn was extremely active in various school and youth activities with her sons. She served in numerous leadership functions in Boy Scouting, where both her sons achieved the rank of Eagle Scout.

I cannot think of a speaker more qualified than Carolyn Ketchel to inform us on the state of Okaloosa County. So if you have a question about Okaloosa County or just want to find out what’s happening in your community, make a reservation and come on out. I look forward to seeing you on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

# What is a Member?

By George Hanks

Attracting new members to NWFMOA has to be a priority, and there is a huge pool of potential new members in our area. Membership is open to active duty, former, retired, and National Guard and Reserve commissioned and warrant officers of the uniformed services and their surviving spouses. The uniformed services are: Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, Coast Guard, Commissioned Corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Commissioned Corps of the Public Health Service. We encourage each of our existing members to seek out members of these eligible groups to become members of both NWFMOA and the national organization, MOAA.

New members to NWFMOA joining this year are paid through December 31, 2022. Here is the link for the NWFMOA membership information: [http://nwfmoa.org/why\\_join.html](http://nwfmoa.org/why_join.html)

MOAA is a **separate** membership. Joining one does not give membership to the other. Also, if you are only a member of NWFMOA our organization does not get credit for that member for the Level of Excellence award. The **basic membership** level in MOAA is **free**. Here is the link to the MOAA membership information page: <https://www.moaa.org/content/join-moaa/why-join-moaa/>

Each organization offers annual membership fees. Spouses of deceased members can continue as an active member by paying a reduced annual fee. Life memberships are also available with the fee based on your age. The spouse of a **deceased life member** is automatically a surviving spouse life member.

Being a member of both organizations makes, you the member, an active proponent for benefits and support to our current and future uniformed services. Continue to look around you and recruit new members. If you have further questions, contact George Hanks at the information for the Second Vice President published on the front page of “The Defender”.





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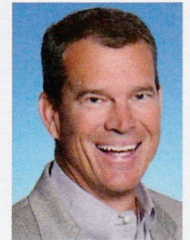
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Make Checks payable to NWFMOA or to Northwest Florida Military Officers Assn. Inc. Check here is you do not want your  name,  phone number, or  email address listed in the printed chapter directories. Membership includes a subscription to *The Defender*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

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

