



THE DEFENDER

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

Vol. 17 No. 9 Serving All Branches of The Uniformed Services SEPTEMBER 2011

Breakfast Meeting & Discussion

When: Wed. 7 September 2011
Time: Open: 0700; Bkfst: 0715;
 Meeting: 0800-0900
Place: Eglin AFB Club
Program: "Where Eglin, Plew, and Ruckel Cross Paths," Mr. James P. Ruckel, Sr.
Eglin Club 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 Dan Cobbs at 685-9415 or send an email to: 1stVP@nwfmoa.org if you are attending.

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Fifteenth Amendment

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

Once Upon A Time.....

By Ken Wright

Well, ladies and gentlemen, do I have a treat for you. Not only do I get to share some words with you about our organization, I get to share some information about our guest speaker.

If you did not know, a gentleman named James E. Plew, a local businessman and airplane buff, saw the potential of a military payroll to boost the local area's depression-stricken economy. He leased 137 acres to the City of Valparaiso on which an airport was established in 1933. In 1934, Plew offered to donate 1,460

contiguous acres for a bombing and gunnery range to the U.S. government. This became the headquarters for the Valparaiso Bombing and Gunnery Base activated on 14 June 1935 under the

command of Captain Arnold H. Rich. The Bombing and Gunnery Base has now become Eglin Air Force Base. With this being the ground work for the history of Eglin AFB, we will have the

pleasure of having the great grandson of the late James E. Plew, James P. Ruckel Sr., to give us a history lesson on his family's relationship with Eglin in the past, present, and future. Jim, as many of the locals know him by, was born in Valparaiso, FL, and is an official "Boggy Boy". He began work with his father at Ruckel Properties



James P. Ruckel, Sr.

in January 1979, was promoted to Vice President in 2002, and became president of Ruckel Properties in 2005 where he continues today.

President's Corner

“Semper Paratus” By Ken Wright

First, don't forget to put December 8, 2011, on your calendar. The 2011 Northwest Florida Military Officers Association Military Ball is being planned for the Emerald Grande in our own Destin, FL. The night will be filled with official military traditions, great food, dancing, an auction to remember, and much more. We do this all in an effort to raise funds for the Northwest Florida Military Officers Association Scholarship Fund and to bring this great organization together to share the holiday season. So, I hope you find it possible to attend this function and support this worthy cause. We are also looking for sponsors for the occasion and if you have time to assist to seek sponsors or have any insights to local businesses wishing to donate a prize or two, then give Frank Glunn (582-2764) or myself a call. Secondly, we hope to see you at the August 26th Officers' Call at the Compass Rose, Valparaiso, FL, from 5:30 – 7:30 P.M. First drink is on us. Bring a fellow officer and let's make them a member. Again, and I can't say enough, you are the membership and we need you to continue the our organization's goals to (1) To promote the social welfare of the community, (2) To conduct programs for charitable, scientific, or educational purposes, (3) To sponsor or participate in activities of a patriotic nature, and (4) To provide social and recreational activities for its members. If you have any ideas to further these goals, please share them with the leadership. Your input is greatly appreciated and encouraged.

In closing, I thank you for your support as we continue to serve you and our country. Thanks and God Bless.



Ken Wright

MEMBERSHIP By Gayle Norgaard



Gayle Norgaard

AMBASSADORS: The organization needs your help to recruit new members. Spread the word and share your Defenders with eligible people you meet. Let them know what we have to offer besides the monthly breakfast meeting. We are now arranging informative/interesting tours and symposiums for our membership. There is no better way to publicize these than word of mouth. Invite prospective members to our monthly Breakfast Meeting. Extra Defenders with membership applications are always available. If a guest decides to wait to sign up, please do a follow up later as a reminder. **Our organization depends on you.**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

September 13, Tuesday, 1100-1200: Tour of Fisher House

Location: Across the street from Eglin AFB Hospital next to the new Dental Clinic.

Parking will be at the Fisher House parking lot.

October 11, Tuesday, 0900-1000: Tour of Okaloosa County Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Location: Northwest Florida State College.

90 College Blvd, Hwy SR 85 N. RIGHT on College Blvd. Enter through western most entrance--closest to SR 85 N across from Cedar Ave. There is a huge parking lot in front of a water tower and it's on the back side of the baseball field. "Emergency Operations Center" or 911 Emergency Center is the big brick building.

There will be a sign up roster at the Monthly Breakfast Meeting or you can contact Gayle Norgaard at 850-259-1155 or Email: gayleret@cox.net.

PUBLIC RECORD

IN MEMORIAM: Lt Col Jerry S. Thorough, USAF (Ret), 7/31/2011.

PERSONAL AFFAIRS

By Gayle Norgaard

Just a note of recognition: This is a Thank You to one of our long time volunteers, Marie Wagner. For years Marie has been responsible for sending sympathy and get well cards in the name of our organization to our members. All this is done without any expense to the organization. When you see Marie, thank her for her thoughtfulness and dedication. A BIG THANKS, MARIE, FROM ALL OF US.

Greetings!

Timing is everything! I love it when a plan comes through! Coincidentally, the constitutional amendment which was up for publishing under the newsletter masthead last month happened to deal with the public debt. And Bill Van Hoesen's article on how to contact your congressional delegation prophetically anticipated President Obama's public plea to do just that and also MOAA National as shown by this month's Auxiliary News. CNN or Fox News couldn't have done any better. I'm still waiting for their phone calls asking how we pulled that off. Do you think *The Parkside Circle Journal* is a catchier name for the newsletter rather than *The Defender*? Hmmmm.



Scott Berry

And it's official now—I'm your new secretary--again--at least through the end of the year--which means I'm your go-to guy for address/phone number/email changes and all those other blocks you filled out on the membership application. I also now update the chapter database when you renew your membership. Did you notice in the membership application on the last page of the Defender that the dues have increased for next year? Just checking—and please don't kill the messenger.

One last observation: we are a community fed by and overly comfortable with abbreviations and acronyms, aren't we? The second paragraph of Auxiliary News made my head hurt as I proofed it and almost made me chuckle if it weren't for the seriousness of the subjects. In parting—TTYL!

Berry "OUT"

Join Us for
"Westwood Wednesdays"
A Lunchtime Series on Medical Topics

TOPIC: "FLIPS"
(Florida Injury Prevention for Seniors)

Featured Speaker: Anna Dyess with West Florida
AHEC

DATE: Wednesday, Sept. 28, 2011

TIME: 12P-1PM

WHERE: Garden Atrium, Westwood Retirement
Resort

Complimentary Light Lunch Served
Seating limited. Contact Billie at 863-5174 or
email

bchappell@brookdaleliving.com by Sept. 23rd!

SSA Suspends Printed Statements

Has it been a while since you received a SSA statement about your anticipated benefits? It used to come about three months before your birthday. No more. The following was copied from the SSA web site: "In light of the current budget situation, we have suspended the Request a Social Security Statement service. You may be able to estimate your retirement benefit using our Retirement Estimator."



THE SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE
CHIEF OF STAFF, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC



Sunday, September 18, 2011

Happy 64th Birthday, Air Force!

August is the perfect time to contact your local congressional representatives because legislators are back in their home states for the annual August recess and anxious to meet with their constituents.

Recently, the House passed its version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which included a provision to increase the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA). The SSIA is payable to military survivors whose Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuities are reduced because they also receive Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from the VA for their sponsor's service-caused death.

In the House provision, the SSIA payment would increase from \$90 under current law to \$163 by FY 2013, with modest increases to follow in later years. This approved provision also will extend the SSIA program through 2021, which under current law would expire Oct. 1, 2017.

Unfortunately, this provision was not included in the Senate version of the NDAA. That means we need your help to support the House provision when the two chambers hash out their differences in conference committee this fall.

MOAA urges you to take this opportunity to contact your local congressional representative or set up an appointment to visit them and discuss SSIA. You can find contact information for your local representative by calling the Capitol Switchboard at (866) 272-6622 or by using visiting <http://capwiz.com/moaa/dbq/officials>. While you have their ear, there are two other issues that are of great importance to MOAA and all surviving military spouses.

SBP/DIC offset: MOAA for years has pushed to have the offset between SBP and DIC repealed. Unfortunately, this year there were no bills that included this repeal. Make sure your representatives know the importance of ending this offset.

Medicare/TRICARE payment cuts: Unless Congress acts, the Medicare and TRICARE payments to physicians will be cut 29.4 percent on Jan. 1, 2012. If this cut goes through, it will have a devastating impact on access to health care for TRICARE and Medicare beneficiaries.

(Editor's note: See Legislative Musings in last month's Defender for more specific instructions on contacting your legislators in Washington, D.C.)



Chaplain Shirley

Lessons From Afghanistan, Part Two

Last month's column closed with these words: "For today, I'm going to focus on being kind, acting like I'm the person I want to be, and taking time to pay attention to other people. Stay tuned . . . in next month's column I'll let you know if it was worth it!"

Well, dear readers, every time I managed to be kind (especially when I didn't feel like being kind), it was worth it. However, I didn't always manage. Which brings us to the second point: I need more practice at acting like I'm the person I want to be. That practice should make me into a kinder, gentler soul. And surely a kinder, gentler soul would pay attention to others regardless of distractions. The closer I get to leaving for the States, the harder it is for me to truly pay attention to other people. I am rather focused instead on all the things on my all-important task list as well as those I've forgotten to list!

Conclusion: attempting to live my first three lessons learned, "Being kind is always the better way," "Act as if" really works if you do it long enough," and "There's never enough time, but there's always time enough," is definitely worth it as long as I don't indulge in guilt-tripping myself when I don't measure up.

As I'm getting closer to redeploying (when you read this I should be on my way to a party at my brother Mike's house!), many people ask me to share the most exciting thing that has happened in my time here. I will now flatter myself by assuming you want to know, too. And then I'll let you know the last, and perhaps most meaningful entry on my list of "Lessons from Afghanistan."

Since arriving last July, I have experienced much excitement, which hopefully I'll get to tell you about sometime. But nothing can beat this:

I conducted a special worship service and invited anyone who wished to come forward to receive a blessing with the Holy Water which I had just consecrated along with some instruction about Christian traditions of making

Continued from page 4

Holy Water (this was a mixed crowd, Christian, Muslim, and Hindu). Since it was a Christian event, it was perfectly appropriate to do the Holy Water thing. As the men and women came forward, I asked each one his or her name and religion so I could give an appropriate blessing. I expected a couple of Baptists, some Catholics, maybe a Lutheran, lots of "just Christians," etc., and I was not disappointed. I put water on their foreheads and said their names, and, while making a damp sign of the cross, "Remember your baptism, and be thankful."

Then I got what I did not expect: Hindus and Muslims, all men, inviting this lady priest to bless them with water that had been sanctified using a Christian formula. A couple of Hindus, a dozen or more Muslims, welcoming my blessing. For a few moments the universe expanded into something no doubt very close to the society God has in mind for us.

So, Sarah's top four lessons learned from a little more than a year in Afghanistan:

1. Being kind is always the better way;
2. "Act as if" really works if you do it long enough;
3. There's never enough time, but there's always time enough; and
4. Continue to believe in, hope for, work toward, dwell in, and (dare I say it) *expect* love and hospitality. Always.

May the God of your understanding bless you and keep you.



Bill Van Hoesen

Let's get the important news out of the way first. Please be advised the Florida state legislature overwhelming passed Senate Bill 228, known as the "Pull Up Your Pants Bill." Now I gotta ask you, with the country and state pretty much in the dumpster, don't you think they have more

important things to do than worry about some kid's butt-crack showing? Besides, when did the clothes kids wear to our local schools become the business of the state? Talk about a Nanny-State.

Now, on to more mundane matters. Up to 28 Jul 2011, 2,676 House and 1,433 Senate bills had been introduced in the 112th Congress. Most will not make it into law, thank the Lord. A good indication on the likelihood of a bill being forwarded to the House or Senate for passage and subsequently being signed into law by the President is the number of co-sponsors who have signed onto and support the bill. An alternate way for it to become law is if it is added as an addendum to another bill such as the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and survives the conference committee assigned to iron out the differences between the House and Senate bills. At <http://thomas.loc.gov> you can review a copy of each bill's text, determine its current status, the committee it has been assigned to, who your representative is and his/her phone number/ mailing address/ email/ website to communicate with a message or letter of your own

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Creating "GoodWHEELs" for Homeless Vets

Many thanks to Jim Foreman, Pat Foster, and Allan Hanson for helping move almost 30 bicycles from the Crestview Police Department to Fort Walton Beach on 10 Aug. The bikes will be repaired and provided to homeless veterans on 12 October at the Homeless Veterans Stand Down. If you'd like to "Stand Up" for homeless vets, contact Bill Van Hoesen at 225-2957 for details.



Allan Hanson and Bill Van Hoesen prepare bikes for homeless veterans. Photo by Pat Foster.

Legislative Musings (cont.)

Continued from page 5

making, and if your legislator is a sponsor or cosponsor of it. To separately determine what bills and/or amendments your representative has sponsored, cosponsored, or dropped sponsorship on, you may refer to <http://thomas.loc.gov/bss/d111/sponlst.html>. To review a numerical list of all bills introduced refer to <http://thomas.loc.gov/bss/111search.html>.

Here are a few of the bills now being considered in one or more congressional committees that are of special interest to retirees and veterans. These are not all of them. For specific information about them, please use the above links.

House of Representatives

H.R.178 : Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act; H.R.186 : Chapter 61 CRDP Eligibility; H.R.238 : Military Retiree Health Care Relief Act of 2011; H.R.303 : Retired Pay Restoration Act; H.R.333 : The Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act; H.R.493 : Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act; H.R.575 : HEALTHY Vets Act of 2011; H.R.652 : TRICARE Premium Limits; H.R.812 : Agent Orange Equity Act of 2011; H.R.814 : Medicare VA

Reimbursement Act of 2011; H.R.1540 : National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012; H.R.1979 : Chapter 61 CRDP + SBP/DIC Offset + Reserve Retired Pay.

Senate

S.260 : SBP DIC Offset; S.344 : Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2011; S.411 : Helping Our Homeless Veterans Act of 2011; S.542 : National Guard, Reserve, "Gray Area" Retiree, and Surviving Spouses Space-available Travel Equity Act of 2011; S.696 : Vet Center Travel Pay; S.866 : Reserve Retirement Deployment Credit Correction Act; S.951 : Hiring Heroes Act of 2011; S.1253 : National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2012.

? Got a Chapter question?

? Change in personal info?

? Comment?

? Don't know who to ask?

? Email: info@nwfmoe.org

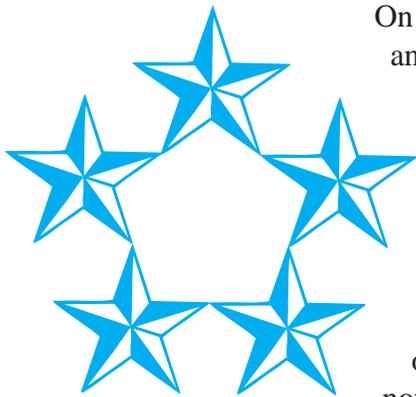
? We'll get an answer for you.



Between the fields where the flag is planted, there are 9+ miles of flower fields that go all the way to the ocean. The flowers are grown by seed companies. It's a beautiful place close to Vandenberg AFB, CA. The floral flag is 740 feet long and 390 feet wide and maintains the proper flag dimensions. This flag is 6.65 acres and is planted with five pointed stars comprised of white larkspur. Each star is 24 feet in diameter; each stripe is 30 feet wide. This flag is estimated to contain more than 400,000 larkspur plants with 4-5 flower stems each for a total of more than 2 million flowers.

(Editor's note: This is not a hoax as verified by Snopes.com—search for "floral flag" and get additional information. I've personally seen these flower fields located near my first duty station in the Air Force and where I met my bride-to-be.)

What We Already Knew Is Now Official!



On July 22nd, MOAA announced that the Northwest Military Officers Association was the recipient of the Five Star 2010 Levels of Excellence Award (LOE). This is a continuing tradition for our chapter but something not easily earned and thus not taken for granted. Chapters are graded across a broad range of criteria from newsletter to membership drives. Another five star streamer will be added to our already well decorated chapter flag at the December Military Ball. Congrats to all with a special thanks to those members who contributed to this achievement.

Say What?

Intoxicaton: Euphoria at getting a tax refund, which lasts until you realize it was your money to start with.

DONATION FORM

Please accept this gift of \$_____ to support the NWFMOA Scholarship Fund.

Donor Information (if not printed on check):

Name _____

Address _____

City, ST ZIP _____

Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

This gift is a memorial in honor of:

Please inform the following of this gift:

Name _____

Address _____

City, ST ZIP _____

Mail payable to: NWFMOA Scholarship Fund,
P.O. Box 310, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32549-0310

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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Membership Application/Renewal

New members joining this year receive membership through December 31, next year for \$34.00.

Membership Renewal

1 yr - \$34.00, 2 yr - \$65.00, 3 yr - \$85.00

Life Membership Dues**

Age	Dues	Age	Dues
101+	Free	71-75	342.00
96 - 99	57.00	66-70	398.00
91 - 95	94.00	61-65	448.00
86 - 90	152.00	56-60	489.00
81 - 85	214.00	51-55	519.00
76 - 80	281.00	-50	549.00

Auxiliary Members

Pay one half of the above rates

Last Name First Name Initial Spouse

Address City State & Zip Phone

Rank Service MOAA mbr. no. Email address

Regular Reserve National Guard Active Duty 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.**