

NORTHWEST FLORIDA MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
LUNCH MEETING
4/4/2024

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The April 4th meeting of the NWFMOA was called to order by President Fran Hendricks at the Fort Walton Yacht Club at 1200. Chaplain Tom Azar gave the invocation and then Craig "Beagle" McCarthy lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Fran began the meeting highlighting our Community Outreach and Scholarship Fund cadet interview activities with an accompanying slide show. After opening remarks, Fran announced the presence of our past Presidents who were with us today and those members who have birthdays in April. He recognized our new member at the meeting today, Lynn Dominique, and our guests, David Butler, Jason Sawyer and Van Chaney, the last two becoming new members. Fran then recognized NWFMOA's only Honorary member, Jerry Williams, President/CEO of the Eglin Federal Credit Union, for his support to the NWFMOA and the community. Fran then discussed several significant events that took place in the month of April. Following that, Fran presented NWFMOA 65th Anniversary coins to Chuck Merkle, Lynn Dominique, Jerry Williams, Jason Sawyer and Van Chaney.

Following lunch Fran introduced our guest speaker, Brigadier General Jeff Geraghty, 96th Test Wing Commander. General Geraghty began his presentation by thanking the community for outstanding support of Eglin Air Force Base. He then briefly discussed all the many facets of the 96th Test Wing Commander's job including war fighters, base civilians, retirees and others. He emphasized that the functions performed at Eglin include all the layers of war fighting from design technology through testing to operations. He then relayed how his command also supports other units citing a new Traumatic Brain Injury hospital, child daycare centers and other initiatives. He concluded his presentation with a view of future initiatives and challenges, including the need for growth of technical personnel, land and sea range management, affordable housing, and land use issues. He ended by again thanking the community and answered a few questions from our members. Following his presentation, Fran presented General Geraghty with the NWFMOA Chapter coin.

Fran then reminded members of upcoming events including our partnership with Zaxby's at the Military Family Appreciation Day on April 20 and that our next Officers Call is on May 30 at Doc's Oyster Bar. He informed the group that the President of MOAA, Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, had to reschedule his visit in support of our 65th celebration on May 1st due to a conflict on his end. Therefore, our Annual Scholarship Awards lunch will be held on Thursday, May 2nd, at the Fort Walton Yacht Club. The date for our formal celebration will be announced at a later date. Dave Parisot then gave the details of the upcoming Scholarship Fund luncheon, noting that those who plan to attend should make their reservations early as we expect 100 or so attendees. Fran pointed to the display of our NWFMOA banner and reminded everyone that a donation to the banner would help fund our Community Outreach projects in addition to seeing their name or logo on the website banner. He then announced two MOAA Advocacy in Action initiatives...(1) The Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act which focuses on extending the health care coverage of military dependents to 26 years of age at no additional cost to the military family (this is what the civilian workforce already enjoys) and (2) Tricare for Life...earlier today, MOAA sent an email focusing on "Tricare For Life Under Threat". Fran urged all Chapter Members to go to the NWFMOA website main page, scroll down and click on the Take Action button to make your thoughts known on these and other legislative matters MOAA National is focused on in our behalf. Fran will highlight MOAA legislative initiatives each month and again urged our members to visit the Advocacy in Action website and send letters to their representatives on these initiatives. It's as easy as just hitting send and your voice will be heard. Fran reiterated that we have a need for a new Treasurer by the end of April and that we also need volunteers to assume the tasks of Secretary, webmaster, meal reservations and Defender editor by year's end. He asked members do their part and volunteer for one of the upcoming vacancies.

Fran then announced that there were 4 eligible members for the April Defender Quiz drawing. The winning name drawn by Jerry Williams was Karl Eschmann. The answer to the question: "Benjamin "Chuck" Mawhinney --

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who passed away on Feb. 12, 2024, at the age of 74 - holds the Marine Corps sniper record with how many confirmed kills?" was 103.

Bill Hunter then held the 50/50 raffle and the winner of \$118 was Bob Cluskey. A total of \$117 went to the Commissary Gift Card fund. Starting this month and through the rest of 2024, proceeds from the 50/50 drawing will go to either the Commissary Gift Cards or Wreaths Across America outreach initiatives.

Past President Elvira Chicarelli displayed some of her work on the Women's Recognition in the Military project and asked anyone who knew of someone deserving to be recognized to contact her.

Les Matheson announced that at 3PM on April 10 there will be the reopening of the Air Park at Hurlburt Field.

Bernie Everhart asked those present to support Chris Noel, Armed Forces Radio Vietnam and founder of "Vetsville Cease Fire House" and asked anyone interested to contact him.

Attendance for the meeting was 52. The meeting was adjourned at 1335.

//signed//

FRED WESTFALL, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)
NWFMOA Secretary, FL-19

Distribution: Email to NWFMOA Chapter Members
and posting on the NWFMOA website