

NORTHWEST FLORIDA MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
LUNCH MEETING
2/1/2024

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The February 1st meeting of the NWFMOA was called to order by President Fran Hendricks at the Fort Walton Yacht Club at 1205. Tom Azar gave the invocation and then Jon Morris lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. After opening remarks, Fran announced the presence of our past Presidents who were with us today. He then introduced our guests and three new members...Richard Black, Bill Hunter and his son, Andrew Hendricks. Fran then discussed several significant events that took place in the month of February.

Following lunch Fran introduced our guest speaker, Mr. Chris Stowers, Executive Director of the Northwest Florida State College Foundation. Mr. Stowers started off with a bit of his background including his work at the Arnold Palmer Hospital for Children in Orlando then gave an overview of the breadth and depth of the College. He mentioned that NWFSC is focused on the needs and desires of the local community but that it has a national presence as well. He specifically mentioned the nursing programs and aviation programs. He was most proud of student performance in the arts, academics and athletics, giving specifics on each. Mr. Stowers also mentioned the Raider teams' national performance over the years. Following his presentation, Fran presented Mr. Stowers with the NWFMOA challenge coin.

Fran then announced several of our upcoming community functions including the Valentines for Veterans, our recent trip to Orlando for the Florida Council of Chapters Training Seminar, our banner ad campaign now had 17 businesses or individuals signed up, and reminded members to pay their dues for 2024. He also mentioned that we will be participating in the American Legion Orator Competition this Sunday. Fran reminded our group that our next Officers Call will be on February 29, at Doc's Oyster Bar and that there will be one each month in 2024 that has a fifth Thursday. He told the group that either the President or Vice President of MOAA will attend our 65th celebration in May and will present MOAA medals to our high school juniors who are in JROTC. Fran then announced that at our Orlando session he was presented Florida Council of Chapter Leadership Awards for Jim Shoff, George Hanks and Dick Solt. Fran presented Dick with his leadership award. (Picture to be in the March Defender). Jim and George were not in attendance and will receive their awards at a future NWFMOA meeting. Fran also announced that Karl Eschmann had been selected as the DAR's Florida Outstanding Veteran Volunteer of the Year for 2023. Lastly, Fran told everyone that they should read Chaplain Tom Azar's Chaplain's Corner article in the February edition of the Defender to truly understand our mission and what it means to "pass the rope".

Members attending the lunch today and who had not previously received their 65th NWFMOA Anniversary Commemorative Coin were given one. He also announced that starting this year we have added an additional category of membership within NWFMOA, the Associate Member, and explained the qualifications that apply.

Fran then announced that there were 6 eligible members for the February Defender Quiz drawing. The winning name drawn by Mr. Stowers was Mike Griffith. Since Mike was not in attendance, the second drawing was Dave Parisot, who declined noting that next month he gets free meal for his birth month. So, the ultimate winner was Karl Eschmann. The answer to the question: "What was the name of the only B-2 not named after a state?" was the Kitty Hawk.

Dave Parisot then held the 50/50 raffle and the winner of \$57 was Wayne Pullen. A total of \$56 went to the Scholarship Fund. As there was no other business to conduct, Fran adjourned the meeting at 1335. Attendance for the meeting was 40.

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FRED WESTFALL, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)

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NWFMOA Secretary, FL-19

Distribution: Email to NWFMOA Chapter Members