

NORTHWEST FLORIDA MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
LUNCH MEETING
3/2/2023

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Our February meeting was called to order by President Fran Hendricks at the Fort Walton Yacht Club at 1200. Chaplain Tom Azar gave the invocation and then Chris Hallion led the members in the Pledge of Allegiance. In honor of the anniversary of the U.S. Navy Reserve, we all sang the Navy song. Fran mentioned two of our February events; celebrating Col Jake Bush's 100th birthday and the Valentine for Vets event at the Bob Hope Village. Pictures of both events were displayed prior to the meeting. Fran then recognized our four guests; Dave Vachon, Bruce Ralimar, Dave Walters and Mel Claxton. He then acknowledged three former NWFMOA Presidents in the audience, Jeff Watson, Elvira Chiccarelli, and Mike Griffith.

Following lunch President Hendricks introduced our guest speaker, LTC Blakely Anderson, Commander, 3d Battalion/7th Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Camp Bull Simmons. Colonel Anderson started his presentation by thanking the community and groups like the NWFMOA for making the Army forces, formerly from Fort Bragg, SC, feel welcome in their new home. His speech began with a chronological history of Special Forces, then went on to describe what it is and what it takes to become a Green Beret, explained the unique focus of the 7th Special Forces Group on Central and South America, emphasizing that all under his command are trained to specialize in a certain Latin America country, are well versed in their culture and are able to speak special dialects of the country's language. He then took us through the steps it would take to qualify as a member of the Special Forces. He also provided an overview of the 7th Special Forces command structure followed by the ranks that fill those positions. Following his prepared remarks, he once again thanked the veterans and then fielded questions from several members in the audience. His message was very well received by all. Fran then presented LTC Anderson with the NWFMOA challenge coin.

OTHER TOPICS

Following the formal presentation Fran presented MOAA Leadership Awards to Dave Parisot, George Colton and Fred Westfall recognizing their service to NWFMOA. He then reminded us there will be an Officers Call held in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of the release of Vietnam Prisoners of War to be held at the Air Armament Museum on March 9th and asked members attending to wear their NWFMOA shirts. Fran again requested that our members TAKE ACTION on the Major Richard Star Act. An email with the link to do that will again be sent to the members. Fran announced that our March speaker will be Okaloosa County Commissioner Mel Ponder of District 5.

Dave Parisot announced that we had 3 new members in the Scholarship's Gold Century Club and then held the 50/50 raffle drawing. The winner of \$76 was Al Bills. Total contribution to the Scholarship Fund for March was \$75.

Attendance for the lunch was 44. The meeting was adjourned at 1335.

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

Distribution: Email to board members and non-board members in attendance.