



THE DEFENDER

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

Vol. 31 No 1

Serving All Branches of The Uniformed Services

January 2025

Lunch Meeting & Discussion

When: Thursday **January 2nd**
Time: Gathering 1130, Lunch 1200, Program to follow
Place: Fort Walton Yacht Club
180 Ferry Road, NE, FWB
Program: **Installation of Offices**

MAKE A RESERVATION

- Reservations are Required
- Wear a name tag
- Bring proper change: \$16

Reservation deadline is Saturday at noon prior to meeting. Go to <http://nwfmoa.org> and select the link "Click here to make reservations", or email nwfreservations@gmail.com, or call Fred Westfall at 850-609-8075 to make a reservation.

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Our January Meeting Will Be the Installation of the 2025 Officers and More!

In 2025 we celebrate the end of our most successful year ever and we mark the 66th anniversary of the Northwest Florida Military Officers Association. As you are probably aware, the mission of the NWFMOA is to benefit the members of the uniformed services, their families and survivors and to advocate a strong national defense, while providing needed support to the community and its members. To that end we have had a tremendous impact on many officer and enlisted military families, veterans, high school and college students in both the Junior and regular Reserve Officer's Training Corps programs and many other activities. Our expectation is that 2025 will be our best, biggest and most successful year ever. Our past successes have been possible only through the benevolence and hard work by our members, and we thank you for supporting NWFMOA's mission.



Our year will begin with the induction of the 2025 Officers and Board of Directors at our January meeting. We are inviting the First Sergeants from area bases who were given the NWFMOA Commissary Gift Cards for E-4 and below families.

As usual, we have many other activities in support of our mission scheduled throughout the year.

So, HAPPY 66th ANNIVERSARY NWFMOA.

Please join us for our January 2nd Membership Meeting. Click [HERE](#) to make reservations.

From the President's Pen

By Fran Hendricks



Officers & Directors

PRESIDENT: Fran Hendricks:

fcashendricks@msn.com

1st VICE PRESIDENT: Jeff Watson:

jeffwatson2011@gmail.com

2nd VICE PRESIDENT: Bob Allen

bopper1@cox.net

TREASURER: Doug Stauffer:

docdoug4@gmail.com

SECRETARY: OPEN

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ray Alexander: rayandruthann@msn.com

Karl Eschmann: phanfix@cox.net

Bob Gramm: bobgramm5@gmail.com

Kevin Kirby: shotgun0603@yahoo.com

Dick Solt: richdulce@aol.com

DEFENDER EDITOR

Elvira Chiccarelli:

nwf.defender@gmail.com

WEBMASTER

Fred Westfall: nwfmoe@gmail.com

2024 – Celebrating 65 Years of Service to the Community

As we look forward to our 66th year of serving those who are presently serving, those who have served, as well as those who have expressed a desire to serve, I thought I would give a quick summary of the year that just closed out. 2024 was a special year for NWFMOA as we celebrated 65 years as a Chapter. Following is some of the highlights from this memorable year. As we have in the past, we will continue to build upon these impactful events as we strive to make a difference in the lives of others in 2025.

Year 2024 in Review:

Increase the awareness of being a NWFMOA Member

- Free lunch during our member's birth month continues to be well received.
- Monthly trivia question in *The Defender*...get it correct and have your name drawn at the next meeting to win a free lunch. Must be present to win. (This is just one of the many contributions made by Fred Westfall).

- Added Mascot of the Month feature to *The Defender* (An opportunity to share a picture of your pet).
- Members shared personal stories about their careers in our Member Spotlight feature in *The Defender*. (I encourage everyone to take advantage of this. In addition to enlightening us all, your feature becomes part of our Chapter repository and lore).

Membership

- Added 22 new Members.
- Hosted Officer Calls...great time and place to share stories from our time in uniform. (Kudos to Dick Solt for leading this effort).
- The Annual Military Ball was a resounding success. Karl Eschmann spearheaded the event and was helped by several Members...Dave Swanick, Fred Westfall, and numerous others who donated items for the auction. Money raised will be used to fund Chapter Community Outreach initiatives in 2025.

Increase Community Outreach Impact

- Partnered with Longwood Elementary School and Bob Hope Village for our 2nd Annual Valentines for Veterans celebration...over 200 handmade Valentine Cards were made and delivered by the Longwood 2nd Graders to residents of Bob Hope Village.
- Awarded \$39,500 in scholarships. (Great job NWFMOA Scholarship Fund Board)
- Participated in FWB Chamber's Military Family Appreciation Day at the Landing. We partnered with Zaxby's and offered restaurant gift card to winners of our cornhole game.
- Applied for and received a \$3,000 MOAA Foundation Grant to purchase Commissary Gift Cards for Junior Enlisted Families. During the first four years of this initiative, we reached a total of 898 junior enlisted families. We reached 300 families in 2023. In 2024, we leverage the \$3,000 MOAA Foundation grant and raised an additional \$7,000 thereby allowing us to reach 400 junior enlisted families—100 additional families this year! (The MOAA Foundation, NWFMOA Members, and the local community are commended for their generosity which enabled this incredible success).
- We hosted a Community Reception to thank the community for partnering with NWFMOA for 65 years as we served the community. Gen and Mrs. Brian Kelly, MOAA President, and COL Steve Bond, Florida Council and Chapters (FCoC) President also attended. Governor DeSantis, Senators Rubio and Scott, Rep Gaetz, State Rep and NWFMOA Member, Patt Maney, Okaloosa County Commissioners, and many local Mayors sent proclamations and letters congratulating the Chapter for its service over the past 65 years. The event was well attended.
- Purchased 100 wreaths through the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)/Wreaths Across America and helped placed them on the graves of Veterans buried in Beal Memorial Cemetery.

Be a Recognized Leader in Florida and with MOAA National

- 3 Chapter Members were recognized with FCoC Leadership Awards (George Hanks, Jim Shoff, and Dick Solt).
- Chapter earned MOAA's highest award (5-Star Award) for its Newsletter. (Congratulations to 2023 *Defender* Editor Fred Westfall)
- The Chapter earned MOAA's highest award (5-Star Award) for its Webpage. (Congratulations Fred Westfall, Webmaster)
- The Chapter earned MOAA's highest award (5-Star Award) for the Chapter. (Congratulations to one and all).
- Karl Eschmann was awarded the DAR Outstanding Veteran Volunteer Award and Les Matheson was awarded the DAR Bronze Medal of Distinction.
- State Rep/Retired Judge/Retired BG Patt Maney was awarded the Boy Scouts' highest honor for an Eagle Scout, the Distinguished Eagle Scout Award.

Our Chapter continues to do well thanks to the hard work of many. I want to especially thank the Board (Karl Eschmann, Jeff Watson, Fred Westfall, Doug Stauffer, Ray Alexander, Bob Allen, Bob Gramm, Michael Griffith, Kevin Kirby, and Dick Solt) for their leadership and help in guiding our Chapter. In 2025, we will once again build on the excellence the Chapter is known for. Please plan to join us as we once again demonstrate **Comradery with Purpose**.

H2S,

Brig Gen Fran Hendricks, USAF Retired
President, NWFMOA

1959 - 2025



Thank You

for helping us celebrate over 66 years of
Service to our Community.

Watch for a new banner ad
on our website in 2025.

[Click HERE now to donate and get your name on the 2025 banner.](#)

Test Your Knowledge

**Take the quiz for a chance to
win a free lunch at our next
meeting.**



This month the quiz is about some important military history. When you click on the link below, you will see a single question and a place to give your answer and name. If your answer is correct, you will be entered into the drawing at the monthly meeting (you have to be present to win your free meal at the next meeting). You may answer the question multiple times but only the correct answer will count for the drawing (so answering the question correctly 5 times will not give you more chances to win). We don't tell anyone that they got it right or wrong until we disclose the winner at the meeting. At the meeting, we state the answer and how many got it right. Then we pull the one winning entry from the hat.

Last month the winner was Mel Claxton but he was not in attendance.

Click the link below to get to the quiz. The winner will be announced at the next meeting. The person must be present to win.

[CLICK HERE](#)

Time To Pay Your Dues

It is time to pay your 2025 dues. And, if you haven't done so already, it is way past time to pay your **2024 dues.** Please make a check for the amount payable for the next year or beyond.

- Not sure if you owe dues? Click [HERE](#).
- If you owe dues, click [HERE](#) to fill form and send it along with your check to **Treasurer, PO Box 1213, Shalimar, FL 32579.**
- You can also now pay your dues by **credit card.** To do that, click [HERE](#).

Chaplain's Corner

By: Chaplain Thomas Azar



Who's carrying your bags?

Welcome back to those returning from visiting family and friends for the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year holidays.

Yes, the news reports on airline delays, cancellations, and ticket confusion forced many to sleep in an airport for days. It was frustrating, demoralizing, perturbing and anxiety producing. Our senior BP and pulse went up drastically.

When people buy a ticket to fly, we don't expect to spend the day on the ground; we trust airport workers for a smooth transition from curb to baggage claim.

We believe the air crew, baggage handlers, hostesses, and receptionists all have our best interest at heart.

When we wore the uniform and deployed to a base, we trusted the commanders and all squadron leadership to protect our very lives.

Recently, my wife and I cruised the Panama Canal. We dropped our clothes, medicine, breathing apparatus at the counter of an airline and later with the cruise company. We trust unknown people with our daily essentials, and yes our safety.

We have to get to our destination and we don't even know who will put it on the plane, let alone pilot it; or who will captain the ship... is that blind faith?

Every day we walk, drive, work out and put our life on the line. Who do we trust? Who watches over the rest of our families?

We hopefully trust our daily life to a God who has a proven track record over our personal past decades. I see how my history validates His presence, protection and empowerment in my life. His fingerprints are all over my baggage.

Then I think about my daily life and realize the God who created the universe is with us. The history of the Bible, shows a God who cares and is concerned about those whose hearts and minds are obedient and trust in Him.

Isn't He more trustworthy than an unknown finite group of workers?

I trust God because when I look back on my life and see the many experiences I had in the military and civilian communities, God provided, protected me so many times. From my parents watching over me, my teachers, youth leaders, and many other individuals who God put in my life to lead and guide me. Our conclusion is there is a God, who is concerned and caring about those who respect and honor and praise him.

I have a hard time hanging a picture on a wall; and I wonder how God could have hung planets onto vast open space!

I wish people would abandon their idols, give up their crooked ways, stop thinking about how great they are, and reflect on the truly good, great and gracious God.

I have met many brave men and women in my life, who went forward to serve their nation. They put their faith and trust in the God of our nation. They lived a life of integrity, excellence and sacrifice. We left no man or woman behind. It was never a formality when commanders asked chaplains to pray before a deployment.

So I want to encourage my peers to try and make time to be alone with God. The great saints in history always found time to be solitary, reflective and meditative. They too looked back on their lives and saw God's leading and directing in their lives. Even Jesus took time to be alone.

So let's start the New Year by reading some Psalms, sing your favorite hymns, re-read your devotional books.

Let's drop our bags off with the best baggage handler who loves each of us and wants us to get to our final destination safely- His heavenly eternal home.

It's a gated community, no doctors, tax offices, police departments or crooked politicians. It's the antithesis of Wall Street, Silicone Valley, and Washington DC.

So who did you entrust with your bags? We already have our tickets; just waiting for our boarding passes.

Officers Call

Correction!

Our next officers call will be on January 30, 2025 starting at 1700,

At Cheers in Shalimar, not Doc's Oyster Bar



PUBLIC RECORD

In Memoriam

None 😊

New Members

None 😞

?
? Got a Chapter question? ?
? Change in personal info? ?
? Comment?
? Don't know who to ask? ?
? Email: info@nwfmooa.org ?
? We'll get an answer for you. ?



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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.

Member Spotlight

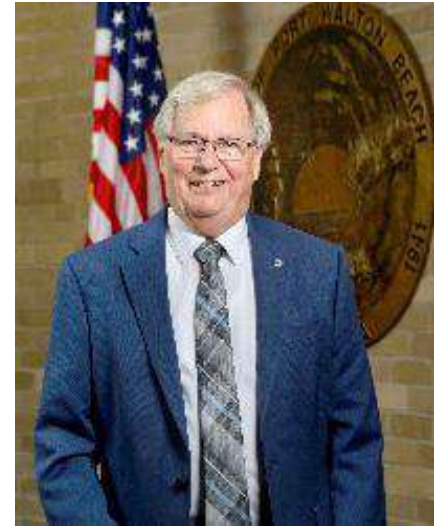
NWFMOA Member and FWB Mayor Rynearson Recalls His Military Career

By Collin Bestor

Northwest Florida Daily News USA TODAY NETWORK

Long before Dick Rynearson would ever be known as the mayor of Fort Walton Beach, he spent his time in the skies flying the B-52 Stratofortress over Vietnam.

Rynearson, 79, grew up in Ohio. His wife, Janey, was his date for his junior prom. After a few years apart, they reconnected at Kent State University and have been together ever since.



While at Kent State, he joined the ROTC, where he developed a duty to serve his country. Family ties cultivated this duty, as his father fought in the Battle of the Ardennes during World War II.

After a year of studying to pursue a history degree, he was informed that a new program at Kent State involved aerospace technology. With interest in flight already building from trying to obtain a private pilot's license, Rynearson decided to switch majors and pursue his love of flight.

"We don't know much about it. But that might be something to look into, and it was fabulous," said Rynearson. "We're on the ground floor of a brand new program."

With a degree in aerospace engineering and a pilot license, Rynearson began his 11-year career in the United States Air Force.

The early years

As Rynearson completed flight training, the first aircraft he was assigned was the Caribou C-7, a cargo aircraft specializing in short takeoff and landing capabilities.

"It was the best flying assignment I could have possibly hoped for. It was brutal flying. There was no autopilot, no bells and whistles. It was just stick and rudder; you fly the airplane," laughed Rynearson. "I learned more in that one year of flying that airplane than I would have in probably five years in another."

After nine months in Vietnam flying routine cargo missions, Rynearson received a call on the radio informing him that a camp in North Vietnam needed help in being resupplied before being overrun by the North Vietnamese Army (NVA).

After being briefed on the mission, it was discovered that the runway was severely damaged after taking mortar and rocket fire. The plan was to load pallets on five C-7s with supplies and perform a low-altitude parachute resupply to the estimated 375 troops on the ground.

One of the main issues with the mission was the camp's surroundings. The base was at the bottom of a valley with mountains on three sides.

There was one clearing for entering and exiting the airspace. Still, intelligence briefings told the men that the NVA was positioned on the hills surrounding the base with 50-caliber machine guns and was capable of delivering accurate fire.

As the group of five aircraft approached the valley, with 20 seconds of separation between them, the first aircraft successfully delivered the cargo and made it out of the valley. The second aircraft, which Ryneerson said was piloted by his best friend, also delivered cargo but made a fateful left turn over the hill and was shot down, killing the entire crew.

As the four aircraft returned to the base, another call from the same base came in, saying they needed more supplies. The C-7 crews waited until night to deliver more supplies and then painted the belly of the aircraft black to avoid being seen. At the mission's end, Ryneerson delivered supplies to the camp three times to prevent the troops on the ground from being overrun.

Ryneerson earned the Silver Star for his actions and completed his first tour in Vietnam after 366 days in the country. As Ryneerson awaited new orders, he received word via radio that his new assignment had been chosen. Following in his brother's footsteps, he was reassigned to the B-52.

After spending several weeks in "B-52 school," Ryneerson eventually became an aircraft commander and was reassigned to the now-closed Blytheville Air Force Base in Arkansas. There, as tensions rose during the Cold War, he spent most of the time on "alert status," preparing for a call that never came to deliver nuclear weapons if needed.

After spending time in the Mississippi Air National Guard, Ryneerson was delivered a new set of orders that sent him to Anderson Air Force Base in Guam, where he would again be deployed to fly missions over Vietnam.

The infamous B-52 story

If you have ever heard Mayor Ryneerson speak at an event in Okaloosa County, you might have heard him briefly mention a B-52 story he would tell later. This was the catalyst for the Daily News asking him for an interview.

During his first tour as a B-52 pilot, Ryneerson participated in a routine bombing mission over South Vietnam. Ground crews radioed Ryneerson's aircraft shortly after takeoff, saying they had found debris on the runway and needed to check their systems before proceeding to Vietnam.

"So we sent the gunner back, and he got 'volunteered' to be the one that went back," he chuckled. "The tech manual says if you ever have to do that, plan five or six minutes for someone to make the journey and come back. He was there and back in less than two minutes."

"I've never seen anybody more wideeyed in my life. I can't tell you exactly what he said, but he said, 'We have a big f-ing hole in the airplane.' "Due to a blown tire, the left rear gear door was forcefully removed from the aircraft. With authority over the plane, Ryneerson continued his mission before returning to base.

Once about 300 miles out, ground crews contacted Boeing, the plane's manufacturer, for guidance on proceeding. They recommended pulling three circuit breakers on the aircraft to prohibit the damaged landing gear from being deployed on landing. Furthermore, engineers also asked Ryneerson to burn as much fuel as possible to reduce the aircraft's weight.

"We could fly 15 more minutes," said Ryneerson.

With perfect weather conditions, Ryneerson gently brought the aircraft down to the runway. On touchdown, one of the gears compressed on impact, making the aircraft bounce as it touched down.

"We probably went 20 feet in the air. It came down about the second time, and then it bounced again. I told the copilot, 'I sure as heck didn't want to bounce the third time.' So I said hit the parachute, and when we came down a third time, we stayed on the ground."

"It was kind of exciting. I don't know anyone else who experienced that problem before. All I know is that Boeing built a good airplane that could take a lot of abuse."

Operation Linebacker II

By late 1972, the U.S. had begun reducing its military efforts in Vietnam. Through diplomatic measures, President Richard Nixon had hoped that the war could end by Christmas.

After losing patience with the NVA in negotiations, Nixon gave the order on Dec. 18, 1972, to commence Operation Linebacker II, an originally three-day effort of long-range B-52 bombing runs targeting military infrastructure in Hanoi.

“They called all the crews into the briefing room, and we were all sitting there, and the curtains open on a stage, and there was a map of Hanoi. (The Commanding Officer) says, ‘Gentleman, this is where you’re going.’ And there’s almost a gasp in the room,” recalled Rynearson.

The plan was simple: B-52 crews would depart from Anderson Air Force Base on Guam and make the 12- to 14-hour journey to Vietnam, drop ordnance on selected targets, and return to base. The only problem was that each day, crews would fly the same route, hit the same targets, and fly back.

“It was hours and hours of boredom interrupted by one or two minutes of excitement and then hours and hours of boredom going home,” said Rynearson.

According to officers above Rynearson, estimates showed that 6% of the crews selected for the mission would not return to Guam. In all, 42 B-52 crews took off that first night, but only 40 came home.

On Night Three, Rynearson’s crew was on deck, albeit with a little apprehension from commanding officers.

“In their infinite wisdom, they were sending us all on the same flight path, same altitude, same time, same target, same post-target turn, identical to what had been done the previous nights,” he recalled. “None of us had a good feeling about that, but an order is an order, so that’s what we did.”

Luckily for him and his crew, the mission went as expected. However, another B-52 crew was shot down by a surface-to-air missile (SAM).

After a two-night break and a change in the mission planning, Rynearson and his crew went back over the skies of Vietnam on night six. Just as his crew was about to drop bombs on their target, the electronic warfare officer informed him that a SAM site had locked on his aircraft.

After dropping the bombs, Rynearson received an alert for a “three-ringer,” which means the SAM was launched. Rynearson turned up on a wing and made visual contact with the missile.

“It was a telephone pole with a big fire,” recalled Rynearson. “The only thing you can do to defend yourself is to dive toward it.”

As Rynearson initiated the dive, the missile flew by on his co-pilot side of the aircraft and exploded, which he recalled looking like Fourth of July fireworks. With no damage felt on the aircraft, Rynearson returned to Guam and ended the most harrowing night of the mission.

Rynearson flew another night before the operation ended on Dec. 29, 1972. Of the 207 estimated B-52s that performed during the operation, 15 were shot down. Forty-three service members were killed in action, with another 49 taken as prisoners.

While the operation eventually persuaded the NVA to come back to the negotiating table, it failed to prevent the eventual fall of South Vietnam in 1975.

Leaving the Air Force

After a four-and-a-half-year break following Vietnam, the Air Force determined that it had too many pilots. With his background in engineering, Rynearson was relocated to Eglin Air Force Base to be a missile engineer.

After receiving a call from the command, they were looking for pilots to fly the T-39 Saberliner, a military variant of a business jet. Six months before Ryneerson left the Air Force, higher officers removed him from the cockpit and placed him in a command post, where he helped develop infrared missiles.

“I absolutely did not like it. We were working 12-hour shifts, working shifts five and six days a week. I was miserable. Janey knew I was miserable.”

One evening, he came home and watched the evening news and watched a story about an engineer standing in front of Hughes Aircraft Company. Ryneerson called the company the next morning and was told how quickly he could be there for an interview.

After spending nearly 11 years in California, he was reassigned to Eglin, where he was part of the air-to-air missile test team until retiring from Raytheon in 2005.

Four years later, Ryneerson won a seat on the Fort Walton Beach City Council, where he remained a council member until 2017 before winning the mayoral race over local business owner Tom Rice.

During Ryneerson’s military service, he earned the Air Medal with seven oak leaf clusters, the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Silver Star.

When asked what skills he carried over from his time in the military, Ryneerson said the main focus was how to keep a team together.

“You learn a lot of techniques for keeping the crew happy. And I think it was the same thing as you want to be surrounded by friends, you want friends to support you, as you do with your group, and try to do that with city employees for sure.”

“We’re going to make sure that they understand that you’re there for them. And that’s why we’re here with the citizens.”

One other fact we learned during our conversation with Mayor Ryneerson: The B-52 on static display at the Air Force Armament Museum was once home to Ryneerson, who flew missions over Vietnam.

“Every time I drive by (the museum) I smile,” Ryneerson said.

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Never Stop Serving

OUR MISSION

The mission of NWFMOA is to benefit the members of the uniformed services, their families and survivors and to advocate a strong national defense, while providing needed support to the community and its members.

NWFMOA Celebrates the Holidays with their Annual Military Ball (December 14, 2024)

Again this year, the NWFMOA held its annual military ball.



[Click HERE for all the pictures.](#)



NWFMOA Presents Commissary Gift Cards to Area First Sergeants

For the fifth year in a row, the NWFMOA has given commissary gift cards to area First Sergeants to distribute as needed to E-4 and below families for the holidays. Below are pictures of those events.

(December 12, 2024)



The Eglin First Sergeants are presented with a check for \$2,500 representing 100 Commissary Gift Cards.

(December 11, 2024)



A check for \$2,500 representing 100 Commissary Gift Cards is presented to the First Sergeants of the 7SFG (Airborne).



Hurlburt First Sergeants are presented with a \$2,500.00 check from the NWFMOA.



SGT Gaudiosi from the Hurlburt Family Readiness Center is presented a \$1,250.00 check from the NWFMOA.



The Duke Field First Sergeants are presented with a \$1,250 check from the NWFMOA.

Photo from Bob Gramm



Gen Hendricks presents a thank you note and NWFMOA 65th Anniversary Coin to the Moose Lodge 2193 (Fort Walton Beach) for their donation to the Commissary Gift Card Program for junior enlisted families.



Gen Hendricks presents the United Way Emerald Coast with a 65th Anniversary Commemorative Coin and thank you note for their donation to the 2024 Commissary Gift Card Program for junior enlisted families. In turn, they coined him with a United Way Emerald Coast coin.



OPUS ONE performs for the NWFMOA (December 5, 2024)

Opus One thrilled the members of the NWFMOA with their annual Christmas song medley.



[Click HERE for all the pictures.](#)



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https://bit.ly/moaa_newsletter

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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.



Never Stop Serving

**If You Belong to the NWFMOA, You ARE
Part Of The Solution**

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The Council Communiqué

Florida Council of Chapters
Military Officers Association of America

[Click to read the FCoC Communiqué](#)

Scholarship Fund

by Dave Parisot



It's 2025 already; 2025 Scholarship Fund Board of Directors; New scholarship award amounts for 2025.

Wow, can you believe it, almost a whole year has passed and we are almost into 2025! Happy and Prosperous New Year to everyone, especially the donors to our Scholarship Fund.

In January we will hold our annual Scholarship Fund Board of Directors meeting. The 2025 Board members are: **Dave Parisot**, President; **Kevin Kirby**, Vice-President; **George Colton**, Secretary-Treasurer; **Bob Allen**, **Fred Westfall**; **Karl Eschmann**; and, **Charles Farmer** (Niceville JROTC). Our Financial Adviser remains **Tess McLaughlin Bass** of Bass, Byrd, and Associates at Merrill Lynch.

When the Board met in September 2023, we decided to offer 2-year scholarships to JROTC cadets of the seven local high schools we support, with the objective to retain them in college ROTC classes for a longer period and eventually leading to commissions in our armed forces. At their Junior or senior year in ROTC they become eligible to apply for one of our ROTC scholarships of \$4,000 each. The number of scholarships to be awarded in 2025 will depend on the number of applications we receive by March 1st. The JROTC scholarships will be valued at \$3,000 for each of two years (i.e., \$6,000 total for each cadet selected.) More info to come after our January Board meeting.

Since my last article we have had a few Chapter members make donations to the Scholarship Fund as follows: **Bob Gramm**, **Howard Fisher**, and **Dave Parisot**.

Below is the complete list of our **Endowed Scholarships**, our **Gold Century Club** members (\$500 cumulative minimum donation) and our **BG Frank Glunn Century Club** members (\$100 minimum donation) for the most previous 12 months, along with our **Business Donors**. Your support is greatly appreciated. All of these donations are used to fund our scholarships. [Note: (D) means deceased and (R) means Renewal of membership.]

Endowed Scholarships: **Lt Col Jim and Mrs Una Heavener Memorial Scholarship** (D) (via their estate, effective 2018); **Dave Parisot** in memory of his wife, **Chong Cha (Kim) Parisot** (effective 2017); **Dr (Lt Col, USAF, Ret.) Howard and Mrs. Irene Fisher Scholarship** (effective 2022); **Dr. (Lt. Col., USAF, Ret.) Fred and Mrs. Jan Westfall Scholarship** (effective 2023); and, **Col. (USAF, Ret.) Karl and Mrs. Charlotte Eschmann Scholarship** (effective 2024).

Gold Century Club: **Bill Ryan** (Feb 2016); **Ruth Cullen**, (D) (Oct 2016); **Dave Parisot** (Feb 2017); **Janet Taylor** (Mar 2017); **Chris Beam** (Mar 2017); **Bob Garcia** (D) (July 2017); **Rod Gerdes** (Nov 2017); **Larry Bush** (Nov 2017); **Dr. Howard & Irene Fisher** (Nov 2017); **Eileen Arpke** (D) (Feb 2018); **Fred & Jan Westfall** (Apr 2018); **Clyde Locke** (D) (Apr 2018); WWII, Korea, and Vietnam Veteran **Sam Lombardo** (D) (July 2018); **Dennis Phillips** (Aug 2018); **Karl & Charlotte Eschmann**

(Oct 2018); **Carol Baker** (Jan 2019); **Ann Adelsperger** (Feb 2019); **Don Litke** (Aug 2019); **Fred Boyer** (D) (Aug 2019).**Dr. Keith & Elizabeth Kulow** (Nov 2019); **Al Bills** (Nov. 2019); **Kay Dent** (Nov. 2019); **Dr. Roger Riegenbach** (Dec 2019); **Robert “Pete” Peterzen** (Dec 2019); **Nick Marotta** (Oct 2020); **Kathy & Jesse Bush** (Dec 2020); **Patt & Caroline Maney** (Dec 2020); **Kevin Kirby** (Apr 2021); **Scott & Janet Berry** (May 2021); **Douglas Hardin** (D) (Sept 2021); **Patrick & Mosla Boab** (Dec. 2021); **Bob Allen** (Feb 2022); **Bobbi Hanson Garcia** (Mar 2022); **Joy Houck** (Mar 2022); **George Colton** (May 2022); **Bob Secrest** (May 2022); **Brig. Gen Fran & Mrs Connie Hendricks** (Oct 2022); **Les Matheson** (Feb 2023); **Dan Brown** (April 2023); **Tess Bass** (August 2023); **Bob Gramm** (Dec 2023); **Larry Tashlik** (Dec 2023); **Jean Dutton** (D) (Oct 2024) and **Jeff Watson** (Oct 2024) [Note: 44 total members]

BG Frank Glunn Century Club (past 12 months) (R=Renewal): December 2023: **Les Matheson** (R); **Jeff Watson** (R) (In memory of Maj. John Besten, USAF, Ret.); **Karl and Charlotte Eschmann** (R); **Bob Gramm** (R); **Brig. Gen. Fran & Connie Hendricks** (R); **Larry Tashlik** (R); **Kay Dent** (In memory of Troy Dent and Larry Kettter); and, **Janet Ryan Taylor** (R) (In honor of Major Bill Ryan); February 2024: **Rod Gerdes** (R); March 2024: **Don Litke** (R); **Kevin Kirby** (R); April 2024: **Fred Westfall** (R); **Dennis Phillips** (R); and **Dr. Keith Kulow** (R); May 2024: **Bob Secrest** (R); **Al Bills** (R); **Bob Cluskey**; and **Dave Parisot** (R) (In memory of Phil Krajeck); August 2024: **Bob Cluskey** (R); **Scott & Janet Berry** (R); **Chuck Merkel** (R); and **Dave Parisot** (R) (In memory of Eileen Arpke); October 2024: **Dave Parisot** (In memory of Jean Dutton); **Jeff Watson** (R); November 2024: **Kay Dent** (R); **Pete Peterzen** (R); and **Karl and Charlotte Eschmann** (R); **Fred and Jan Westfall** (R); **Bob Gramm** (R); **Howard Fisher** (R); and **Dave Parisot** (R) (In memory of Chong Parisot)

2023/2024 Business Platinum Donors: (\$1,000+): Dec. 2023: **Bass, Byrd & Associates at Merrill Lynch of FWB** (R); March 2024: **Florida Power & Light**



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Legislative Corner



Targeted Pay Raise for Junior Enlisted Personnel

For the Legislative Minute at our November monthly meeting, I highlighted one provision of the House-passed version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)—the need for a targeted pay raise for junior enlisted personnel.

While recent increases in military compensation have helped keep pace with rising costs, they have not provided the meaningful financial relief our junior enlisted personnel desperately need. These young servicemembers, many of whom are living paycheck to paycheck, are the backbone of our military. They bear the greatest burdens while facing financial hardships that affect not only their well-being but also recruitment, retention, and readiness. The bipartisan House Armed Services Committee of Life Panel has highlighted the necessity of this pay raise, particularly for those ranked E-1 to E-4, and MOAA believes this investment is essential to maintaining a strong and capable force.

MOAA understands the need to balance resources within a limited national budget, but fair compensation for junior enlisted personnel must remain a priority. Their dedication and sacrifices are invaluable to our national security, and they deserve pay that reflects their vital role.

Join me and ask our elected Congressional leaders to support approving a meaningful pay raise for the men and women who serve our nation with honor. I invite you to visit the NWFMOA Webpage and hit the Take Action button. That will take you to the MOAA's Active Legislative Campaigns. There you will find all the legislative actions MOAA is working. With a few clicks, a letter voicing your support will be sent to our two Senators and Congressman.

UPDATE:

On December 11, 2024, the House passed the NDAA with a targeted pay raise for junior enlisted included in the bill. The targeted raise would be 14.5% for junior enlisted and a 4.5% for all others. The bill now proceeds to the Senate.

Join me and ask our elected Congressional leaders to support approving a meaningful pay raise for the men and women who serve our nation with honor. I invite you to visit the NWFMOA Webpage and hit the Take Action button. That will take you to the MOAA's Active Legislative Campaigns. There you will find all the legislative actions MOAA is working. With a few clicks, you can voice your support for this specific bill, as well as all legislative actions MOAA is working. Thank you for taking the time to make this happen.

H2S,

Fran Hendricks, Brig Gen, USAF Retired
President, NWFMOA

Surviving Spouse Corner

Chaplains Ray Alexander and Tom Azar have created a number of excellent resources for Surviving Spouses and it is on our website. Be sure to check it out by clicking on the link below. Or visit our [website](#) and click on the Member area.

[Click here for Surviving Spouse Information](#)



The Council Communiqué

Florida Council of Chapters
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AN INVITATION TO YOU: The membership of NWFMOA extends a sincere invitation to join us in our social cultural, professional and service activities that extend for the local to national levels.

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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

Membership Application/ Renewal

**New Members joining this year
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1 yr--\$25.00, 2 yr--\$48.00, 3 yr--\$65.00

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76-80	195.00	<50	395.00

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Important Things To Remember

What

What to Click

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Is Your Personal Information Up to Date?

If any of your vital information has changed, like if you've moved and have a new mailing address, or a new phone number or email address, please use the Update Your Information link on our NWFMOA website.

The link is http://nwfmoa.org/info_update.html

The information you provide helps us keep in touch with you and is ONLY used by the NWFMOA

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