

March 2021



**Indian River Chapter MOAA**

**P.O. Box 644047**

**Vero Beach, FL 32964-4047**

***Indian River Chapter  
Since 1983***

**NEW MEMBERS WELCOME**

Do you know someone who is a retired or former military officer or widowed spouse of an officer, but not a member of our chapter or MOAA? If so, ask them to join and contact **Carroll Oates** at 954-494-8742.

March 2021



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Commissioned Officers

I had been thinking about topics for discussion in our IRC-MOAA newsletter and the word "Commission" continued to come to mind. At first, I thought it would be simple and easy to talk about a military commission and to share it with an organization like MOAA, which is filled with Commissioned Officers and Warrant Officers. I was wrong.

As I researched, I suddenly realized that the word commission took one into many different directions. World history tied the commissioning of military or militia leaders to nobility, elite, and favored subjects of a territory who had connections and influence to the territory's owner. For example, just looking at Great Britain proved this out over many centuries. When that new country called America and United States evolved many of the initial military "higher ups" came from this class as well. That changed quickly when we began to elect rather than "crown" our country's leaders. We all owned a piece of the pie.

One main definition of "commission" started to be highlighted. The person being given a commission was taking on the responsibilities and liabilities of the territory leadership - in our case, The President. The mission was protecting and defending our Constitution.

This now began to task the commissioned person with responsibilities far greater than many wanted. In other words, make the mission your responsibility even if it costs you and others your wealth and even life itself. The commission made you a part of it all and gave you ownership.

Enlisted soldiers in our military take the same oath as officers, but their service is a contract. Contracts are different than commissions, as they obligate the contracted person for a specific purpose and for a specific period of time. Having served as an enlisted troop for my first three years of service this bothered me. I was just as patriotic and dedicated to the mission as anyone else, including the Lieutenant or General. When my

three-year contract was completed, it was, well, completed, finished, kaput.

At the completion of my first three years of service, I was given an opportunity to receive a commission. I always wanted this opportunity, because I believed life would be better. Living conditions, pay, and being the boss instead of the worker. Like many others, I gave very little thought to the acceptance of responsibility to others and, as always, to the mission. I didn't feel noble or elite, but I did feel privileged.

I learned that my next 24 years of service was just a measure of time and would actually last forever. To protect and defend and (I add) make better and uphold and teach and lead and accept. It never ends.

That's what it's all about. That's why we here at IRC-MOAA are Still Serving. We need to continue to protect, defend, teach, stand proud, encourage others, ensure it continues, and be proud of our service and share our experiences.

As I wrote down these thoughts about commission, I glanced at the calendar. I realized that exactly 30 years ago (with 22 years of service at that time) I was past due for promotion to Lt. Colonel in the US Army. I was in a vehicle with my Brigade HQ. We were waiting for the word to move out and follow our 3rd Armor Division across the cold, hard desert in Iraq. At age 43, I had more than enough years to retire. I remember asking myself: why was I here following the warriors of the Spearhead Division into the unknown? I was a part of this mission, always had been. This was who and what I was.

In a word, I was Commissioned. Let's keep it going!

**STILL SERVING,  
CARROLL OATES  
LTC USA (RET)**

March 2021

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## LIST OF IRC-MOAA CHAPTER EVENTS

### By Carroll Oates

Although the Covid-19 situation continues to keep things quiet with the schools in Indian River County, Team C (MOAA) has completed several classes:

- Feb. 9 - Team C presented a radio show program on Veterans Council Radio about Mission of IRC-MOAA within the Veterans Council.
- Feb. 16 - Classes on The Armed Forces were given to the Trail Life Scout Group, Kings Baptist Church, Vero Beach.
- Feb. 26 - Team C (MOAA) gave lecture to Surviving Spouse Group at C. J. Cannon's.
- Feb. 23 - Classes on The American Flag and Americanism given to the Trail Life Scout Group, Kings Baptist Church, Vero Beach.
- Feb. 24 - Team C (MOAA) took part in the Student Interviews at St. Edwards School, Vero Beach, FL.

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### Treasurer's Report

#### By Bill Duffy

We showed a balance of **\$16,581.24** at the beginning of February.

To date, this month we have posted paid dues and donations for the total of **\$1360.00**

We have had expenses totaling **\$1,293.73**. These included a \$1,000 donation to the Vero Beach World War I Memorial and \$175.00 for the purchase of a ½ page ad in the Florida Council of Chapters (FCoC) Conference brochure.

We currently have a balance of **\$16,647.51**.

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March 2021

## IRC – MOAA SPEAKERS BUREAU

By Carroll Oates

We are always searching for ways that members can participate and use their knowledge and experience to help promote our mission.

One major way that I have been involved with is serving as a leader in the **IRC Veterans Council's Veterans in the Classroom Program** and being a member of the **Veterans Council's Speakers Bureau**.

All too often I have been cautioned to shorten my speech or stay quiet. Too bad, but it won't happen. As leaders, we have usually found ourselves out front teaching and instructing. After all, we are officers and we take the lead.

In this past year, I have been asked to be a speaker at many civic organizations events, including Women and Men's Guilds, Rotary and Lions Clubs, Scout Groups, Home Owners Associations, and Veterans Day and Memorial Day events. This is all besides the Classes that our IRC-MOAA Veterans in the Classroom Team conduct within Indian River County. But we need help. Three or four of us MOAA Officers is not enough.

If you look at the "Recent Events" you'll see that in the last 21 days we had 6 events alone. So, we are looking for a few good men and women who would be willing to be on our Classroom Team and Speaker Bureau. When you join one you join them both.

You may ask your self "What can I offer"? Well, here are some examples:

- Life experiences (Civilian and Military)
- Your Service in the Military. What you were, where you served, and what you did.
- Some special experiences: Flying a plane, jumping from one. Countries visited.
- Hobbies and Expertise. (For example, Robert Scheppy is an expert on China.)

With our Classroom Team, we will provide the required lesson plans and have you observe our classes before presenting them. Classes include: The Armed Services: Who and What. Americanism and Patriotism, Our American Icons, such as Pledge of allegiance, National Anthem, Our Flag and Constitution, and Women in the Military. NOTE: The Veterans Council has 3 Teams but our MOAA Team is, by far, most often requested.)

I believe that IRC-MOAA will take the lead with Veteran speakers.

We need your help so contact me at 954-494-8742 or E mail [carrollonmiramar@aol.com](mailto:carrollonmiramar@aol.com)

Or, Terry Treat at 703-304-4935 or E mail [tjtreat@hotmail.com](mailto:tjtreat@hotmail.com)

**Remember, We are Still Serving.**



**Photo: Carroll Oates speaks to a Rotary Club in Vero Beach, Florida**

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March 2021

## VETERANS IN THE CLASSROOM



Feb. 16, 2021- Classes on The Armed Forces were given to the Trail Life Scout Group, Kings Baptist Church, Vero Beach. Last row: Eric Menger, Terry Treat, and Carroll Oates



Photo: Terry Treat talks to the Trail Life Scout Group.

## THE FOUR CHAPLAINS

### From The History Place

One of the more extraordinary acts of heroism during World War II occurred in the icy waters off Greenland after a U.S. Army transport ship was hit by a German torpedo and began to sink rapidly.

When it became apparent there were not enough life jackets, four U.S. Army chaplains each removed theirs, handed them to frightened young soldiers, and chose to go down with the ship.

In February 1943, the U.S. Army transport ship *Dorchester* was filled to capacity, carrying 751 passengers, 130 crew members and 23 naval personnel on a journey from Newfoundland to an American military base in Greenland.

The 5,649-ton ship was built in 1926 and originally served as a luxury coastal liner. By 1943, the ship clearly had seen better days and most of the troops had been quite uneasy boarding such a "lousy old freighter."

The *Dorchester* was one of three transports in a small convoy, accompanied by three U.S. Coast Guard cutters. Seas were rough and the *Dorchester* rode the waves poorly, dipping and swaying, bouncing and shuddering as it plowed through the blackness of a cold winter's night.

Throughout the voyage, the four chaplains; **George L. Fox, Alexander D. Goode, Clark V. Poling and John P. Washington**, helped to soothe the nerves of the 700 young draftees and enlisted men on board by walking among them. They laughed, joked and even put on amateur floor shows every night. The chaplains also held regular religious services which at first were poorly attended. However, attendance increased with every mile the ship sailed further away from home.

To reach Greenland, the convoy had to pass through U-boat infested waters where numerous transports already had been sunk.

On the evening of February 2nd, one of the Coast Guard cutters detected a submarine on its sonar and blinked the warning "we are being followed" to *Dorchester's* Captain, Hans J. Danielsen. An urgent radio call then went out requesting anti-submarine patrol planes. But the response came back that the planes were patrolling "elsewhere." The ships would have to go it alone.

(Continued on next page.)

March 2021

(Continued from previous page.)

By now, they were only about 150 miles from their final destination and hopes were high they might make it to port without trouble. But as a safety precaution, Captain Danielsen ordered all of the men on board to sleep in their regular clothing and wear life jackets. Many of the men deep in the ship's hold ignored this order due to the sweltering engine heat and the uncomfortable bulkiness of the life jackets.

At one o'clock in the morning of February 3rd, the ship's bell struck twice. It would never sound again. The periscope of *German submarine U-223* poked through the water's surface and spotted the ship in its cross hairs. A German officer gave the order to fire torpedoes.

The *Dorchester* was blasted on its starboard side near the engine room, far below the water line, killing a hundred men and knocking out all power and radio contact. Captain Danielsen was then informed his ship was rapidly taking on water. He gave the order to abandon ship.



George L. Fox  
Methodist Minister



Alexander D. Goode  
Jewish Rabbi



Clark V. Poling  
Dutch Reformed Church



John P. Washington  
Catholic Priest

**Photos: The four chaplains went down with the *Dorchester* off Greenland in 1943.**

Panic now set in among the men below decks as they groped around in the darkness, struggling to get topside. Many had no life jackets or clothing. Those who made it up onto the listing deck immediately realized they were about to die in the Arctic air and frigid water.

Lifeboats quickly became overcrowded to the point of capsizing. Rafts were tossed into the sea but drifted away before anyone could get into them. Only two lifeboats out of 14 were successfully launched.

Amid the disorder, the four Army chaplains quietly spread out among the soldiers, preaching courage to the frightened, offering prayers to the wounded, and guiding the disoriented.

After most of the survivors had struggled up on deck, the four chaplains opened a storage locker and began handing out life jackets. Soon they ran out.

**"Padre," a young soldier hollered, "I've lost my life jacket and I can't swim!"**

One of the four chaplains, it is not known which, removed his and said, "Here, take mine. I won't need it. I'm staying." The other three chaplains followed his example.

"It was," an eyewitness later recalled, "the finest thing I have ever seen or hope to see this side of heaven."

Now, just 27 minutes after the torpedo struck, the ship was about to go down. The four chaplains locked arms together and braced against the deck with its heavy starboard list. They prayed, each in the tradition of his own faith, as the water reached their knees.

A wave swept over the ship, then another, and another. The *Dorchester* fought to right herself but failed and plunged into the seething ocean.

**Of the 902 men aboard, 675 died, leaving just 227 survivors.** News of the tragedy and the heroic conduct of the four chaplains caused a sensation in America. On December 19, 1944, the Distinguished Service Cross for "extraordinary heroism" and the Purple Heart were awarded posthumously to the chaplains' next of kin.

In 1961, Congress authorized a Special Medal for Heroism which had never been given before and is never to be given again.

March 2021

## EDITOR REQUESTS

### ARTICLES OF INTEREST

By Robert Scheppy

*This is your newsletter.*

Would you like to submit an Article of Interest? Send it to Robert Scheppy, Editor, for inclusion in the Newsletter. [scheppy70@yahoo.com](mailto:scheppy70@yahoo.com)

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## POSTAL CONNECTIONS

### OUR PUBLISHER

Postal Connections publishes our Newsletter. The store is owned and operated by Marc Richard, a fellow MOAA member. Marc is located on 1275 US Highway 1, Suite 2, Vero Beach, FL 32960. He's next to a Publix Liquor Store. Tel 772-778-4241. [pca228@postalconnections.com](mailto:pca228@postalconnections.com)

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## INDIAN RIVER CHAPTER

### NEWSLETTER

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The chapter is non-partisan and the contents of the Indian River Chapter News are the opinions of the authors and are not necessarily those of the National MOAA, Florida Council of Chapters, the Indian River Chapter FL36, or the DOD.

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## LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

By Jay Torres

A chapter must be politically nonpartisan. However, a legislative committee can and should make a deliberate effort to inform its membership of candidates' positions.

## SICK CALL

**Joan McCarthy**, a USAF Surviving Spouse, is in hospital. She is a longtime member of our chapter, having joined in 2005. **Rayma Murray** sent Joan a get well card.

**Carroll Oates** sent a card in behalf of us at IRC-MOAA to **Henry Trumbower**. Henry is in Hospice and is near relatives up at or near the Villages.

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## This Month's Chuckle

From Bob Albrecht

Charles, a new retiree-greeter at Wal-Mart, just couldn't seem to get to work on time. Every day he was 5, 10, 15 minutes late.

But he was a good worker, really tidy, clean-shaven, sharp-minded and a real credit to the company and obviously demonstrating their "Older Person Friendly" policies.

One day the boss called him into the office for a talk. "Charles, I have to tell you, I like your work ethic, you do a bang-up job when you finally get here, but you being late so often is quite bothersome."

"Yes sir, I know, and I am working on it." "Well good, you are a team player. That's what I like to hear." Yes sir, I understand your concern and I'll try harder."

Seeming puzzled, the manager went on to comment, "It's odd though you're coming in late. I know you're retired from the Armed Forces. What did they say to you there if you showed up in the morning so late and so often?"

The old man looked down at the floor, then smiled. He chuckled quietly, then said with a grin, "They usually saluted and said: "Good morning General, can I get your coffee sir?"

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March 2021



### World War I Monument

By Carlos Halcomb

The MOAA Indian River Chapter Board of Directors unanimously voted to take on the role of project manager for a new monument to be erected on Memorial Island in honor of those who served in World War I. Sometimes called "**The War to End All Wars**," it was supposed to change relationships between nations --a prediction not fulfilled. However, it did change the nature of war for the next century by introducing aerial, armored, and chemical warfare.

The monument design, which is still in the conceptual stage, will chronicle key aspects of the conflict and complement Memorial Island's other memorials. Some ideas being considered, including an inscription of the iconic poem "**In Flanders Field**" and a red poppy.

The plan is to unveil the monument as part of the overall Veterans Day ceremony on November 21, 2021. Originally called Remembrance Day, it was declared a national holiday to commemorate the end of the fighting that ceased at the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month.

The construction and placement of the monument have been approved by the Memorial Island Sanctuary Committee and the City of Vero Beach. The final design and cost will also be subject to their approval.

**Col. Carlos Halcomb** and **Col. Mike DiScipio**, the lead project managers, welcome your ideas and suggestions. You can send them to

pavejackal@yahoo.com.

Progress reports will be published periodically, as well as the final design.

### Veterans Discounts:

#### The Home Depot and Lowe's

By Martin Zickert



#### The Home Depot:

- Requires registration at store.
- Will give veterans a 10% discount on purchases up to \$500. Over \$500 no discount.
- 10% discount is only on items physically in the store.
- Online purchases do not get a discount.
- Special Orders for items not in the store do not get a discount.



#### Lowe's:

- Requires registration at store.
- Will give veterans a 10% discount on all purchases. Does not have a dollar limitation. Can get the discount on a \$2,000 refrigerator for example
- Online purchases and special orders get a 10% discount which will be taken at the time of order as long as you have registered.
- If you haven't registered, the discount will be taken when you pick up the item at the store.
- Lowes has parking signs designated for veterans.

