



Military Officers Association of America
Northeast Florida Chapter
Monthly Membership Newsletter

"The NOR'EASTER"

January 2023 Edition



P.O. Box 442022,
Jacksonville, FL 32222-2022

"Chapter website"
<http://moaafi.org/Chapters/NEFLMOAA>

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<https://moaa.quorum.us/>

This publication is intended for the benefit of our membership and to provide a form of communications to the members by the Officers and Board of Directors of the chapter.

The "Nor'easter" a newsletter of MOAA Northeast Florida Chapter (FL-18); published by the Northeast Florida Chapter, which is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). MOAA and its affiliated chapters and councils are **non-partisan**. The advertisements that appear in this publication also do not reflect an endorsement by MOAA or this affiliate.

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & RENEWAL

If you would like to join our chapter or renew your current membership go to <https://chapterdues.moaa.org/> by doing so you will be able to pay online using your credit/debit card. Annual membership is ONLY \$25.00 or \$12.50 if you are a surviving spouse. If you have any questions please contact our chapter Membership Chair, Jim Lorenz by email at jim.lorenz84@gmail.com.



The President's Corner

CWO5 Marc Manor, USN (Ret)

I hope this finds you well and in good spirits!

I come to you this month with the holiday season and the new year CBDR (Constant Bearing Decreasing Range). Traffic is really heavy around our retail hubs so be careful out there! Highways always require our undivided attention, but don't let your guard down in the parking lots either! The Manor family wishes everyone a safe and joyous holiday season and a happy new year!

Speaking of the new year, it's time to go full speed ahead with our newly revived scholarship program! Cindy and John O'Sullivan have been working hard to put in place a new instruction; but the key to our success will be to get the word out so we can have some quality candidates. A healthy scholarship program will help bolster our chapter's standing in the local community even further. Thanks to Bruce Carawan's leadership and connections to local schools, we already have a solid foot in the door!

I will be attending the annual meetings for the Florida Council of Chapters (FCOC) in early January. I hope to gain more insight and ideas for our chapter for 2023! If you have concerns for me to take to the FCOC leadership, let me know!

Never stop serving! 2023 will also be a year to select new leadership for our chapter. The current leadership still has a full year ahead; but it is never too early to start thinking about who will take the reins for 2024 and beyond. We hope to grow from our ranks because we know we have great leaders in our midst! If you are worried about the commitment, just think about all the other things in life you have committed to. I would be willing to bet every time you took the pledge, the oath, or signed the contract, you came out the other side a better person. I was hesitant myself; but after serving as president for a year, I can say without hesitation, the chapter will have your back. So don't worry about making a commitment you can't keep. Take the plunge with the knowledge that you have a strong support structure that will not let you down! If you want to start small, project oriented commitments, let our leadership know and any of us will not hesitate to connect you with personally fulfilling opportunities.

The Veterans Council of Duval County in conjunction with the Vystar Veterans Memorial Arena is still looking for veterans memorabilia. If anyone has items stashed away they would like to share with the local community in a museum type display at the arena, let me know and I will put you in touch. These can be photos, uniform articles, and other items that help show our community the many contributions of our local veterans.

Until next month...steady as she goes!



Happy New Year—2023!

From your Chapter 1st Vice President

LTC Jim Lorenz, USA (Ret)

January is the month for paying our annual chapter membership dues. Watch your e-mail and USPS mail for a reminder, and please send yours in on time.

For our January and February meetings in 2023, we will be returning to the Officers' Club at NAS Jacksonville. The meetings will be on January 18 and February 15. We are still working on confirming our guest speakers, so watch for your January *Nor'easter* for the menu and the identity of our guest speakers.

From Your Chapter 2nd Vice President

CDR Paul Werring, USN (Ret)

MEETING UPDATES. Our December meeting / holiday party at the Hilltop Restaurant on the evening of 7 December was a huge success. We had 45 people in attendance, and all had a great time at the event that included a dirty Santa gift exchange and door prizes.

We also filled our box with gifts for the Toys for Tots program. That made three months in a row that we filled up the box with gifts, and I want to thank everyone who supported this worthy cause. I also want to thank Fran Elliott for making all the arrangements with the Hilltop and Linda Mosley and Susan Kirkpatrick for running the festivities during the evening.

Our January meeting / luncheon will be on 18 January and will be held at the River Cove Conference Center on NAS Jax. There will be a social beginning at 1100 with lunch being served at 1130. Lunch will consist of meatloaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli, salad w/dressings, red velvet cake, and ice tea / coffee. We will start our business meeting at 1200.

As I have mentioned at the last couple of luncheons, the cost for holding our meetings has continued to increase (as all things have) and that we would have to raise the price we charge for attending them. **Reluctantly, the Board has voted to increase the price we charge to attend our luncheons to \$25 per person beginning with this January meeting.**

If you have any thoughts or concerns you can always e-mail them to me at pgwerring@gmail.com. Thanks again for your support.

Installation of Officers and Board Members

January 18, 2023

We will install our new and re-elected NE Florida Chapter board members at our monthly luncheon meeting at the River Cove Conference Center (more familiar to some as the NAS JAX Officer's Club). The chapter president, 1st and 2nd vice presidents, secretary and treasurer have one more year to serve on their current terms. Come join us for lunch and congratulate the board members who will start new terms.

MOAA Scholarship Information Available via Webinar

Cindy and John O’Sullivan are hard at work revitalizing our NE Florida Chapter’s scholarship program, but families with a service connection can also benefit from the national level MOAA Scholarship Fund. Share this information with a military family concerned about funding college.

Register now for the next live webinar at [https://www.moaa.org/content/events/transition-and-career/how-the-moaa-scholarship-fund-can-help-you-\(plus-panel-discussion-with-recent-college-grads\)/](https://www.moaa.org/content/events/transition-and-career/how-the-moaa-scholarship-fund-can-help-you-(plus-panel-discussion-with-recent-college-grads)/)

If you miss the live on-line event on January 6, DO NOT WORRY! Just go to the www.moaa.org website, where MOAA premium and life members can access recorded webinars in the MOAA archives at [MOAA - Webinar Archive](#).

You can see the recorded event(s) from start to finish to learn details about the MOAA Scholarship Program:

The MOAA Scholarship Fund proudly offers students of uniformed services families interest-free loans so they are not burdened by a mountain of debt when they complete their continuing education journey.

In response to the skyrocketing cost of continuing education and to better assist these students, the MOAA Scholarship Fund Board of Directors recently approved \$3.6 million for grants for the 2023 school year. In 2021, 36% of assistance distributed was in the form of grants – that’s up from 12% in 2019!

Want to learn more about your eligibility, timelines, and how to apply for this program? Join us for an educational and informative webinar event, where we’ll walk you through the process and answer all of your questions. The free event is open to undergraduate students, recent graduates, and parents of all ranks with a uniformed service/veteran affiliation.

As an added bonus, MOAA has assembled a panel of recent college graduates who will share valuable insights on establishing a professional trajectory and transitioning into a new career. Hear directly from them on:

- What they did during their college days to make themselves more desirable to employers.
- What they know now that they wish they would have known then.
- How they navigated their job search, built their professional networks, assembled their résumés, and stood out in job interviews.
- And much more!

What are you waiting for? Let MOAA help you finance your continuing education and land your dream job! Register today!

(Reprinted from MOAA.Com)

Remember—MOAA Premium and Life members have access to all recorded MOAA webinars at any time via [MOAA’s Webinar Archive](#). Want to join MOAA? See MOAA.org/join for details.

MAKE YOUR LUNCHEON RESERVATION TODAY for JAN 18, 2023
at River Cove Community Center on NAS Jacksonville. Social hour will be
from 1100 to 1130, and lunch starts at 1130 sharp. Dress is appropriate casual.

Menu: meatloaf, mashed potatoes and gravy, broccoli, salad w/dressings, red velvet cake,
and ice tea /coffee

Cost is \$25 per person (new price due to increased costs)

Make reservations on line at <https://moaaf.org/Chapters/NEFLMOAA/Calendar.aspx> . You must have a reservation to eat. Please make your reservation as early as possible so we can provide the caterer an accurate headcount to properly set up the facility and have enough meals prepared. The actual deadline/cutoff date for making reservations is midnight on Sunday January 15, 2023. You can also make your reservations by calling CDR Paul Werring at (571) 274-6570 or by email at pgwerring@gmail.com .

Cancellation Policy: *All reservations are binding financially unless they are cancelled by the Cutoff Date for making reservations or due to a last-minute hardship that is accepted by the Board of Directors.*

Surviving Spouse Corner

Vicki McCuistion

Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter

Meeting Reminder—The next meeting of the MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter will be on 17 January 2023. For additional information or to join MOAA's Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter, email mssvc02@gmail.com. An [online application](#) also is available.

MOAA's Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter is an affinity group whose members can share information and ideas in a virtual environment with others seeking to work together in adjusting to a new "normal."

The Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter meets monthly through a teleconference. Eventually, we hope to have all 50 states represented in our membership. There are no dues, and this chapter is intended to be an enhancement to, not take the place of, geographic chapters. Several weeks in advance of each meeting, an email is sent to members alerting them to the date and time of the gathering; a follow-on email with instructions for joining the free telephone conference is sent several days prior to each meeting. The call is kept to about one hour, and topics for discussion have included SBP-DIC offset updates, financial discussions, and information from MOAA national as well as other items of interest.

We recognize everyone has busy lives; therefore, members participate to the extent they are able. While the chapter is geared toward surviving spouses and surviving spouse liaisons, any MOAA spouse is welcome for membership. We espouse MOAA's mantra of "Never Stop Serving" to make a difference locally, statewide, and nationally.

For additional information about surviving spouse issues and events at the national level, you can visit [MOAA's Surviving Spouse Corner](#) by clicking on this link.

Vicki can be reached at vickimcc44@outlook.com.

**Chaplain's Corner—
David McCuiston, CWO , USN (Ret)**

As we begin a new year, let us all remember that some continue to celebrate the Christmas season through Epiphany, or Three King's Day, which is a Christian feast day celebrating the revelation of God incarnate in Jesus Christ. It also commemorates the visit of the Magi to the Christ Child, symbolic of Christ's physical manifestation among the Gentiles.

I wish for you the Divine Blessings of enlightenment, knowledge, and wisdom in your daily endeavors. May you consciously and spiritually feel His presence within as your guiding light every day.

Happy New Year to you all. As MOAA compatriots, I hope you realize that you are never alone, that you can call on any of us for support and assistance, and that you always have the power of truth empowering you through every challenge that you face.

As the traditional Irish Blessing says:

*May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
The rains fall soft upon your fields, and until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.*

May God bless you and keep you safe.

The Chaplain asks that we send updates about sickness and distress and passings news to David McCuiston, email davidmcc44@outlook.com.

Retirees Get a Second Chance to Enroll In or Opt Out of the Survivor Benefit Plan **DECEMBER 28, 2022**

Editor's note: This article by Amanda Miller originally appeared on [Military.com](https://www.military.com), a leading source of news for the military and veteran community. It was reprinted in the national MOAA Newsletter and has been edited to fit available space in this issue of The Nor'Easter.

Military retirees who opted out of a valuable survivor's benefit when they left active duty will get a rare second chance to enroll thanks to a [new rule in the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act](#). The same measure allows currently enrolled users to leave the program. Retirees typically get only one chance to enroll in the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP). Those who opt in usually name their spouses as the beneficiaries, said [Mark Belinsky](#), director of currently serving/retired affairs for the Military Officers Association of America and an Army retiree.

The SBP is like a life insurance policy with no cap. After a retiree dies, the SBP pays a beneficiary up to 55% of the retiree's [retirement pay](#), adjusted for inflation, monthly for the rest of the surviving spouse's life, or till a child reaches an age cap. The SBP is such "a very good plan," Belinsky said, that for retiring service members to opt out, their spouses have to consent.

But despite the benefit's high face value, many retirees declined coverage because of a rule known colloquially as the "widow's tax" and officially as [the Survivor Benefit Plan offset](#). That law reduced SBP payments to spouses who were also eligible for the Department of Veterans Affairs' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) allowances. DIC allowances are for the surviving spouses of service members who died on active duty or of veterans who died from injuries received as a result of their service.

The Defense Department has eliminated the SBP offset in phases, with full removal as of the Feb. 1, 2023 pay date, so now is a good time to open up enrollment, Belinsky said.

Those who enroll during the open season will have to catch up on paying the premiums they missed since retiring plus pay interest and "any additional amount" deemed necessary to maintain the "soundness" of the Defense Department's retirement fund, according to the new law.

Current enrollees can opt out during the open season with their spouse and/or beneficiaries' consent but won't receive a refund for the premiums they've already paid.

The open season to enroll begins with President Biden's signature and ends Jan. 1, 2024. Anyone receiving retirement pay who hasn't already enrolled in the SBP may take advantage of the open season in 2023. Retirees are eligible who either already receive retirement pay or who would receive it except they haven't yet reached age 60.

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

By Kathy Spain

“Haste Makes Waste”

FY 2023 NDAA BECOMES LAW: On Dec. 23, 2022, President Biden signed into law H.R. 7776, the “*James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023 (FY 2023 NDAA)*.” The legislation—which is critical to American military preparedness—passed the Senate by a vote of 83-11 on Dec. 15, after passage in the House on Dec. 8, 350-80. The purpose of the defense bill is to outline the policy agenda for the Department of Defense (DOD) and authorize spending in line with the priorities set for the Pentagon. Congressional appropriators then use this authorization to appropriate the funding for defense. In this \$858 billion bill, lawmakers allocated \$817 billion to DOD, \$30.3 billion for national security programs at the Dept. of Energy, and \$378 million for other defense-related activities. To mitigate the effects of inflation and accelerate the implementation of the National Defense Strategy, Congress included \$45 billion more than the president’s original budget request. The bill includes \$12.6 billion to address the impact of inflation on purchases, \$3.8 billion for inflation in military construction, and \$2.5 billion for inflation effects on DOD fuel purchases.

Among the many provisions of the bill is the controversial stipulation which rescinds the U.S. military’s COVID-19 vaccine mandate. Specifically, the act prohibits involuntary separation of a service member for refusal of the COVID-19 vaccine until each Service achieves its authorized end-strength. Thus far in 2022, DOD has discharged about 8,000 active-duty service members for refusing the COVID-19 vaccine. In addition, an estimated 17,000 National Guardsmen and 22,000 Reserve soldiers who refused vaccination were suspended from service and stripped of their military benefits and pay. The bill does not reinstate members who have already been discharged or those who had their benefits cut for refusing the vaccine.

A few other provisions in the FY 2023 NDAA include: (1) a 4.6% pay raise for active-duty military & the civilian workforce at DOD; (2) funding to ensure service members have access to quality housing; (3) critical investments in battle force ships, submarines, aircraft, combat vehicles, long-range artillery, etc.; (4) additional investments in the Pacific Deterrence Initiative & authorization for the Taiwan Enhanced Resilience Act of 2022 to increase our security cooperation with Taiwan; (5) increased funding for the European Deterrence Initiative & the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative; (6) strengthening & securing the national supply chain as well as support for the defense industrial base; (7) modernization of our military technology & capabilities; (8) increased funding for military construction; (9) maintenance & modernization of a secure, credible nuclear deterrent; (10) funding for the continued development of various missile defense programs & systems; and (11) funds to strengthen DOD’s cybersecurity strategy & capabilities.

CONGRESS RAMS THROUGH OMNIBUS SPENDING BILL PACKED WITH PORK: On Dec. 19, Congressional leaders unveiled a \$1.7 trillion “*FY 2023 Omnibus Appropriations*” bill to fund the federal government through Sept. 30, 2023. On Dec. 22, the Senate quickly passed the 4000-page bill in a 68-29 vote, although none of the lawmakers had read the entire bill. The very next day, the House also approved the spending monstrosity, 225-201-1. With insufficient time left to get the bill to the president’s desk before the current Continuing Resolution (CR) funding the government expired that day at midnight, both chambers quickly passed another CR (the 3rd for 2022). President Biden is expected to sign the omnibus bill on Dec. 30 before the new CR expires at midnight. The measure provides \$858 billion for national defense and \$773 billion for non-defense spending—including \$118.7 billion for VA medical care.

In addition to the usual 12 appropriations bills to fund the federal government’s various departments and agencies, the \$1.7 trillion spending package also funds a number of administration priorities. Primary among these is \$45 billion in assistance to Ukraine and our NATO allies—bringing the total security, economic and humanitarian aid to Ukraine to more than \$110 billion for the year. The legislation includes \$11.9 billion to replenish U.S. stocks of equipment sent to Ukraine and \$126.3 million to prepare for and respond to potential nuclear and radiological incidents in the country. The bill also gives the U.S. European Command \$7 billion for mission and intelligence support and other related activities while increasing President Biden’s draw-down authority for Ukraine to \$14.5 billion for FY 2023, allowing him to continue transferring weapons from U.S. stocks.

Additionally, the omnibus allocates \$175 billion for U.S. military personnel world wide—funding an active-duty end-strength of 1,316,944 troops and a Reserve and National Guard component of 770,000. The funding amount for this is \$1.2 billion less than the White House had requested. However, the White House did get an extension through 2024 of a resettlement program for Afghans who helped the U.S. in Afghanistan during its 20-year war. The spending bill authorizes an additional 4,000 visas for the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa program.

Other brief highlights of the omnibus include: (1) \$40.6 billion to assist American communities dealing with natural disasters; (2) \$58.7 billion for programs authorized by the “*Infrastructure Investment & Jobs Act*,” (3) \$1.8 billion to fund the “*CHIPS & Science Act of 2022*,” (4) \$5 billion for the Cost of War Toxic Exposure Fund to implement the “*PACT Act*,” (5) \$47.5 billion for the National Institute of Health (NIH); (6) \$9.2 billion for the CDC; (7) \$1.5 billion for the ARPH-H to fight cancer; (8) \$950 million for the Biomedical Advanced Research & Development Authority; (9) \$13.4 billion for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program; (10) \$28.5 billion for the Child Nutrition Program; (11) \$6 billion for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program; (12) \$3.6 billion for Homeless Assistance Grants; (13) \$2 billion for the Rural Housing Service; (14) \$1.5 billion for the HOME Investment Partnership Program; (15) \$1.4 billion for the Housing for the Elderly & Housing for Persons with Disabilities; (16) \$8 billion for the Child Care & Development Block Grant; (17) nearly \$12 billion for Head Start; (18) \$5 billion for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program; and (19) \$700 million for combating violence against women. The “*Electoral Count Reform Act*” also makes an appearance in the omnibus. This measure reforms the “*1887 Electoral Count Act*”—clarifying the vice-president’s role in the Electoral College count as ceremonial and raising the threshold to challenge presidential electors from the states to 20% of the House and Senate—rather than the current lawmakers from each chamber.

(continued on next page)

(Legislative Liaison Report, continued)

In addition, several last-minute “tweaks” were added to the omnibus bill in the form of amendments. Among the eight amendments (or add-ons) adopted before final passage are proposals for (1) allowing proceeds from assets seized from sanctioned Russian oligarchs to be put toward Ukraine; (2) strengthening protections for breastfeeding workers; and (3) compensating 9/11 victims. Congress also approved an amendment to provide for the continuation of pay and benefits for Navy Lt. Ridge Atkins—who passed out from air sickness while driving in Japan, unintentionally killed two Japanese citizens with his car, and is now serving a 3-year sentence in a Japanese prison. Finally, the omnibus includes legislation that prohibits the use of TikTok on government phones and devices. (Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of all expenditures and provisions in the bill. ... Whatever happened to a “clean” bill?)

USERS OF MAIL ORDER PHARMACY MUST RECONFIRM REFILLS: Starting January 1, TRICARE beneficiaries using the mail order pharmacy will no longer receive their prescription refills automatically. Express Scripts, TRICARE’s pharmacy benefits manager, has announced that these patients will receive a notification via email or text when the prescription is up for a refill, and they will have to then log in to confirm the request. Once authorized, Express Scripts will send out the refill medication. If a beneficiary turns down the refill or does not respond, the prescription will be removed from the automatic refill program. Express Scripts will, however, continue to send reminder notifications until the prescription expires.

The change was instituted by Express Scripts because the federal government has filed a lawsuit against them under the False Claims Act, charging they “delivered excess prescription drugs to military beneficiaries through the TRICARE Mail Order Pharmacy system and profited at the expense of the Defense Department.” In 2021, the Defense Health Agency (DHA) spent \$7.4 billion on the TRICARE drug program--\$3.2 billion on mail order medications, \$1.5 billion at military pharmacies, and \$2.7 billion at retail pharmacies. In past years, the mail order program had comprised just 20% of the overall cost.

Prescription co-payments for medications obtained through TRICARE will not change in 2023. Beneficiaries who use the mail order system will continue to pay \$12 for a generic drug, \$34 for a brand-name drug, and \$68 for a non-formulary medication for a 90-day supply. Co-payments for a 30-day supply at a retail pharmacy will remain at \$14 for a generic drug, \$38 for a brand-name, and \$68 for a non-formulary, specialty medication.

CBO REPORT TARGETS MILITARY BENEFITS FOR COST SAVINGS: MOAA is warning that a recent biennial report put out by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) is once again targeting the earned benefits of the military community as good options for cutting the deficit. Every two years, before the start of a new congressional session, the CBO provides a 10-year overview of deficit reduction measures. The report includes strategies for reducing both mandatory and discretionary funding, along with ways to increase federal revenue. The benefits of active-duty military and veterans are always prime targets. This year is no different.

Some of the proposals found in the CBO report include: (1) the introduction of enrollment fees for TRICARE for Life (TFL); (2) the introduction of Minimum Out-of-Pocket Requirements in TFL; (3) Means-Test VA Disability Compensation for Veterans with higher incomes; (4) ending VA’s Individual Unemployability Payments to Disabled Veterans at the full retirement age for Social Security; (5) reducing VA Disability Benefits for veterans who are older than the full retirement age for Social Security; (6) narrowing eligibility for VA Disability Compensation by excluding veterans with Low Disability Ratings; (7) using an alternative measure of inflation to Index Social Security and Other Mandatory Programs; (8) capping increases in Basic Pay for Military Service Members; (9) replacing some military personnel with civilian employees; (10) reducing the Basic Allowance for Military Housing to 80% of average housing costs; (11) increasing prescription drug co-payments for all veterans; (12) ending enrollment in VA Medical Care for Veterans in Priority Groups 7 & 8; and (13) including VA’s Disability Payments in Taxable Income.

MOAA is asking for our help. We need to let Congress know right now where beneficiaries stand on these issues. Please contact your representatives and/or visit MOAA’s [Legislative Action Center](#) at www.MOAA.org.

MOAA NAMED TOP LOBBYIST AGAIN: “*THE HILL*” recently named MOAA to its list of top lobbyists—for the 16th consecutive year. Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret.), MOAA’s president and CEO, received the award on behalf of the organization. Atkins will retire in early January, after seven years as MOAA’s president. In 2022, MOAA members and organizational staffers contacted all 535 congressional offices during the annual Advocacy in Action (AIA) lobbying campaign, conducted 250 virtual and in-person meetings, and sent over 10,000 messages to Capitol Hill. MOAA was also involved in intense lobbying for the “*Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act*” and celebrated its passage by Congress this year.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: “Voltaire” was the nom de plume of Françoise-Marie Arquet, born in 1694. He is the author of “*CANDIDE*”, a work of satire in which there is much wisdom to be found.

“Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities.”--Voltaire

“If you want to know who controls you, look at who you are not allowed to criticize.”—Voltaire

---NEVER STOP SERVING---



Happy New Year—2023!

From Your Transition Liaison Officer

David Kennett, CDR, USN Retired

Greetings, Everyone! I am providing a detailed breakdown of all aspects of the PACT Act recently signed into law as well as an update on concurrent receipt of the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) for surviving spouses which has been phased in over the last two years. [Best wishes for a wonderful and prosperous New Year!](#)

Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honor our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act –

The PACT Act of 2022 is a new law that expands VA health care and benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances, and improves the ability to provide generations of Veterans—and their survivors— with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve. It expands and extends eligibility for VA health care for Veterans with toxic exposures and for Veterans of the Vietnam era, Gulf War era, and Post-9/11 era, and expands eligibility for VA disability benefits for Veterans exposed to toxic substances.

Other key components include: (1) VA will improve the decision-making process for determining what medical conditions will be considered for presumptive status; (2) Every Veteran enrolled for VA Health Care will receive an initial toxic exposure screening and a follow-up screening every five years; (3) Veterans who are not enrolled, but who are eligible to enroll, will have an opportunity to enroll and receive the screening; (4) VA health care staff and claims processors will receive toxic exposure-related education and training; (5) the Act will help the VA build a stronger, more skilled workforce to meet the growing demand for benefits and services; (6) the Act authorizes 31 new facilities across the country, providing greater access to VA health care.

If a Veteran served in any of these locations and time periods, they are eligible for the new Gulf War-related presumptions. This includes the airspace above any of these locations.

On or After August 2, 1990: Bahrain; Iraq; Kuwait; Oman; Qatar; Saudi Arabia; Somalia; UAE

On or After September 11, 2001: Afghanistan; Djibouti; Egypt; Jordan; Lebanon; Syria; Uzbekistan; Yemen

Here is the listing of new conditions that are presumed to be service-connected due to various in-service toxic exposures. You can **APPLY NOW** at [VA.gov/PACT](https://www.va.gov/PACT) or through your **county/state VSO** to expedite your claim and benefits.

New Conditions are: Asthma (diagnosed after service); Brain Cancer; Chronic Bronchitis; Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD); Chronic Rhinitis; Chronic Sinusitis; Constrictive Bronchiolitis or Obliterative Bronchiolitis; Emphysema; Gastrointestinal Cancer of any type; Glioblastoma; Granulomatous Disease; Head Cancer of any type; High Blood Pressure (hypertension); Interstitial Lung Disease (ILD); Kidney Cancer; Lymphomatic Cancer of any type; Lymphoma of any type; Melanoma; Monoclonal Gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS); Neck Cancer; Pancreatic Cancer; Pleuritis; Pulmonary Fibrosis; Reproductive Cancer of any type; Respiratory (breathing-related) Cancer of any type; Sarcoidosis.

Veterans can file a claim for the new presumptive conditions:

New Claim—Veteran has never filed for the presumptive condition.

Supplemental Claim—Presumptive condition was previously denied but is now considered to be presumptive.

Repeal of Widow's Tax / Concurrent Receipt of SBP & DIC – As you know, the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act made official the phased-in repeal of the Survivor Benefit Plan – Dependency Indemnity Compensation (SBP – DIC) offset from 2020 through 2022. In January 2023, the so-called “Widow's Tax” will be fully repealed, authorizing surviving spouses to begin receiving 100 percent of both (concurrent receipt) of their SBP and DIC benefits.

V/r & Best Regards, Dave Kennett – Transition Liaison Officer / 904.790.1630 / ddkennett@yahoo.com

Northeast Florida Chapter, FL-18

Elected Officers/Board Members, Appointed Committee Chairs and Support Staff

“Chapter Officers/Directors”

President: CWO5 Marc Manor, USN Ret, 904-874-1030, manor.marc@gmail.com
1st Vice President: LTC Jim Lorenz, USA Ret, 703-283-1791, jim.lorenz84@gmail.com
2nd Vice President: CDR Paul Werring, USN Ret, 571-274-6570, pgwerring@gmail.com
Treasurer: COL Ken Kirkpatrick, USA Ret, 904-718-9789, kenneth.m.kirkpatrick@gmail.com
Secretary: LT David Mosley, USN Ret, 252-469-1824, dlynnmosley@gmail.com
Immediate
Past President: COL William Roberts, USA Ret, 321-987-2556, frostyroberts@msn.com
Director: CWO5 Wayne Elliott, USN Ret, 904-282-9604, elliottwf@att.net
Director: Mrs. Kathy Spain, SS, twin_oaks@comcast.net
Director: CDR Bruce Carawon, USN Ret, 904-276-9025 brcar1@comcast.net
Director: CDR David Kennett, USN Ret, 904-790-1630, ddkennett@yahoo.com

“Appointed Committee Chairs”

Legislative Affairs: Mrs. Kathy Spain, SS, twin_oaks@comcast.net
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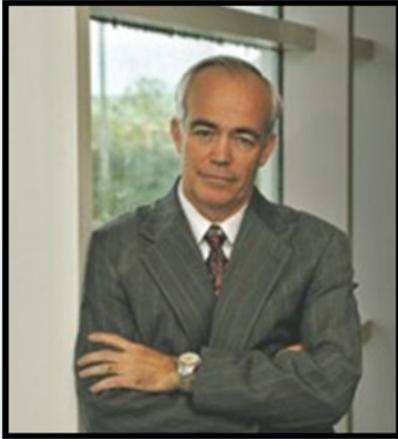
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“A Note From The Editor”

Each chapter member can help with the publication of the “Nor’Easter”, our chapter newsletter, by providing content and articles that they feel would be informative. The preferred format for your input is WORD doc for written input and jpg for pictures. I will make every effort to include your input in the next monthly newsletter if content is appropriate and timely.

The deadline for input to the February issue of the Nor’Easter is COB Friday, 27 January 2023



Thank you for reading and supporting our monthly
membership newsletter

“The NOR’EASTER”





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