



Military Officers Association of America
Northeast Florida Chapter
Monthly Membership Newsletter

"The NOR'EASTER"

June 2022 edition



P.O. Box 442022,
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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)

My wife, Myrna and I attended the First Coast Honor Flight departure event on the early morning of 21 May. It was one of the most moving events honoring veterans I have ever experienced.

I don't have an official count of the grateful Americans who showed up, but I would guess it was more than 50. TSA closed the security entrance just prior to the arrival of the 25 veterans and their sponsors. About 100 additional travelers gathered on the perimeter of the corridor that was formed. Some travelers initially seemed somewhat irritated by the slight delay in their travel plans, but when the sound of bagpipes filled the air, the crowd stood in reverence to the heroes moving toward the gate in a single file formation.



I looked into the eyes of each one of these Veterans as their wheelchairs rolled by, and it was evident they were moved and doing their best to hold back tears. It was all we could do to keep the water works to a minimum! The combination of seeing those proud Veterans (two from WWII) and the bagpipes created a moment everyone in the terminal can never forget. The next Honor Flight is scheduled for October. It's an early rise for sure, but well worth it! A real "God Bless America" moment! Please consider supporting this inspiring program.

The Board unanimously approved a \$100 donation to the family of fallen service member, Staff Sgt Seth Michael Plant. Who was killed in Alaska while conducting a training exercise. The money will assist the family with expenses until SSGT Plant's military benefits are provided. I have posted the information on the Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/NEFLMOAA>) in case anyone would like to make an additional private donation.

We had a great turnout for the luncheon on 18 May at Culhane's on the Southside. It was a little on the pricey side but very nice venue. Councilman Nick Howland gave an excellent presentation on the "Firewatch" program. We will be looking for other venues but as these restaurants face their own challenges with the cost of doing business, I think we are going to have to settle into the \$20 luncheon fees for the foreseeable future. We will see everyone back at River Cove (NAS O'Club) the next couple of months but we are open to suggestions for other venues as a once-per-quarter alternative. (continued)

(President's Corner—continued from front page)

Last but certainly not least, Cindy and John O'Sullivan have agreed to co-chair our Scholarship committee. Our scholarship program is a very important part of our mission locally and I think I can speak for the entire chapter by saying we are super grateful and excited to get the program back on track! THANK YOU John and Cindy for stepping up.

Until next month...steady as she goes!

Marc

From Your Chapter 1st Vice President (and Membership Chairman)

LTC Jim Lorenz, USA, (Ret)

At our May meeting, City Councilman Nick Howland, provided us an in-depth view of *The Firewatch*, Florida's statewide program that aims to reduce or eliminate Veteran suicides. The problem is serious; at least 20 U.S. veterans are taking their lives every day. Federal solutions have had little or no effect on the crisis here in Florida, home to over 1.5 million veterans, the need and the challenge are evident. If you missed the meeting, you can learn more about *The Firewatch* and how you can help at www.thefirewatch.org.

Our speaker for June is Bill O'Leary from The Legacy Law Group.

If you have a request or recommendation for a topic or speaker, please let me know. I am always looking for topics and speakers that will be of interest to our membership. You can email your suggestions to me at: jim.lorenz84@gmail.com.

From Your Chapter 2nd Vice President

CDR Paul Werring, USN (Ret)

MEETING UPDATES. We held our May Luncheon at Culhane's Southside restaurant. It was the first time we have met on the east side of the St Johns River and it was well received. 36 people attended to hear Mr. Nick Howland of *The Firewatch* telling us about his organization's efforts to prevent suicide by veterans.

For our June Luncheon on the 15th, we are going back to the River Cove Community Center on NAS Jacksonville. The social will begin at 1100 with lunch being served at 1130. We will begin our business meeting at 1200. The guest speaker will be Bill O'Leary from the Legacy Law Group. I hope to see as many of you there as possible.

As announced previously the cost for all Luncheons going forward will be \$20. Also, please note that the chapter has begun using the "Square" card reader system and we are now able to accept credit card payments.

While we plan to have most of our meetings at River Cove, we are also planning to hold one meeting each quarter off base, as we did last month. I have been given several suggestions by Chapter members for alternative locations, but if you have additional ideas, I will be glad to hear them.

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

15 JUNE CHAPTER MEETING & LUNCHEON

Please make plans to join us for our June Chapter Meeting & Luncheon at The River Cove Community Center on NAS Jacksonville. Social hour will be from 1100 to 1130, and lunch will be served at 1130 sharp. Dress is appropriate casual.

Menu

Cold salad plate with stuffed tomato w/chicken salad, pasta salad, boiled eggs, cube cheese and assorted crackers. Chef's choice for dessert.

A cash Bar will be open for beer, wine & sodas.

Cost is \$20 per person.

You can make your reservations online via our website at <https://moaafi.org/Chapters/NEFLMOAA/Calendar.aspx> . You must have a reservation to eat. Please make your reservation as early as possible so we can provide an accurate head count for the caterer so they can properly set up the facility and have enough meals prepared. So do not delay, make your reservations today! The actual deadline/cutoff date for making reservations is June 10, 2022. Reservations may also be made 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 no later than the Cutoff Date for making reservations or due to a last-minute hardship that is accepted by the Board of Directors.

LUNCHEON PROGRAM

Bill O'Leary of The Legacy Law Group

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

In 1917 President Wilson declared June 14 as Flag Day in America,. The Flag is a symbol of Patriotism, binding citizens to country. But, what provides that impetus to take up arms and fight other countries? Maybe this poem will help us understand.

Old Glory – A Flag of Liberty

By David McCuiston

Just a ragged piece of cloth some say,
With no real significance in any way.
Just a rag that with the wind doth sway.
Just an ordinary flag they say.

Then help me understand why,
After many years and battles does she still fly?
After so many deaths she reigns so high,
And around the world she refuses to die.

Please tell me why if you will,
Her National Anthem gives such a thrill.
When remembering her raising on Iwo Jima's hill,
That very sight gives such a chill.

Tell me why citizens cherish her so,
And stand ever ready to take up arms and go
Defend that Divine Principle of which we know
Helps the tree of liberty continually grow.

What reason can be found,
For rushing to defend her world 'round?
What keeps her from decaying on the ground?
I ask you, can't you hear the sound?

That sound of Freedom that so loud doth ring!
The sound of God Bless America as we sing!
That sound of courage of Eagle's wing!
That sound of liberty to which we cling!

Red and Yellow, Black, Brown, and White,
They all took up arms to fight,
To defend that Divine Principle they knew a right,
To preserve Freedom's light ever so bright.

This Flag flown proudly in every American town,
says civil and religious liberty can be found.
This Flag raised daily to fly above the ground,
Exalted, revered, protected by citizens all around.

Just a ragged piece of cloth you say,
With no real significance in any way.
A Flag of Liberty like no other I say.
Yesterday, today, always.

Hand crafted Wooden Cremation Urns—a Labor of Love.

In 2013, USAF veteran Mike DePizzo, an avid (and talented) wood worker, read a *Florida Times Union* article about a veteran whose remains were buried in a south Florida cemetery in a cardboard box. He and his wife agreed that was not a fitting end for a U.S. veteran.

Mike wanted to do something, so he contacted the Jacksonville National Cemetery (JNC) and began making urns to hold the cremains of veterans who lacked the familial or public support so many of us are blessed enough to take for granted. But the story doesn't end there.

The Missing in America Program (MIAP) finds veterans who have fallen through the cracks of the “system”, and one of the services they provide is ensuring a proper burial for those who have served. When the MIAP was short one urn for a ceremony, the cemetery director offered Kathy Church, the MIAP Director for Florida one of Mike's creations. When he asked if she needed more, she asked if he might be able to make 40 in time for their next ceremony.

Mike gulped and got to work, making the deadline for that first 40 urns. Since then, he has made and donated close to 600 cremation urns. They have largely been used at the JNC, but they have also been shipped all over the country to make sure veterans go to their final rest in dignity.



As word spread, nationally known companies like Steinway Pianos of New York City and Martin Guitars got involved providing wood.

Mike continues to make urns for veterans. He doesn't charge for them, telling people who ask that they are not for sale. Instead, Mike asks recipients to make a donation to Wreaths Across America (WAA)—another great program for honoring those who served.

Mike's story tells us that there are opportunities to serve those who serve America all around us. How many of us have talents that we could put to work as Mike has done with his?

Thanks to Wayne Elliott, CWO5, USN, Ret., a member of our Board of Directors for making us aware of Mike DePizzo's labor of love on behalf of the least among us.

From Your Transition Liaison

CDR Dave Kennett, USN (Ret)

Greetings, Everyone! This month, I am sharing an article of note; guidance on [filing disability claims, tracking claims and appeals, and identifying a strong VSO; awareness of Pension related scams; and an upcoming MOAA Estate Planning webinar on June 21st](#). Best wishes for a wonderful June and beyond!

[Check out this article with something for all Veterans](#) – Thanks very much to Wayne Elliott for sharing a non-traditional, and somewhat humorous, article titled, “23 things veterans may carry for life”. Here is the link to the article – <https://www.marinecorpstimes.com/off-duty/military-culture/2022/05/12/23-things-veterans-may-carry-for-life/>. We hope you enjoy it!

[Video on the Process of Filing VA Disability Claims](#) – It is well-known that filing a disability claim can be a confusing process. The VA ([U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#)) has maintained and enhanced comprehensive guidance, including a video on “How to File a Disability Claim” which guides you through the process step-by-step. Here is the link to this video: [How to File a VA Disability Claim - YouTube](#)

Learn more about how to file a VA disability claim by visiting – <https://www.va.gov/disability/how-to-file-claim/>. Learn more about overall VA disability benefits and eligibility by visiting <https://www.va.gov/disability/>.

[Tracking Status of VA Disability Claims & Appeals](#) – You can continually stay updated about the status of your [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#) claims or appeals through the eBenefits site or by logging in to <https://www.va.gov/claim-or-appeal-status/>.

[Finding a Veteran Services Officer \(VSO\)](#) – Veterans Service Organizations can help you prepare and submit your [U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs](#) claims. You can find the VSOs in your local area at – [How to Find a VSO \(Veterans Service Organization\) - YouTube](#)

[Are You Being Scammed?](#) – The VA has seen an increase of fraudsters and non-accredited representatives who are targeting the pension benefits of elderly Veterans and their dependents and survivors.

The VA is committed to defeating fraudsters, who target elderly Veterans, by educating them, their families, and all partners about the types of fraudulent tactics being used against them, including [Pension Poaching](#).

Pension Poaching is the financial exploitation by an advisor who profits by artificially qualifying a claimant for VA pension benefits. The scheme often involves financial maneuvers such as advising claimants to hide their assets in trusts or annuity products sometimes resulting in lost investments and lucrative fees paid to the advisor. Pension Poaching is rapidly evolving as a preferred method used by criminals to defraud elderly Veterans, survivors, and their families who are eligible for VA benefits.

You can check out the entire article at – [Are you being scammed? \(military-veteran.com\)](#)

[MOAA Webinar, “What You Need to Know About Estate Planning”, on June 21st](#) – Here is a great opportunity to participate in a relevant MOAA webinar on Tuesday, June 21st beginning at 2:00pm ET. This is part of MOAA's ongoing Fundamentals of Building Wealth series. Proper estate planning is vital to protect your loved ones and your legacy. But it's often neglected or put off until it's too late.

You can join MOAA financial and benefits professionals Capt. Paul Frost, USN (Ret), AFC®, and Lila Quintiliani, ChFC®, AFC®, along with special guest Joseph Montanaro, CFP®, Relationship Director at USAA's Military Advocacy Group, on June 21st as they discuss important estate planning topics such as:

Wills; Trusts; Advance Directives; IRAs and Retirement Plans; Probate; Estate Taxes.

Select this link to register – [What You Need to Know About Estate Planning \(on24.com\)](#)

From Your Legislative Liaison

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

By Kathy Spain

“As We Watch a World in Turmoil”

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

By Kathy Spain

CORRECTION OF THE RECORD: There was an error in my newsletter article last month, and I wish to correct the record. In the section discussing ‘red flags’ raised by the president’s budget request, I noted that the proposal called for a significant cut in authorized end-strength in each of the services. However, during a ‘*spelling & syntax check*,’ a portion of my text was inadvertently removed, and I failed to catch it. The result was: “Overall end-strength would fall to 473,000 from the 485,000 authorized last year.” That was supposed to read: “*Overall ARMY end-strength would fall to 473,000 from the 485,000 authorized last year; the NAVY falls from 346,920 to 346,300; the AIR FORCE falls from 329,220 to 323,400; and the MARINES fall from 178,000 to 177,000.*” In other words, the total authorized end-strength in 2022 is 1,339,640, and the 2023 budget proposal calls for reducing that end-strength by almost 20,000 (19,940) service members.

I apologize for the error and for any confusion it may have caused.

CONGRESS PASSES \$40 BILLION UKRAINE AID PACKAGE: On May 19, the Senate approved a \$39.8 billion aid package for Ukraine—which is \$7 billion more than President Biden actually requested. The Senate vote was 86-11. The House had previously passed the bill on May 10, by a vote of 368-57. The “*ADDITIONAL UKRAINE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2022*” pays for additional weapons and provides significant economic and humanitarian assistance to Ukraine as they fight to defend their nation against Russian aggression. Reportedly, the \$40 billion in emergency aid is more than three times the amount all European countries combined have contributed to Ukraine. When the aid package is added to the \$13.8 billion in Ukrainian aid passed as part of the U.S. government funding bill in March, the total U.S. aid to Ukraine thus far totals \$54 billion.

The new legislation includes approximately \$20 billion for DEFENSE DEPARTMENT support of Ukraine: (1) \$6 billion in direct security assistance (i.e. training, equipment, weapons and other support); (2) \$3.9 billion for European Command operations; and (3) \$9 billion to replenish stocks of U.S. weapons and equipment sent to Ukraine since the invasion. To date, the Biden administration has transferred at least 5,500 Javelins and 1,400 Stingers to Ukraine, comprising a respective one-third and one-fourth of U.S. stockpiles for each system.

The aid bill also includes \$8.8 billion in DIRECT ECONOMIC SUPPORT to ensure Ukraine’s continuity of government—plus funds to repair the U.S. Embassy in Kyiv, document war crimes, and protect against nuclear fuel leaks. In addition, the bill contains \$4 billion for the FOREIGN MILITARY FINANCING PROGRAM, which will provide grants for Ukraine and surrounding countries so they can build and update their capabilities by purchasing equipment from U.S. defense manufacturers. HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE totals about \$6.5 billion—with \$5 billion going to address food insecurity globally due to the conflict and about \$1.5 billion stipulated for refugee support services and medical support.

The new aid package also authorizes an additional \$11 billion in PRESIDENTIAL DRAWDOWN AUTHORITY, which allows the president to respond quickly to emergency situations. According to the bill summary, the authority allows the president to “*draw down defense articles and services*” from U.S. stocks and “*provide excess equipment and direct procurement to Ukraine and other regional allies*” without first obtaining congressional approval. President Biden had requested \$5 billion.

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THE MARKUP OF FY23 NDAA BEGINS: The House Armed Services Committee (HASC) has announced the markup (writing) schedule for the “*FY 2023 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT (FY23 NDAA)*.” Subcommittees will begin markups on June 8-9, and the full committee markup is scheduled for June 22. The Senate Armed Services Subcommittees will markup their sections of the defense bill the week of June 6, with full committee markup scheduled for the week of June 13. After each chamber passes their version of the defense bill, the House and Senate will iron out their differences in a conference committee.

WORK BEGINS ON FUNDING THE GOVERNMENT IN 2023: In just four months, fiscal year 2023 begins on October 1. With this deadline looming on the horizon, the House Appropriations Committee has set a tentative schedule to mark up *all* 12 appropriations bills for FY 2023 in subcommittee from June 13 – June 22, and the full committee is scheduled to consider the bills June 22 – June 30. The Senate Appropriations Committee action timeline, on the other hand, is somewhat ‘*murky*.’ As a reminder, the FY 2022 appropriations process was not concluded until March 2022, when Congress passed a massive 2,700-page spending bill about six months late.

RADIATION EXPOSURE BILL EXTENDED 2 YEARS: On May 11, the House passed a 2-year extension of the “*RADIATION EXPOSURE COMPENSATION ACT (RECA)*” by voice vote. The Senate had already unanimously approved the 2-year extension on May 2. This legislation, which was set to expire in July, provides one-time benefit payments for people exposed to harmful radiation from U.S. nuclear weapons testing and uranium mining. Since 1945, the U.S. has conducted more than 200 above-ground nuclear tests, leading to lung cancers, pulmonary fibrosis, and other serious diseases caused by radiation exposure—primarily in states like Nevada, New Mexico, and Utah. Since the bill was first passed in 1990, over \$2.4 billion in benefits have been paid to more than 18,000 people.

SENATE DEAL REACHED ON TOXIC EXPOSURE REFORM: On May 18, Senator Jon Tester (D-MT), Senate Veterans Affairs Committee (SVAC) Chair, and Senator Jerry Moran (R-KS), SVAC Ranking Member, announced a bipartisan Senate agreement on comprehensive toxic exposure reform. The arrangement amends the “*SERGEANT FIRST CLASS HEATH ROBINSON HONORING OUR PROMISE TO ADDRESS COMPREHENSIVE TOXICS (PACT) ACT*,” which is a bill passed by the House in March.

According to the joint announcement, the amended bill would:

- (1) make 3.5 million Post 9/11 combat veterans eligible for VA health care;
- (2) add about 24 toxic exposure-related conditions to VA’s list of service presumptions;
- (3) expand Agent Orange presumptions to additional territories in the Pacific during a prescribed time period;
- (4) establish a framework for future linking of health conditions to exposures in future conflicts; and
- (5) invest in VA training, resources, facilities, and research connected to toxic exposure.

Comprehensive toxic exposure reform has long been a top priority for MOAA, and the organization joins dozens of veterans’ advocacy groups in applauding the Senate deal. However, in order to eliminate the threat of a potential filibuster, at least 60 senators must back the legislation before it can pass the Senate and be returned to the House for a vote on the amended bill. Therefore, MOAA is asking its members to contact their senators and urge them to support this measure.

The bill honors Sgt. 1st Class Heath Robinson, who deployed to both Kosovo and Iraq with the Ohio Army National Guard and was later diagnosed with a rare form of lung cancer related to toxic exposure. Robinson died in 2020.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: “Life is a strange classroom sometimes. The test precedes the lesson.” --unknown

May God bless America and all those who serve—and have served—to keep her free!

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
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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
Membership: LTC Jim Lorenz, USA Ret, 703-283-1791, jim.lorenz84@gmail.com
Transition Liaison: CDR David Kennett, USN Ret, 904-790-1630, ddkennett@yahoo.com
ROTC/JROTC: CDR Bruce Carawon, USN Ret, 904-276-9025 brcar1@comcast.net
Scholarship: Mrs. Cindy O’Sullivan, 904-894-4619 anatbat@gmail.com
Col John O’Sullivan, USAF Ret, 904-338-1075 [pacomi60@aol.com](mailto:pacomj60@aol.com)
Personal Affairs: Mrs. Pat Sundt, SS, 904-384-6316
Public Affairs: Vacant
Surviving
Spouse Liaison: Mrs. Vicki McCuiston, 865-320-5955, vivkimcc44@outlook.com

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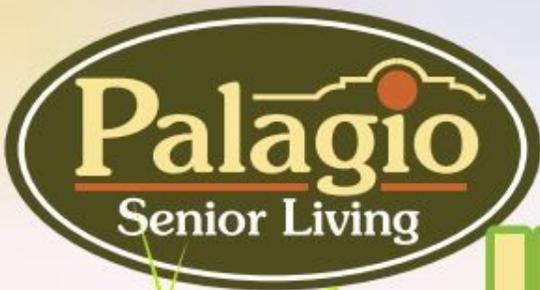
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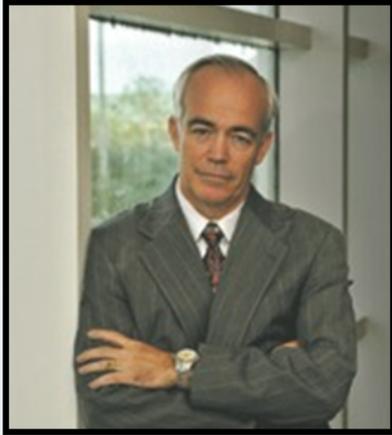
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“A Note From The Editor”

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 July issue of the Nor’Easter is by COB Wednesday, June 29, 2022

Thank you for reading and supporting our monthly
membership newsletter

“The NOR’EASTER”



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