As this column goes “to press,” my wife, Christa, and I are in Washington DC, for the April 10 MOAA’s annual “Storming the Hill.” Together with MOAA leaders from around the country we will visit all 535 members of Congress in support of MOAA’s legislative priorities.

The Florida contingent will consist of four (4) Teams which will meet with Florida’s two Senators and 27 Representatives. Team members are: FCOC VP Mike Borders & Vickie Ocasio of MOAA’s Currently Serving Spouse Council; FCOC IPP & MOAA Director Marc Oliveri & Cape Canaveral Chapter 1st VP Tim Pishdad; Charlotte Harbor Chapter Director Tony Pimentel, Jill Pimentel, & MOAA Staff Member Eryn Wagnon; and FCOC President Len Friedlander & MOAA Director Rick Buchanan. Representatives and Senators each team will visit are listed following this article.

The issues we will be addressing with our legislators and/or their staff may seem repetitious to those of you who have stayed abreast of the past MOAA legislative initiatives, but the circumstances associated with each of these issues evolve over time. The three subject areas we will be discussing are:

Military Pay and Benefits for Active Duty Personnel is a major factor for recruitment and retention. Specifically, we will be requesting their support for a 3.1% pay raise for FY2020 and to protect military benefits like Basic Allowance for Housing, Commissary, and Exchange from being eroded. MOAA was successful in area last year, but the appropriation issue requires yearly scrutiny and effort.

Health Care Costs to Military Beneficiaries is a misunderstood subject with most believing that military beneficiaries pay next to nothing for their healthcare. The previous Congress decided that TRICARE fees and copays for beneficiaries could be raised and the funds could be used for non-
healthcare purposes. MOAA is seeking congressional oversight to evaluate and stabilize TRICARE programs and fees – and any fee/copay increases should be tied to the cost of care NOT medical readiness or other defense programs.

Elimination of the Widow’s Tax (SBP-DIC Offset) is a long running issue that affects 67,000 military survivors. There have been incremental changes that have helped a small number of survivors, but full repeal of the offset needs to be achieved to enable these widows to receive both the full VA monetary benefit for survivors whose sponsor died of a service connected injury or disease and the full value of the member purchased annuity. We will seek to have our legislators co-sponsor and support Rep Joe Wilson’s HR 553 and Sen. Doug Jones’ S.622 which end the Widow’s Tax.

More information on these issues and how you can participate in Storming the Hill by sending your TAKE ACTION message to your legislator is available at:


To support “Storming the Hill,” I would also suggest visiting your congressman’s local office to voice your support of the MOAA actions related to these issues.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you,
Len

Florida’s “Storming the Hill” visits

**COL Mike Borders & Vickie Ocasio**

- Sen. Marco Rubio  
  - FL05
- Rep. Al Lawson  
  - FL09
- Rep. Darren Soto  
  - FL07
- Rep. Stephanie Murphy  
  - FL04
- Rep. Matt Gaetz  
  - FL01
- Rep. Ted Yoho  
  - FL03

**LTC Marc Oliveri, MAJ Tim Pishdad**

- Sen Rick Scott  
  - FLS1
- Rep. Kathy Castor  
  - FL14
- Rep. Bill Posey  
  - FL08
- Rep. Brian Mast  
  - FL18
- Rep. Gus Bilirakis  
  - FL12
- Rep. Lois Frankel  
  - FL21
- Rep. Alcee Hastings  
  - FL20

**Col Tony Pimentel, Jill Pimentel, Wagnon**

- Rep Debbie Murcasel-Powell  
  - FL26
- Rep Charlie Crist  
  - FL13
- Rep Michael Waltz  
  - FL06
- Rep Val Demings  
  - FL10
- Rep Ross Spano  
  - FL15
- Rep Neal Dunn  
  - FL02
- Rep MarioDiaz-Balart  
  - FL25
- Rep Gregory Steube  
  - FL17

**Col Len Friedlander, RADM Rick Buchanan**

- Rep. Vern Buchanan  
  - FL16
- Rep. Frederica Wilson  
  - FL24
- Rep. Ted Deutch  
  - FL22
- Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
  - FL23
- Rep. Daniel Webster  
  - FL11
- Rep. Donna Shalala  
  - FL27
- Rep Francis Rooney  
  - FL19
The 20-23 June 2019, annual Florida-wide FCoC Convention is less than 90 days away, and the 1 May 2019 reservation cutoff date is less than 30 days away. Your participation is the critical factor in determining the success of this convention.

If you haven't already registered, there are two ways you can sign up; the preferred way is to print the mail-in registration form, fill it out, and send it, along with a check to the Convention Chairman or, you can register online by visiting the FCOC website (http://www.moaafl.org/Convention/Registration.aspx) and pay by credit card or send a check to the Chairman. For those of you who have already registered, we thank you for your support!

I can tell you that a tremendous amount of effort and funding have been invested in this convention to bring our MOAA members a first class convention in one of Florida's historic hotels: the Safety Harbor Resort and Spa, Florida's only, all-natural mineral springs Spa, surrounded by the quaintness of a "Mayberry-like" small town charm.

We have developed a great program:

• MOAA Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Awards being presented to the Florida winners at the Friday evening President's Reception;
• Keynote speakers featuring, RADM Michael Silah (Director of NOAA’s Commissioned Officer Corps and the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO)) at the Saturday Breakfast;
• Lt. Gen. Dana Atkins, USAF (Ret) MOAA President and CEO at the Saturday dinner;
• Informative presentations by key MOAA National and State leaders to update and assist all of us in our efforts to support our military members and their families across the board.

Bring your spouse/significant other/guest to join you for a relaxing weekend at a world-class health spa at a very reasonable rate of only $109 per night. In addition to the great program, we have a number of fun social activities planned or available (i.e., Third Friday street festival with live music/entertainment/arts and crafts/food and beverage vendors, Professional Chef's cooking class, health and wellness classes, Aqua-fitness & Yoga, Safety Harbor Historical Society City Historical Sites Walking Tour, Museum and Cultural Center, kayaking and fishing down at the Marina, Wine & Cheese Art event sponsored by Syd Entel Art Gallery, etc).

We realize that June 20th seems like a long ways off, but room requirements must be provided to the resort substantially in advance of that date in order to keep the room rate of $109. Likewise, for those of you who will be participating, but not staying at the hotel, catering arrangements must be finalized well in advance of the event. Please make your reservations as soon as possible, but NLT May 1. The mail-in form is on page 10 of this issue.

Lewis VanDyke
Convention Chairman

Make Your Reservation by May 1
March-April 2019

Legislative Affairs
Lt Col Bob Bienvenue, USAF, Ret., Legislative Chairman, rbienven@sprynet.com

Call to ACTION

This month’s column is a continuation of the URGENT FCOC Pre-Storming CALL TO ACTION which was issued via email to all Chapter Presidents and Legislative Liaisons last week.

By the time you have read this, MOAA’s 2019 Storming the Hill event will be in the history books. But the role of chapters and members is not over. We all must continue to advocate for the 780,000 currently serving military, their families, retirees and surviving spouses who live here in Florida that may be impacted by the provisions of the FY 2020 NDAA.

So first, here’s a reminder of the issues that were the focus of the Florida teams’ visits to our congresspersons and senators on April 10th:

• Providing Military Pay and Benefits necessary to Recruit and Retain an All-Volunteer Force
• Ending the "widows’ tax" imposed on military survivors whose sponsor purchased coverage under the Survivor Benefit Plan and died from service-related causes, and
• Stabilizing TRICARE fees and co-payments.

And second, here’s what should be next on all of our agendas -- a “follow-up” with our Congressional District offices to ask where the Congresspersons stand after those meetings. Give a call to both the district office and the Capitol Hill offices with that question. Maybe start with a question to find out which staff member took the meeting with the MOAA team from Florida. Then ask to speak with him/her as a follow-up from a MOAA member who is a constituent [you].

Engage in a discussion on the importance of these matters to our national defense readiness. Go to this link to read the position papers where you’ll find MOAA’s read on all of this:

http://www.moaa.org/storming2019/

Continued on next page
The key to success for MOAA’s advocacy mission is persistence in keeping the lines of communication open and consistency in our message that Congress has the responsibility to fulfill our nation’s solemn obligations to the well-being of our uniformed servicemembers, to their families who also sacrifice in service every day, and to maintaining the earned benefits of those who have committed 20-30 years in patriotic service to our nation in uniform.

AF Secretary Heather Wilson
March SASC Testimony

“We can only meet [our demands for maintaining security] with predictable budgets driven by the National Defense Strategy. In Fiscal Year 2019, the Department of Defense received its first on-time appropriation in over a decade. That agreement required substantial effort by the Congress, and we are grateful for your support and confidence.”

“However, continued budgetary uncertainty threatens to disrupt the progress we are making. Substantial budget cuts would erase the gains we made over the last three years and inflict substantial damage to our national defense. In 2013, in the wake of sequestration, we were forced to stand down one-third of our combat flying squadrons. We cancelled large-scale exercises and lost over one million work-hours of depot maintenance.”

“Despite nearly 30 continuous years of combat, no enemy in the field has done as much to harm the readiness of the Air Force than the combined impact of artificial spending restrictions, worsened by operating for 10 of the last 11 years under continuing resolutions of varied and unpredictable duration. ... A return to sequestration would erase the gains we made over the last three years and inflict substantial damage to our national defense.”

“Let’s be clear. We cannot fully implement the National Defense Strategy to protect America’s vital national interests with unpredictable and constrained budgets. We must come together to find a way forward. Sequestration is again looming in 2020 and 2021, the last two years the BCA’s spending caps are enforced, unless lawmakers agree to raise the defense spending ceiling above $576 billion in 2020 and $591 billion in 2021.”

“If US spending exceeds those limits, the defense budget would automatically be slashed by $71 billion and non-defense by $55 billion below 2019 spending levels, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.”

We have not heard yet from the other service Secretaries but I’m sure their testimony will convey the same message.

Our work to “advocate for strong national defense and to play an active role in military personnel matters and especially proposed legislation affecting the career force, the retired community, and veterans of the uniformed services” is never finished ..... we must “NEVER STOP SERVING”
Over the last couple of months, I had the opportunity to visit four chapters around the state: Imperial Polk County, Central Florida, Southwest Florida, and Suwannee River Valley.

I went to a lunch hosted by the Imperial Polk County chapter in Lakeland. Polk County is big, but it has a very engaged chapter leadership that is really doing good things in the community. Like the others I will mention below, there are so many good things happening because of these chapters that we can't list it all without turning the Communiqué into an Encyclopedia Britannica.

I also went to a luncheon hosted by the Central Florida chapter in Orlando. This was attended by Colonel, USA (Ret) Terri Coles, head honcho at Council and Chapter Affairs at MOAA National. She gave a very informative overview of the goings on in D.C., and also shared some of the best practices she has gleaned from her visits to chapters around the country.

I was also able to attend the Military Officers Association of Southwest Florida (Naples) annual gala. What can I say? It's Naples. Everything down there is so classy and elegant that it makes (most) of the rest of us look like second-class citizens.

Finally, I visited the Suwannee River Valley chapter in Lake City for a dinner that was attended by Lt Gen Dana Atkins, President and CEO of MOAA National. He gave a “State of MOAA” presentation that was noteworthy for both the information and the enthusiasm with which he delivered it. I am ever more impressed by Lt Gen Atkins and what he is doing at the helm of our national organization. We are in good hands.

The bottom line is that I came away impressed by the leadership of these four chapters, by the quality and quantity of the programs they are doing, and the absolute dedication to the cause. There are some “true believers” out there.

Some would ask, “what has MOAA done for me?” One way I look at this is that MOAA is an avenue—a vehicle—that allows me to give back. I could be doing the giving back thing in the American Legion, AUSA, or any other number of organizations. But I firmly believe that MOAA is the most effective at taking care of the troops, providing the leadership at the national, state, and local levels, and delivering on the promise to Never Stop Serving. I also like the Camaraderie With a Purpose motto. Isn't that what we are doing as the servant leaders we were taught to be?

1 MAY 2019 FINAL CALL FOR LEVELS OF EXCELLENCE AWARD SUBMISSIONS

Councils and chapters have until May 1 to submit a nomination entry for the Levels of Excellence Award (LOE) competition. A standard set of rating criteria will be used to evaluate all councils and chapters that submit a package. The very, very best councils or chapters receive a five-star award. Please read the LOE Award criteria closely before sending your submission. To help streamline the submission process, entries can be accepted through an online submission platform.

President’s note:
Many of our FCOC members may not be aware that our Council Chaplain, Colonel Charles Caudill, USAF (Ret) and his wife Jan departed Florida and returned to Lexington, VA earlier this year, leaving us without a Chaplain.

Those who know me, know that I am badly in need of a Chaplain, so I’m not sure if it was luck, or divine intervention but LCDR Terry Robertson of the Lee Coast Chapter volunteered to assume the position. I’m certain FCOC will greatly benefit from his participation and counsel. As you will see in his note of introduction, Terry is no stranger to MOAA and FCOC. Please join me in welcoming Terry.

Chaplain’s Message
LCDR Terry Robertson, USN, Ret. terryrobertson49@gmail.com

Good Day. My name is Terry Robertson and I am the incoming President of the Lee Coast Chapter. As you read above, I have also been appointed as Council Chaplain, replacing Charles Caudill, who did a magnificent job. This article will simply be an introduction.

I am 70 years old, I was a Coast Guard helicopter pilot for ten years and a Navy chaplain for 13+ years, with two tours with the Marine Corps and the rest of my chaplain service with the Navy. I have been active in MOAA in Florida for about 12 years. I have also served as membership chair, legislative affairs chair, and chaplain of the Lee Coast Chapter.

Please let me know how I can be of assistance to you or your chapters and I will do my best to get around to see you and respond to your needs. Also, if you have someone who needs a chaplain’s visit, please let me know, and I will get around to see them, as I can. I can be reached via email, above, or telephone, (352) 638-5838.

REMEMBERING THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO HAVE SACRIFICED SO MUCH FOR OUR NATION ON THIS MEMORIAL DAY
TAMPA – Gov. Ron DeSantis joined the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs to announce *Forward March*, an initiative which aims to unite the combined energy and resources of Florida’s state agencies, veterans’ service organizations, private partners and local communities. The new initiative, launched March 29 at the University of South Florida, will work to ensure the state of Florida is providing the very best services and support for our veterans.

“As a veteran myself, I am proud to be Governor of the most veteran-friendly state in the country,” said Governor DeSantis. “I look forward to working with Director Burgess, the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs and partners across our state to ensure those who have served our country are receiving the care they need and deserve.”

The kickoff event featured breakout sessions focusing on housing, mental health, emergency assistance and legal matters to help Florida’s 1.5 million veterans receive the best resources and tools they so rightly deserve.

“Forward March is the start of an ongoing effort to determine best practices and ensure the state of Florida sets the national standard for veteran services and support,” said FDVA Executive Director Danny Burgess. “I look forward to teaming up with Governor DeSantis, various agencies and veterans’ organizations in this important work to boldly serve Florida’s veterans.”

Over the following months, *Forward March* will meet with veterans throughout Florida’s communities to hear their stories and address the issues facing our nation’s heroes while focusing on finding ways to eliminate redundancy for effective delivery of veteran services.

*FDVA News continues on page 12*
LIFE IS EXPANDING AT FLEET LANDING.

Introducing our newest neighborhood, Beacon Pointe at Fleet Landing.

“Fleet Landing is the best decision we ever made. And it keeps getting better with more opportunities to continue the life we love. Make plans to join us!”

– CAPT & Mrs. Milton Miefert, USN(Ret), Residents

TO LEARN MORE CALL (TOLL-FREE) 1.877.623.4229
OR (LOCAL) 904.685.4425.

Beacon Pointe at Fleet Landing

One Fleet Landing Boulevard
Atlantic Beach, FL 32233
BeaconPointeFL.com
SAVE THE DATES:
Florida Council of Chapters MOAA Convention
20-23 June 2019

Registration is now open!

The Tampa chapter will be hosting the 2019 annual convention 20-23 June 2019 at the Safety Harbor Resort & Spa. You are encouraged to support this event by registering and attending the convention. The Tampa chapter website (TampaMOAA.org) and council website (MOAAFL.org) have information about the convention and registration options.

While you can register on the MOAAFL.org website, we are encouraging you to mail in your registration to save the processing fees incurred when paying online. There are two ways to get the registration form; download it from the website or download it from the next page of the Communiqué.

Once you have filled out the registration form, just mail the form and check to the address on the registration form.

Contact me if you have any questions: vandykeRL@verizon.net
Lewis VanDyke, 2019 Convention Chair
# 20-23 JUNE 2019 ANNUAL CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM

Venue: Safety Harbor Resort & SPA

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**Resort Reservation Cost**: Arrival Date ____________ Departure Date ____________

$__________ = # Nights X $109.00  **Bed preference**: ___King ___ 2 Queen

Please indicate the number registering, shirts, and attending each event below

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**Meal choices for Military Ball**

|   | $50.00 each London Broil |
|   | $50.00 each Chicken Marsala |
|   | $55.00 each Grilled Salmon |

|   | $35.00 | Man: ___ Small ___ Med ___ Large ___ XLarge ___XXLarge |
|   | $35.00 | Woman: ___Small ___ Med ___ Large ___ XLarge ___XXLarge |

TOTAL COST (Check Payable to: Florida Council of Chapters)

Will Attend _____ Will Not Attend _____

20 June Operation Helping Hand Dinner

(No charge for meal. Transportation provided by James A Haley Veterans Hospital from Safety Harbor Spa and Resort for first 50 that sign up.)

Will _____ Will not need transportation from Spa

Mail Form and Check to: Lewis VanDyke
1151 Shipwatch Circle
Tampa, FL 33602-5786

NOTE: send questions or special accommodation needs to: vandykeRL@verizon.net.
Provide any comments you may have on the back of this form.
James S. Hartsell Named FDVA Deputy Executive

TALLAHASSEE – Retired Marine Corps Maj. Gen. James S. “Hammer” Hartsell has been named Deputy Executive Director of the Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs by FDVA Executive Director Danny Burgess. The agency operates a network of seven state veterans’ homes and provides statewide outreach to connect Florida’s more than 1.5 million veterans with their earned services, benefits and support.

“I’m honored to be joining such a dedicated group of individuals whose heartfelt passion for veterans’ advocacy and care is known statewide,” said Hartsell. “As a proud Floridian, I'll add my voice to those who seek to serve our state's veterans and their families and explore innovative ways to serve those who served us.”

“General Hartsell’s 37 years in the Marine Corps along with his career in the health care industry will bring big dividends to our expanding efforts to boldly serve Florida’s veterans,” said Burgess. “As our agency celebrates its 30th anniversary, we'll rely on his leadership and policy skills to enhance our ability to determine best practices and eliminate redundancies in services for our state’s veterans.”

Hartsell served as an Enlisted Marine in the Reserves from 1981-83, and then was commissioned as an officer serving on Active Duty from 1983-1994. He then transitioned to the Reserves where he was mobilized for the following Operations; Iraqi Freedom I - 2003, Iraqi Freedom II - 2004, and Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan – 2009-10.

As a General Officer he served as the Deputy Commanding General (Mobilization) I Marine Expeditionary Force and 1st Marine Brigade, as the Commanding General of the 4th Marine Division, and as the Mobilization Assistant to the Commander of the United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) where he served as the J5 Strategic Plans & Policy, the Chief of Staff, and as the Director of the Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies.

His civilian career while serving in the Reserves was focused on the health care industry with U.S. and global business responsibilities in the orthopedic implant business, in hospital administration, and in health care leadership. Most recently he served as the Director of Future Operations for the Pasco County Sheriff’s Office.
2019 Women Veterans Recognition Week

The Florida Department of Veterans’ Affairs maintains an excellent resource section with links to:
- New VA Online Discharge Upgrade Tool
- Crisis/Hotlines
- Employment & Business Services
- Veterans’ Benefits
- Veterans’ Resources
- Women Veterans
- Other Government Departments & Agencies
- Returning Veterans
- Health Issues

Resources

http://floridavets.org/resources/

If you are facing a mental health or suicide crisis:
For 24-hour counsel, call the National Veteran Crisis Hotline at 1-800-273-8255. You are NOT alone!
Veterans in Florida, call the Florida Veterans Support Line at 1-844-MyFLVet (693-5838) or 2-1-1.
New Documentary Explores Agent Orange's Little-Known Medical Legacy For Civilians

Agent Orange, the chemical herbicide used by the U.S. military during the Vietnam War to deforest the land, deprived combatants of food and the ability to conceal themselves.

But as we now know, the toxic chemicals did much more than that. Agent Orange caused devastating health consequences for millions of people — the Vietnamese on the ground and the American troops serving there. In 1979, there was legal action that won a historic settlement.

What's not commonly known is that American civilians working stateside were also exposed to the harsh herbicide. Among them were workers at the Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

Radio producer Jon Kalish (@kalishjon) tells their stories in his new documentary, "The Forgotten Civilians of Eglin Air Force Base," commissioned by Living Downstream. The environmental justice podcast series is from Northern California Public Media. Kalish joins Here & Now's Robin Young to discuss the documentary.

The workers at Eglin were known as range technicians. Some of them went out and collected cardboard placards that had been sprayed, bringing them back to a lab to be analyzed. Others were cameramen operating massive refrigerator-sized color film cameras. As the cameramen filmed, they were also being sprayed.

Tommy C. Brown and Clarence Hobbs were among those filming. In the documentary, Brown described the process.

"Sometimes, it would be like a mist," Brown says. "But I remember one time, we got sprayed [and] it was like a mud. It was like a thin mud. It kind of covered us up. If we saw mist, I would not turn that camera off. I would sit there in my position unless they told me otherwise."

"Sometimes we'd have to wipe our foreheads running the camera 'cause [it got] on your forehead bad enough you'd pray it don't get in your eyes," Hobbes adds. "They gave us instructions to wipe that camera down and clean it every night, but they never told us anything about wiping ourselves down."

Kalish explains that at the time, there was very little understanding of Agent Orange’s

continued on next page
dangers. And for these men, who he describes as "salt-of-the-Earth kind of guys," the work at Eglin Air Force Base was a solid, well-paying job. And there was no warning from the Vitro Company that employed the civilians that they were being exposed to a highly toxic chemical compound that contained dioxin.

In addition to their own exposures, Kalish says the workers now believe they were inadvertently exposing their wives and children. Linda Yates, widow of worker Jack Yates, describes how her then 3-year-old daughter would jump into her father's arms when he came home from work, so thickly covered in the chemical that it created a coating on his clothing.

"I did not know how dangerous that chemical was," she says. "When I did get to wash them [his clothing] they were like starched. Sticky and stiff." And those clothes, she says, went into the washing machine with her and her children's laundry.

Another worker, Bobby Gunter, worries that his late wife's neurological problems and stepson's death from leukemia were also Agent Orange related.

"And I beat myself up all these years," he laments. "Was [Agent Orange] the cause of it?"

Kalish points out that speculation about miscarriages and birth defects is more controversial than claims by the exposed men about the presumptive diseases for which Vietnam veterans can win disability benefits. They include leukemia, Parkinson's disease, diabetes, lymphoma, nervous system disorders, liver disorders, a skin rash known as chloracne, and more.

For the men of Eglin, the connection between their illnesses and Agent Orange came decades after exposure, when former worker Von Jones connected the dots. He was at a clinic getting chemotherapy and noticed his former Eglin supervisor there, also getting treatment. As they talked, they realized how many former colleagues had either died or were suffering from debilitating diseases. Somehow, most hadn't been aware of the $180 million settlement the Vietnam veterans had received.

They signed on local attorney Rusty Sanders, who approached Victor Yannacone, the legendary environmental attorney who, in the late 60s, litigated the ban of DDT. He's also the lawyer who launched the class-action suit on Agent Orange on behalf of Vietnam veterans. Kalish says that Yannacone was "willing to jump into the ring again."

But despite Yannocone's previous victory — and the fact that those exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam are entitled to benefits and treatment — the new suit has yet to launch.

"These companies have tremendous resources," Sanders explains. "They're not going to bow easily. So, we need a public interest consortium to help bring these civilians justice."

In other words, they don't have the money.

"The two lawyers who are willing to bring this clearly do not have the deep pockets it's necessary to go up against these chemical companies that have huge resources to fight this in court," Kalish says.

He adds that it could be argued that the chemical companies, including Dow and Monsanto, are "basically waiting for these guys to die."

"At this point, Sanders and Yannacone are waiting for a public interest law firm with deep pockets to step forward and fund this litigation," Kalish says. "They don't feel that they can do this themselves."

During the Vietnam War, Air Force C-123 planes sprayed millions of gallons of herbicides, known as Agent Orange, over the jungles of Southeast Asia. (Department of Defense/AP/File)
Cape Canaveral Chapter
By Marilyn Sanford, MOAACC Public Relations

Indian River Lagoon Update

The January meeting of the Cape Canaveral Chapter (MOAACC) at the Indian River Colony Club featured Dr. Chuck Jacoby, the Supervising Environmental Scientist for the Estuaries Section at the St. John’s River Water Management District and Chair of the Science, Technology, Engineering and Modeling Advisory Committee for the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program. He has also provided advice to Federal, state, and local governments in both the US and Australia.

The Indian River Lagoon is an amazing estuary that provides over $7.2 billion in benefits to the region. However, this bounty is threatened by detrimental changes in the Lagoon’s health. Dr. Jacoby discussed key challenges and on-going efforts to mitigate them.

The Estuaries Section examines harmful algal blooms, restoration of damaged salt marshes, and nutrient loads in estuarine waters which extends from the Florida-Georgia border through Indian River County.

Viera VA Outpatient Clinic

Dr. Linda Bortugno, Chief Medical Officer at the Viera VA Outpatient Clinic, was the featured speaker at the February luncheon meeting of MOAACC, held at the Tides, Patrick AFB.

Dr. Bortugno came to Florida in 2000 and joined the Viera Outpatient Clinic as a primary care staff physician. She moved to Team Lead in 2006, and then to Chief of Primary Care. In 2014 she was appointed Chief Medical Officer for the Viera VA Outpatient Clinic.

During her presentation, Dr. Bortugno outlined the Viera clinic’s key success factors:
- Veteran Access
- The veteran’s experience during their visit
- Quality care and safety for the patients
- Employee experience for the staff
- Efficiency and effectiveness of the staff with patients

She also reported on the Clinic’s support teams and benefits, including specialty services such as the Ambulatory Surgery Center, and the new 142,000 square foot Mental Health Specialty Care addition.
Citrus County Chapter
By COL Mark Bodenheim USAR (Ret), President, Citrus County Chapter

February Meeting features Susan Gill

(Above, left) MOAA Citrus County Chapter members attend February 2019 chapter meeting at The Plantation on Crystal River where Susan Gill, Supervisor of Elections for Citrus County, spoke. (Above) COL Mark Bodenheim, USAR (Ret), presents a certificate of appreciation to Susan Gill. (Left) MOAA Citrus County Chapter members (left) RADM “Mac” McLeod, USN (Ret) and CWO4 J.J. Kenney, USMC (Ret), are awarded the MOAA Florida Council of Chapters (FCoC) chapter leadership award at the Feb 14, 2019 meeting recognizing their over 20 years of service of leadership to the MOAA Citrus County Chapter and to the Citrus County community at large, exemplifying the MOAA motto “Never Stop Serving”.

Commissioner & veteran Brian Coleman speaks at March meeting

Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Citrus County Chapter president (right) COL Mark Bodenheim, USAR (Ret), presents a certificate of appreciation to County Commissioner and fellow veteran, Brian Coleman (left), for his presentation to chapter members during the March 14th, 2019 chapter meeting at The Plantation on Crystal River. Commissioner Brian Coleman speaking on issues and solutions affecting Citrus County veterans.
Historic Mayport Chapter
By CDR Patrick R Kleuver, USN, Ret, President

Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp Support

Navy Program Lead RADM Doug Venlet, USN (Ret), President CDR Pat Kluever, USN (Ret), and member, Peggy Steck, visited Duval County’s First Coast High School to show the Chapter’s support for the school’s Navy / Marine Corps Junior ROTC unit on February 21. The cadets received awards and recognition for appearance and performance during the day’s inspection. RADM Venlet and CDR Kluever presented a check for $250.00 to the NJROTC Unit Senior Military Instructor LCDR Suzann Bolden, USN (Ret), the only female Senior Military JROTC in Florida state, to show our Chapter’s support for her unit. The Chapter will present the MOAA medal to the outstanding Junior Cadet at First Coast’s upcoming awards ceremony at the end of this school year.

USAF Program Team Member LtCol Bob Burkart, USAF (Ret) and President CDR Pat Kluever, USN (Ret) visited Duval County’s Andrew Jackson High School March 21, to show the Chapter’s support for that school’s USAF Junior ROTC unit. LtCol Burkart presented the MOAA Medal and Certificate to outstanding Junior Cadet Fabian Martinez-Perez at the unit’s annual awards ceremony in the school gymnasium. Thanks to Bob for helping the Chapter recognize these very deserving students.

Senior Military Science Instructor Major Trent Johnson, JROTC unit has impressively obtained his unit’s designation as an US Air Force Flight Academy. Around 20 of the cadets were honored for achieving their first flight in a small civilian aircraft and are eligible to compete in an USAF program to visit a training base during the summer. The summer program of realistic flight training is fully funded by the USAF with the goal of cadet’s obtaining a private pilot’s license. Well Done, Major Johnson and Cadets!

Chapter President Pat and Mary Kluever attended the March 22 JROTC William M. Raines “Vikings Battalion” military ball at UNF’s Adam W. Herbert University Center. Following the solemn “POW MIA Remembrance Ceremony” the cadets eagerly joined in the “salty” preparation of “The Grog” by Senior Military Instructor LTC William Liptrot, USA (Ret). The cadet chosen to sample “The Grog” survived the ordeal.

Historic Mayport Chapter continues on next page
Historic Mayport Chapter Hosts Mayoral Candidates

The Historic Mayport Chapter hosted two Jacksonville March 19 mayoral candidates, Mayor Lenny Curry and Councilwoman Anna Broche on February 7 and March 7, respectively. Both candidates educated members about issues and their stands in the hotly contested election.

Many people commented on how much they appreciated the session, and how much they learned about the city and the ongoing contest for mayor of Jacksonville. Mayor Curry won the four-candidate March 19 vote with 57.8% of the vote.

A coming meeting will feature Councilman Rory Diamond who represents the beaches. He unopposed candidate for the council seat representing the beaches. He share his perspective on the issues facing the beaches and what he plans to work on as councilman on the Jacksonville City Council.

Kingdom of the Sun
By Arlo Janssen, LTC, USA (Ret), Editor, Sunbeams, KOS/MOAA

KOS March Luncheon

The “KOS March Luncheon” was held March 7 at the Ocala, FL, Elks Club and featured speaker was Richele Colon Schwab, RN and Director of Nursing (left), of TimberRidge in Ocala, FL. She provided information and answered questions on assisting living facilities in Marion County and TimberRidge.

Medal of Honor Day

The KOS Chapter supports the local "Veterans in the Classroom" project in Marion County. Local KOS member, LTC Frank Rasbury, USA (above), dressed in his Army Dress Blue uniform, spoke to about 80 Ocala Madison Street Academy fifth grade students on the March 25th "National Medal of Honor Day." The presentation was well received by the students and the teachers.

8th Annual Joint Meeting Held

COL Mark Bodenheim, USA, President of the MOAA Citrus County (left) and COL Bob Schelgel, USA, President of the Kingdom of the Sun (KOS) Chapter (right) "Welcoming" members and guests to our joint Chapter meeting at Stumpknockers on the River, April 4, 2019.
Sarasota Veterans Charity Shut Down

Florida Investigators call American Veterans Foundation, Inc. a “sham”

By Zac Anderson
Political Editor
zac.anderson@heraldtribune.com

March 28, 2019 -- Attorney General Ashley Moody announced Thursday that Sarasota-based American Veterans Foundation, Inc. and founder Paul K. Monville signed the order agreeing to the solicitation ban.

A Sarasota veterans charity has agreed to “a permanent ban on soliciting charitable donations” after being accused of being a “sham charity” by the Florida Attorney General’s office and the Federal Trade Commission.

Attorney General Ashley Moody announced Thursday that Sarasota-based American Veterans Foundation Inc. and founder Paul K. Monville signed the order agreeing to the solicitation ban, which appears to effectively ends the charity’s existence. Monville also agreed not be involved in “oversight and management of charities in the future.”

A complaint filed in federal court this week by the attorney general’s office and the FTC alleged that American Veterans Foundation “is a sham charity created and controlled by Monville to benefit private interests.”

The complaint states that donors gave more than $6.5 million to the charity between 2014 and 2017.

“Defendants falsely tell donors that their contributions will be used to send care packages to service members deployed overseas and to provide immediate assistance to veterans facing homelessness,” the complaint states. “Instead, donations almost entirely benefit Monville — the founder, president, and executive director of AVF — and the for-profit fundraisers he hires. Any spending on the programs Defendants described to donors is merely incidental.”

The complaint says American Veterans Foundation operated out of a suite at 1950 Northgate Blvd. in Sarasota. The charity’s board included Monville’s sister and son.

Using for-profit fundraisers, AVF solicited donations from across the country, mostly in small amounts “ranging from $10 to $50,” according to the complaint. “AVF’s contracts with these fundraisers grant the fundraisers ownership of its donor lists, and agree to pay them 80 to 85 percent of the all funds raised,” according to the complaint, which says Monville approved the telemarketing scripts and brochures and pledge letters sent to potential donors.

The complaint states that AVF’s solicitation materials are “false or misleading” and that a “miniscule fraction of donations” are spent on veterans.

Continued on next page
...Sarasota Veterans Charity Shut Down

“The vast majority of every donation — over 92 percent — goes directly to the for-profit fundraisers, compensation for Monville and his son, and other administrative costs,” the complaint states.

To illustrate the charity’s alleged false claims, the complaint notes that despite saying it sends care packages to veterans, AVF spent only $47,246 out of $3.5 million raised between 2014 and 2016 on care packages. The charity’s donations jumped from $929,963 in 2015 to $2.1 million in 2016, but the amount spent on care packages dropped from $15,351 in 2015 to $1,845 in 2016, according to the complaint, which documents similarly low amounts spent on the charity’s other big claim, that it helped homeless veterans.

“In fact, AVF provides only de minimus immediate support to veterans, homeless or otherwise,” according to the complaint, which goes on to say that “AVF reported spending 2.7 percent of donations on helping homeless veterans in any way. Under these circumstances, it was deceptive for Defendants to tell donors that their contributions would provide immediate assistance to veterans facing homelessness.”

Monville earned nearly $80,000 a year in compensation and bonuses from the charity, and his son also was paid by the charity, according to the complaint. The charity also spent thousands on “meals, airline flights — including for a board member’s spouse — hotels, rental cars and gas” for Monville’s son’s personal vehicle.

“The board allowed such expenses without question or oversight; Monville alone oversaw use of the AVF AmEx car by himself and son,” according to the complaint.

The complaint details seven different federal and state charges. The defendants were accused of violating the FTC Act, the Telemarketing Sales Rule, the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act and Florida’s Solicitation of Contributions Act.

The settlement reached with American Veterans Foundation and Monville “imposes a monetary judgment of approximately $6.5 million,” according to the press release from Moody’s office.

“All remaining charitable assets will be paid to a legitimate veterans charity, subject to court approval,” the release states.

“This fraudulent charity took in millions of dollars from generous donors who believed the funds would go to active military members and veterans,” Moody said in a press release. “Deceiving donors by exploiting the brave men and women who protect our country is disgraceful. My office will work to ensure that any recovered money from this sham charity will go to legitimate organizations helping our amazing military members.”
Sun City Center Chapter
By CAPT B. Frank Kepley, USN (Ret), Legislative Liaison

April Meeting features
Major General Clayton Hutmacher

Benny Blackshire, chapter president, (right) presents General Hutmacher (upper left inset and left) with a $200 check for the Special Operations Warrior Foundation. One of the foundations major goals is to provide a free education, from 1st grade through college, for the children of individuals killed while on active duty.

Major General Clayton Hutmacher, USA (Ret) was the featured speaker at the April 6 Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) luncheon in the Florida Room at the North Side Atrium in Sun City. General Hutmacher assumed the positions of President and Chief Executive Officer of the Special Operations Warrior Foundation in September 2018.

A career United States Army Officer, General Hutmacher retired in 2018 having served over 40 years in uniform. As an Army Special Operations Aviator. He commanded at every level during his three tours with the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment, where he served as the MH-60 Direct Action Penetrator platoon leader, company operations officer, executive officer and commander of 1st Battalion, Regimental Commander, and the Commanding General of the U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation Command.

His last assignment was the Director of Operations in the U.S. Special Operations Command, Tampa, Florida. His previous assignment was as the Deputy Commanding General of the United States Army Special Operations Command at Fort Bragg, North Carolina.
The MOAA Florida Council of Chapters (FCOC) is comprised of 44 Chapters with nearly 8,000 members and their families. FCOC is one of MOAA's largest Councils. MOAA has a membership of over 380,000 members in all 50 States.

The FCOC’s primary communication vehicles are our bi-monthly publication, The COUNCIL COMMUNIQUÉ and our Website www.MOAAFL.org. Ads run for one year.

The COMMUNIQUÉ is distributed electronically to all our chapters, MOAA Headquarters in Virginia, and our influential contacts across the state of Florida.

The COMMUNIQUÉ provides a unique forum for businesses to reach a select segment of the population. The membership is patriotic and professional. We encourage your business to reach out to our members by advertising in The COUNCIL COMMUNIQUÉ.

In appreciation of Businesses that also support the FCOC Annual Convention with Ads in the Convention Souvenir Program Book within the last year the FCOC offers a discount for the same size Ad shown on the following Order Form.

Thank you!

FCOC

Submitting Articles and Pictures for The Communiqué

Articles can be attached to an email. Microsoft Word works best. You can also type your information into the body of an email where it can be copied and pasted into the newsletter. PDF files can also be used.

Pictures should have a .jpg extension. If you are sending pictures from your chapter, please include the chapter name and the names of those in the picture. A few words on what the event is about will help interest the readers.

If you have questions about your submission, contact

Polly Parks
pparks@igc.org
703-338-6881
# The Council Communiqué
## ADVERTISING ORDER FORM

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Size of Ad</th>
<th>Per Issue Placement</th>
<th>Annual (6 issues)</th>
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<td>Full Page (9.625&quot; x 7.5&quot; W)</td>
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Size of Ad: _____________________ # of Placements: _____ OR Annual: _______

Notes: Annual is from Jan-Dec; six (6) issues published electronically on the 10th of the even month. Mid-year placement for a recurring annual placement can be at pro-rated annual rate for remaining issues. Remaining copy due dates for 2018 are: October 1 and December 1.

Ad placement in printed Annual Convention Program (June) is handled separately by Convention Committee; POC’s listed under Committee Chairs on last page of Communiqué.

Amount: $____________ (make check out to: Florida Council of Chapters and mail, with this ad form, to: Polly Parks, Communiqué Editor, c/o SCFC of MOAA, PO Box 7841, Sebring, FL 33870.

Business Name: __________________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________________

City: ______________________________ State: _________ Zip: __________

Business Contact: ___________________________ Email: _________________________

Tel/Cell #: ___________________________ Fax #: ___________________________

- Submit PDF or jpeg file to: pparks@igc.org

- Ad copy must be submitted by the first of the month of the month of publication; i.e. Feb 1 for the January-February edition. Please notify the editor in advance if you plan to change the ad copy.

Any further questions, please contact: Polly Parks, pparks@igc.org or 703-338-6881.
## Florida Chapters & Web Sites (if available)

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Florida Chapters, Continued

Now and Always We’ll be There.

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