



THE DEFENDER

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

Vol. 32 No 2

Serving all Branches of The Uniformed Services

February 2026

Lunch Meeting & Discussion

When: Thursday **February 5th**
Time: Gathering 1130, Lunch 1200, Program to follow
Place: Fort Walton Yacht Club
180 Ferry Road, NE, FWB
Program: **Guest Speaker**
Commissioner Drew Palmer

MAKE A RESERVATION

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

Reservation deadline is Saturday at noon prior to meeting. Go to nwfmoa.flmoaa.org and select the link "Click here to make reservations", or email nwfreservations@gmail.com, or call Karl Eschmann at 850-621-7482 to make a reservation.

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February Luncheon - Drew Palmer Okaloosa County Commissioner

Commissioner Drew Palmer serves as the County Commissioner for District 5, which includes Destin, Bluewater Bay, and much of Niceville. Originally from Texas, Drew has called Okaloosa County home since 2010, living there with his wife, Jodi, and raising their two daughters in Destin.



Drew comes from a family deeply rooted in service with multiple family members helping their community as pastors and law enforcement officers. Their work inspired him to pursue his own path of service from a young age.

He joined the Air Force at 17, embarking on a distinguished career in Aerospace and Defense that has spanned over two decades. His extensive experience in this sector has provided him with a strong foundation in leadership, strategic planning, and operations.

Drew holds a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration and Project Management, a Master of Arts in Leadership, and a Master of Science in Operations Management. He also has several industry certifications in Lean Six Sigma, Finance, and Program Management.

Drew's vision for Okaloosa County includes fostering a thriving business environment, promoting community engagement, and supporting sustainable development.

Please join us for our **February 5th** lunch which will start with a social gathering at 1130 with the meeting beginning at 1200 followed by lunch. To make reservations click [HERE](#). You may also call Karl Eschmann at 850-621-7482.

Reservations are **REQUIRED** (no walk-ins please) and must be made by no later than **January 31, 2026**.

From the President's Pen

By Fran Hendricks



Officers & Directors

PRESIDENT: Fran Hendricks:

fcashendricks@msn.com

1st VICE PRESIDENT: Jeff Watson:

jeffwatson2011@gmail.com

2nd VICE PRESIDENT: Bob Allen

bopper1@cox.net

TREASURER: Doug Stauffer:

docdoug4@gmail.com

SECRETARY: **OPEN**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Karl Eschmann: phanfix@cox.net

Rod Gerdes: gerdesusmc@msn.com

Bob Gramm: bobgramm5@gmail.com

Kevin Kirby: shotgun0603@yahoo.com

Dick Solt: richdulce@aol.com

DEFENDER EDITOR

Bob Gramm:

bobgramm5@gmail.com

WEBMASTERS

Fred Westfall: nwfmoo@gmail.com

Liz Plauche liz.pl.454@gmail.com

What Gets Measured – Gets Done

To quote an old boss of mine, MG Keith Thurgood, US Army Reserve, “What gets measured, gets done!” At the January Board meeting, the NWFMOA Board approved the Chapter’s goals for 2026. They did so with the intent of building upon the successes the Chapter has earned and enjoyed over the past decade. This approved list of goals will define where we will concentrate our efforts on meeting our stated purpose of making a difference in the lives of those presently serving, those who have served, and those who have expressed an interest in serving. Following are the goals for the NWFMOA as we celebrate our 67th year.

NWFMOA 2026 Goals

Goal 1 Membership

- (1) Increase Chapter Membership by 10 new Members
- (2) Feature New Members in The Defender Welcome Aboard
- (3) Schedule and hold Officers Call in Jan, Apr, Jul, Oct

Goal 2 Financial Soundness

- (1) Finish the year in the black
- (2) Banner Income...collect \$4000 in donations
- (3) Solicit and collect members’ dues

Goal 3 Christmas Party

- (1) Partner with Crispy Warriors (again)

Goal 4 Scholarship

- (1) Award scholarships to deserving local area high school JROTC seniors and college ROTC juniors and seniors
- (2) Award Education Support Grants to local JRTOC units

Goal 5 Community Outreach

- (1) Finalize 2025 MOAA Foundation Grant (After Action Report)
- (2) Apply for 2026 MOAA Foundation Community Outreach Grant
- (3) Annual Valentines for Veterans
- (4) Military Family Appreciation Day
- (5) Commissary Gift Card Campaign—purchase 600 Commissary Gift Cards for Junior Enlisted Families in need
- (6) Wreaths Across America—purchase 200 wreaths **DONE (Dec 2025)**

Goal 6 To be a Recognized Leader in Florida and with MOAA National

- (1) Work in close coordination with the Florida Council of Presidents
- (2) Establish and maintain contact with MOAA National
- (3) Earn MOAA 5-Star LOE Submit annual Chapter LOE to MOAA
- (4) Earn MOAA 5-Star Harris Communication Award for Newsletter
- (5) Earn MOAA 5-Star Harris Communication Award for Website

Goal 7 Recognition

- (1) Recognize Chapter members for their selfless service and support to the Chapter and its mission
- (2) Each Board Member identify 1 NWFMOA Member for Spotlight Feature in The Defender

Goal 8 Support Legislative and Service-Related Issues that impact our Community

- (1) Use Call to Action emails to all Chapter Members to solicit action and support
- (2) Conduct Legislative Minute at monthly Chapter luncheons
- (3) Invite an elected official to attend lunch and brief on items of interest to our members

Please plan to join us as we once again demonstrate **Comradery with Purpose** and build upon the excellence the Chapter has routinely demonstrated.

H2S,

Brig Gen Fran Hendricks, USAF Retired
54th President, NWFMOA

And Remember...
Never Stop Serving

Officers Call

Thursday, January 29, 2026

Doc's Oyster Bar & Grill 5-6:30 PM

Bring a friend and a story to tell.



Click on the logo for a map to Doc's

Test Your Knowledge

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

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

The January Trivia Quiz winner was Dennis Phillips.

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

[CLICK HERE](#)

Upcoming Events

American Legion Post 296

Saturday, February 7th



The American Legion (Post 296) has extended an invitation for us to attend a presentation by Ron Springer regarding the 4 Chaplains on February 7 at **1300** in their Post ballroom. This year (February 3) marks the 83rd Anniversary of their heroic actions. If your schedule permits, please plan to attend. Click [HERE](#) for map to American Legion Post.

What is this event about? When the U.S. Army Transport Dorchester was struck by a German submarine, Feb. 3, 1943, four Army chaplains spread out among the soldiers, calming the frightened, tending the wounded and guiding the

disoriented toward safety. They were Lt. George Fox, a Methodist; Lt. Alexander Goode, a Jewish Rabbi; Lt. John Washington, a Roman Catholic Priest; and Lt. Clark Poling, a Dutch Reformed minister. (U.S. Army) Rather than evacuating the ship, they each gave up their life jackets and their places in the life boats. They were last seen on the deck, praying, hand in hand, as the ship sunk. They were each posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross and Purple Heart.

3rd Annual Valentines For Veterans

Friday, February 13th

NWFMOA will once again partner with Bob Hope Village and Longwood Elementary School in our 3rd Annual Valentines for Veterans celebration on Friday, February 13 at Bob Hope Village. Longwood Elementary Kindergarteners and 3rd graders will deliver their handmade Valentines to the Bob Hope residents. The event is scheduled to start at 1430. NWFMOA will provide the refreshments. We will greet the students upon their arrival at 1430 and take a picture outside before they enter the building. Please plan to join us and be part of this celebration.



Honoring Our Heros

Saturday, February 28th

SAVE THE DATE

SAT

FEB 28 2026

5:00 PM

DESTIN FWB RIGDON CENTER



The war consisted of two phases the first was codenamed Operation Desert Shield (2 August 1990 – 17 January 1991) for operations leading to the buildup of troops and defense of Saudi Arabia. And the second was Operation Desert Storm (17 January 1991 – 28 February 1991) was the combat phase. In addition to distinguished national leaders, the event will highlight local veterans' stories, offering firsthand perspectives on pivotal moments in history, including Task Force Normandy, the hunt for SCUD missiles, the Battle of Khafji and other joint operations.

 <p>VERY SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER Gen. Charles Albert 'Chuck' Horner</p>	 <p>MASTER OF CEREMONIES Lt. Gen. Marshall B. 'Brad' Webb</p>
 <p>KEYNOTE SPEAKER Lt. Gen. David A. Deptula</p>	 <p>KEYNOTE SPEAKER Dr. John Andreas Olsen</p>

LISTEN TO THE STORIES OF LOCALS WHO WERE THERE

Joint Special Operations
Operation Normandy
The Hunt for SCUDs and Battle of Khafji

SPONSORED BY:



The Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce will host **Honoring Our Heros: A salute to Service - 35th Anniversary of Desert Shield/Desert Storm** on Saturday, Feb. 28, 2026, at the Destin-Fort Walton Beach Rigdon Center (FWB Fairgrounds). The Honoring Our Heroes event will begin at 5:00 p.m. and will commemorate the service and sacrifice of those who served during the Gulf War.

The evening will feature **Gen. Charles Albert “Chuck” Horner** as a special guest speaker. Gen. Horner played a central role during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm, leading coalition air operations that helped define modern military airpower.

Lt. Gen. Marshall B. “Brad” Webb will serve as master of ceremonies. Keynote speakers include **Lt. Gen. David A. Deptula**, a principal architect of modern air campaigns, and **Dr. John Andreas Olsen**, an internationally recognized military historian and strategist. In addition to distinguished national leaders, the event will highlight local veterans’ stories, offering firsthand

perspectives on pivotal moments in history, including Task Force Normandy, the hunt for SCUD missiles, the Battle of Khafji, and other joint operations.

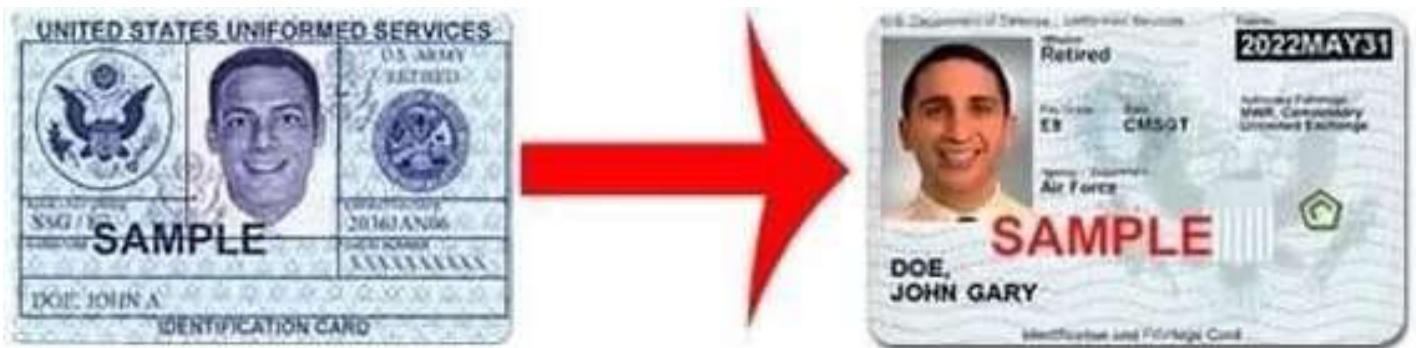
“For the past 15 years, our Chamber has been proud to honor local military heroes while helping our community better understand the history behind their service,” said *Ted Corcoran, CEO of the Greater Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce*. “The Desert Storm commemoration is especially meaningful to me. Many Chamber members served during this time, and they are people I now know personally and consider true heroes. This event will honor their service while continuing to educate our community about our nation’s role in global conflicts.” For additional questions, please contact the Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce at (850) 244-8191.

Call to Action 25-01

Replace Your Military ID Card

If you haven't changed your and your spouse's military ID to the new Next Generation Uniformed Services Identification (USID) card, you need to do so before December 31, 2025. If you miss this deadline, the Security Forces will confiscate your military ID upon trying to enter the base.

How do you know if you have the correct military ID card? The new Next Generation Uniformed Services Identification (USID) card is white. The soon to be outdated cards are red, brown, green, blue, and tan in color. It doesn't matter if your current military ID card says INDEF or has an expiration date beyond December 31, 2025. If your military ID card is not the new white ID card, it will be confiscated. See below.



Both you and your spouse can get your new Next Generation Uniformed Services Identification (USID) card by visiting the Eglin Military Personnel Section, Building 210 (310 Van Matre Avenue). Appointments are not required. Search military ID cards Eglin AFB online for instructions on how to sign into the queue before arriving, thereby shortening your wait time.

For more specifics on this matter, please see the article, *Replace Your ID Card* in the August *Military Officer* magazine, page 28.

Kudos to NWFMOA Board Member, Kevin Kirby for bringing this to our attention.

Update: The December 31, 2025 implementation date mentioned in the article has been extended. A new implementation date for replacement of "old" military ID cards has not been released. Recommend you still replace your "old" military ID Card with the new one at your earliest convenience).

H2S,

Fran Hendricks, Brig Gen, USAF Retired
54th President, NWFMOA

Chaplain's Corner

By: Chaplain Thomas Azar



The Dog Mirror

“Do not judge others, and you will not be judged. For you will be treated as you treat others. How can you think of saying to your friend, let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye, when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye” Matthew 7:1-5.

Have you ever been a proud dog owner? Dogs respond and reflect our behavior like a weathervane. Virtuous Christian men and women want to grow in God's righteousness, and walk the 'King's Road'. They want to improve, to be a better version of their present moral and spiritual state of being. No one wants to remain a 'kindergarten christian.' We want to pursue and graduate to higher levels of faith and sacrificial service. One avenue we all need to pursue is to overcome what holds us back—the seven deadly sins.

Therefore, I'm offering a practical prescription to those of us who wear 'dog tags' - “Man's best friend”. It is really a simple and worry free way to objectively see oneself in the mirror. Dogs can be our helper so one can see and change oneself. Dogs can give a person sight, sniff out cancer and even warn individuals when a medical emergency is forthcoming. They are a valued partner in military and law enforcement. Dogs give us so much in the exterior world, I believe they can do the same for our interior world. We need to use them as part of our tool box for one's spiritual walk.

What am I barking at? Since I often wear a 'dog collar' let me say that no one likes to look deep into the soul to self-reflect and repent, so engaging your dog's assistance is an additional way to become self aware and to have a moral framework to look within and without.

Rarely do we hear others disclose their spiritual battles publicly. Most are too proud because they fear mockery and gossip. No one wants to be thought less of in a world that pushes pompous self-image, be king of the mountain, and get all you can.

So let me shine a private light on these sins, (I will try not to be “dog-matic”). It's difficult to see clearly one's hidden motivation and behavior when one is proud, angry, lustful, envious, greedy, gluttonous and slothful.

Our two dogs, Sarah Lee and Hazel Mae, help me see these vices. They live and move within our family. Just as parents can see themselves in their children, we can see ourselves in our dogs if they take the time to objectively reflect.

Let's start with pride and obedience. How many times have we held our dog on a leash or at ease next to our feet and gave it a direct command not to move. It often does the opposite. That's what happened with Adam and Eve. God told them directly not to eat the fruit, but they disobeyed and ran for the fruit. I'm sure you had this experience many times, often resulting in embarrassment when your dog disobeys you at home and in public.

Obedience school doesn't always guarantee 100% change, but if there were dogs in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve might have chosen differently. They could have been “the dog in the manger” and changed history, and saving us a lot of suffering and separation.

Furthermore, when your dog walks in the room, head and tail high, doesn't she feel like she is the queen of the house. That's pride. They forget who is the alpha dog. Same with Adam, Eve and us—we deceive ourselves and think we are equal or better than our Creator God. Many today arrogantly strive for that same power and position. The world is replete with such leaders in all areas of life. They strike me as being very “doggy.”

Did you ever notice when your dog wants another pet's bone, toy or treat- that's envy. Why can't they be content with what gift you gave them? The tenth commandment tells us not to covet. Society pushes material gain. We humans are not much better, wanting what others have and flaunting it. Envy causes one to take another's money, property or spouse. Nations go to war to exact them. We engage in “dog fights” to prove ourself. We are just like our dog, but if we are humble, we can see and change.

Have you ever noticed when your canine family member looks at a dog of the opposite gender? It sniffs and jumps all over the place. We lust over other bodies, books, movies etc. We crave the immoral sites on the internet and sinfully pursue our neighbor's possessions. Individuals end up in “the dog house” and lose everything!

Then there is greed. Have you ever noticed how your dog hides their bone in the backyard or basement burying it so even their owners can't find it? We have our ‘hush’ monies and jewelry scattered in safety deposit boxes. We crave more to the point of major debt. We ruin our reputation and credit to fill our greedy desires and addictions. We end up doing “the dog paddle” to avoid drowning financially and socially.

We have all experienced our dog sleeping all day. They refuse to move off their comfortable bed or couch. We even call it “dog days.” That is sloth. Christians are called upon to overcome their fleshy nature and seek renewal from the Holy Spirit so we can be about our Father's business.

Sadly our dogs growl and bark at our innocent neighbor or passer-by. The dog gets mad and possessive to the point of being angry. Sometimes it even bites the hand of a family member that feeds her. As many of you know, the cross-shaped petals of “the dogwood tree” represents purity, harmony and peace — nature's reminder that life is sacred and one should not growl.

Of course we can't forget gluttony. Our dogs broke into the pantry and ate the whole bag of food. They never think of the homeless pets in shelters, hungry, beaten and abandoned. We don't expect them to, but we should be more cognizant of those less fortunate. There are many innocent people caught up in natural disasters and war.

If you take time to study your best friend closer, (best friends want the best for you), you may be getting to see how these seven deadly sins exist in your life. We who keep our dogs like family have a better chance to reflect and change. They are part of God's creation for our purposes. When we pray and act humbly, the Trinity can intercede for our growth.

Yes I believe “you can teach us old dogs new tricks.”

It becomes a team effort; our dog is an extension and reflection of its master. However, you and I have much more capability given to us by God's grace so we need to work on those sinful tendencies and develop those heavenly virtues .

Who is your top dog? Ours is God, so we listen to and obey His commands and example. History is rich with great men and women of faith. Study their biographies. Make notes in your journal. “Dog ear” those pages. Westminster Kennel club won't help much.

Life can be ‘ruff’, but ‘God’ spelled backwards is still ‘Dog’ and he can show us how to live the opposite to today’s self-absorbed culture. Our canine companions become a framework to see and live by. When they do wrong and we scold them, the next day they give us unlimited licks of forgiveness. (I don’t think cats are as forgiving; they seem to hold grudges longer, lol).

We owe our pets so much for all the undeserved love and endless protection they give us, especially the ability to change. Loyalty and love are a great combo to emulate. We ‘prodigal’ dogs have a Master who welcomes us with open arms.

Now who is the ‘best friend’? The Trinity blesses us with these heavenly hounds in the name of Love. (And that is church “dog-ma”).

Public Record

In Memoriam

None

New Members

None



NWFMOA Website

Our new website is fully operational. 😊 The old website is linked to the new one, so if you type in the old address of <http://nwfmoa.org> you should be sent to the new website. The official website is <https://nwfmoa.flmoaa.org>. Let’s hear it for Webmasters Liz Plauche and Fred Westfall.





Donors for the 67th Anniversary Banner



Click [HERE](#) to see the banner on our webpage

Corporate and Organizational Donors

Emerald Coast MAC
Cornerstone Church
FWB First Methodist Church
Eglin Federal Credit Union
Pros Heating and Air
Destin Chamber of Commerce
Greater FWB Chamber
American Legion Post 235
Crestview Rotary
RNR Property Solutions
Sceptre Security
American Legion Post 296

Tactical Assessment Consultants
Sunest Vettes of NWFL
Faith Independent Baptist Church
Fisher & Fisher Attorneys at Law
A Perfect Balance
Harvey F. Eckoff VFW Post 7674
Zaxby's Chicken
Playground Corvette Club
Air & Space Force Association
Cutoff Barber Shop
United Way of the Emerald Coast
VFW Post 7674 Auxiliary

Click [HERE](#) to see the donor page on our website

Individual Donors

David Whalen
Les Matheson
Parker Destin
Doug and Judy Stauffer

Jeff and Judy Watson
Fred and Jan Westfall
Fran and Connie Hendricks

Thank You All

Community Outreach

January Luncheon - Area First Sergeants and NWFMOA Induction of 2026 Officers and Board

In addition to the Induction of Officers and Board, we invited area First Sergeants to join us and share their experiences in distributing Commissary Gift Cards to E-4 and below Families In Need. This year we gave \$15,000 worth of Gift Cards to First Sergeants at Duke Field, Camp Bull Simons, Eglin, and Hurlburt plus the Commando Airmen and Family Support Group at Hurlburt.



First Sergeants and representatives expressed their appreciation to the NWFMOA and presented moving testimonials to both to the entire group and in side conversations.



Maj Gen Richard Comer, USAF (Ret), addressed the group and administered the Oath of Office to the 2026 NWFMOA Officers and Board. Click photo for more pictures.

Honoring NWFMOA Members and Spouses Deceased in 2025

Also during the January luncheon, we took time to honor our members and spouses who passed during 2025:

Jessie “Jake” Bush, Col, USAF (Ret)

Lawrence P Bush, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)

Doris Day, Spouse of Bud Day, Brig Gen, USAF (Ret)

Robert L Grete, Lt Col, USAF (Ret)

Donald L Marks, Maj Gen, USAF (Ret)

James B Randels, Col, USAF (Ret)



NWFMOA 1st Vice President, Jeff Watson and President Fran Hendricks during the reading of the names



2nd Vice President , Bob Allen, rings the bell honoring each of the deceased members and spouses



Chaplain Tom Azar provides an invocation honoring the 2025 deceased members and spouses

Crestview Rotary Makes Contribution

NWFMOA President Fran Hendricks briefed the Crestview Rotary on Dec 10, 2025 on NWFMOA. They, in turn, made a donation to the PolioPlus Fund of the Rotary Foundation on his behalf and also made a sizable donation to our Commissary Gift Card Program.



President Fran Hendricks presents the NWFMOA Commemorative Coin to the Crestview Rotary Club



Crestview Rotary Club President, Phillip Berezo Jr, presents Fran with a certificate of donation to the PolioPlus Fund of the Rotary Foundation

Calling all B-52 Aircrew, Maintainers and Enthusiasts

NWFMOA Board Of Directors member, Karl Eschmann, is the historian for the B-52 Stratofortress Association. You might remember that he authored “*Linebacker: The Untold Story of the Air Raids Over North Vietnam*” which was published by Random House Ivey Books in 1989. He submitted this article to inform those Chapter members who were also associated with the “Bomber” about this great association.



Tinker AFB OK Association Rendezvous, 2024

Over the past sixty years, tens of thousands of pilots, navigators, EWOs, and gunners have pulled alert with or flown the World’s Greatest Warplane. Together their stories tell its *raison d’être*, its reason for being.

A few years ago it was said that the last B-52 crewmember had not yet been born. Today that may or may not be true, but it’s probably true that that last crewmember is still in grammar school.

You don’t have to have had direct contact with the BUF to appreciate its contribution to history.

There are aviation historians, students of the Cold War, Vietnam, Desert Storm, the Balkan Wars of the ‘90s, and the current Middle Eastern wars who recognize and want to preserve the history of America’s Big Stick.

And, of course, they’re enthusiasts who just recognize greatness when they see it and want to be part of its preservation.

The People Behind the B-52

The Association brings together all those who have been or are associated with the BUF—designers and builders, aircrew, maintainers, enthusiasts — to exchange memories. We try to help old buddies find each other -- anything it takes to keep alive the history of the weapon known in its early days as “America’s Long Rifle.”

Association Purpose

The purpose of the B-52 Stratofortress Association is to document and perpetuate the history of the B-52 Stratofortress aircraft. Activities to this end shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- a. The accumulation, exchange, and distribution of historical information on the B- 52.
- b. Collection of historical materials relating to the design, development, and operation of the B-52. These materials are currently archived at the Castle Air Museum in Atwater, California.
- c. Publication of a newsletter to inform the active membership of the Associations’ activities and to carry out the first activity.
- d. Organize periodic reunions of those who designed, manufactured, maintained, and operated the B-52, as well as anyone with an historical interest in the aircraft
- e. Be a source of commemorative items highlighting the B-52 and its service.
- f. Facilitate renewed and continued fellowship among those who share association with the B-52 Stratofortress

Reunion 2026

Every two years, there is a Rendezvous Reunion of all the members for several days. Last year it was at Tinker AFB OK at the Air Logistics Center where B-52s are modified and upgraded, and also the Boeing B-52J Integration Lab where they are designing the 7-8 mods, including replacing the engines on the jet.

Next year, from 10-13 September 2026, the reunion will be in Seattle Washington. The Tours will include Boeing Facilities, The Museum of Flight, and Pike Place Market. If you join the association, be sure to sign up for the Rendezvous.

If you have any interest in joining the B-52 Association, simply go to the website <https://stratofortress.org> and go to the membership form. It is \$20 for individuals, or \$30 for you and your spouse jointly.

If you have any questions regarding the Association, please call your local area member, Karl Eschmann, at 850-621-7482, or email: phanfix@cox.net.



Scholarship Fund

by Dave Parisot



Scholarship Applications due by March 1st; Annual Scholarship Board meeting on Jan. 22nd; FWB High School JROTC to host drill competition on March 7th.

Looking forward to an exciting year in 2026 for our Scholarship Program. We will be offering eight to ten scholarships for local JROTC cadets along with at least six scholarships for local ROTC cadets in their junior or senior of college. In mid-December I contacted our previous scholarship awardees who will be entering their junior or senior year of college in the fall of 2026 to see if they are still enrolled in ROTC and am happy to report that we should have many applications for our \$4,000 scholarships available for junior and senior year ROTC cadets. All scholarship applications are due by March 1st. 2026 should be our best year ever for scholarships.

The primary objective of the NWFMOA Scholarship Program is to have these cadets get commissioned in any of the military services. In the past four years, 13 of our previous scholarship awardees have been commissioned as second lieutenants or ensigns in either the active or reserve forces. We have one senior ROTC cadet who will be commissioned in May 2026.

On January 22nd we will hold our annual scholarship Fund Board of Directors meeting to set the number of JROTC and ROTC scholarships to be awarded in May 2026. I am pleased to announce the addition of Lt Col **Jeff Fanto**, USAF, Ret, as a member of the Board.

In 2022 we established our Education Support Grant (ESG) program in which we provide grants to our local JROTC units funding for cadet educational programs that are not funded by either the host military service or by the County School District. On Saturday, March 7, 2026, the NWFMOA Scholarship Fund will be the primary sponsor of the drill competition hosted by the Fort Walton Beach AF JROTC at Hurlburt Field. To date, seven area JROTC units will be competing for placements and awards at this event. Our sponsorship will pay for the lunch meal and trophies. This is the third year we have sponsored this drill competition.

Donations to the Scholarship Fund since my last article were made by Dennis Phillips, Jeff Watson, and Dave Parisot. Jeff's and Dave's donations were made in memory of Lt. Col. Larry Bush, a long-time Chapter member and very generous donor to the Scholarship Fund who passed away in December 2025. We sincerely thank you for your generous donations to help fund scholarships for local JROTC and ROTC cadets.

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

Endowed Scholarships: Lt Col **Jim and Mrs Una Heavener Memorial Scholarship** (D) (via their estate, effective 2018); **Dave Parisot** in memory of his wife, **Chong Cha (Kim) Parisot** (effective

2017); **Dr (Lt Col, USAF, Ret.) Howard and Mrs. Irene Fisher Scholarship** (effective 2022); **Dr. (Lt. Col., USAF, Ret.) Fred and Mrs. Jan Westfall Scholarship** (effective 2023); **Col. (USAF, Ret.) Karl and Mrs. Charlotte Eschmann Scholarship** (effective 2024); **Lt.Col. (USAF, Ret.) Larry Bush** in memory of **Mrs. Joan Bush** (effective 2025); and, **Florida Power and Light** (effective 2025).

Gold Century Club: **Bill Ryan** (Feb 2016); **Ruth Cullen, (D)** (Oct 2016); **Dave Parisot** (Feb 2017); **Janet Taylor** (Mar 2017); **Chris Beam** (Mar 2017); **Bob Garcia (D)** (July 2017); **Rod Gerdes** (Nov 2017); **Larry Bush** (Nov 2017); **Dr. Howard & Irene Fisher** (Nov 2017); **Eileen Arpke (D)** (Feb 2018); **Fred & Jan Westfall** (Apr 2018); **Clyde Locke (D)** (Apr 2018); WWII, Korea, and Vietnam Veteran **Sam Lombardo (D)** (July 2018); **Dennis Phillips** (Aug 2018); **Karl & Charlotte Eschmann** (Oct 2018); **Carol Baker** (Jan 2019); **Ann Adelsperger** (Feb 2019); **Don Litke** (Aug 2019); **Fred Boyer (D)** (Aug 2019). **Dr. Keith & Elizabeth Kulow** (Nov 2019); **Al Bills** (Nov. 2019); **Kay Dent** (Nov. 2019); **Dr. Roger Riegenbach** (Dec 2019); **Robert “Pete” Peterzen** (Dec 2019); **Nick Marotta** (Oct 2020); **Kathy & Jesse Bush** (Dec 2020); **Patt & Caroline Maney** (Dec 2020); **Kevin Kirby** (Apr 2021); **Scott & Janet Berry** (May 2021); **Douglas Hardin (D)** (Sept 2021); **Patrick & Mosla Boab** (Dec. 2021); **Bob Allen** (Feb 2022); **Bobbi Hanson Garcia** (Mar 2022); **Joy Houck** (Mar 2022); **George Colton** (May 2022); **Bob Secrest** (May 2022); **Brig. Gen Fran & Mrs Connie Hendricks** (Oct 2022); **Les Matheson** (Feb 2023); **Dan Brown** (April 2023); **Tess Bass** (August 2023); **Bob Gramm** (Dec 2023); **Larry Tashlik** (Dec 2023); **Jean Dutton (D)** (Oct 2024) and **Jeff Watson** (Oct 2024); **Dick Solt** (Mar 2025); **Michael Barnes** (Apr 2025); [Note: 46 total members]

BG Frank Glunn Century Club: (past 12 months) (R=Renewal): January 2025: **Dr. Keith and Elizabeth Kulow (R)**; **Janet Taylor (R)** (in honor of Bill Ryan).and, **Dave Parisot (R)**(in memory of Lydia O’Connor). February 2025: **Rod Gerdes (R)**; **Al Bills (R)**, and **Dave Parisot (R)** (in memory of Doris Day). March 2025: **Dick Solt (R)**; **Brig Gen Fran & Mrs Connie Hendricks (R)**; **Chris Beam (R)**. April 2025: **Dennis Phillips (R)**; **Michael Barnes**; and **Dave Parisot (R)** (In memory of Angela Colton); May 2025: **Michael Barnes (R)**; **Kevin Kirby (R)**; **Bob Gramm (R)**; **Patrick and Mosla Boab (R)**; **Dr. Howard and Mrs. Irene Fisher (R)**; June 2025: **Dave Parisot (R)** (In memory of Col. Jake Bush); July 2025: **George Colton (R)** (In memory of Angela Colton). November 2025: **Pete Peterzen (R)**; **Karl and Charlotte Eschmann (R)**; **Fred and Janet Westfall (R)**; **Tess Bass (R)**; **Dave Parisot** (In memory of Chong Parisot) (R); December 2025: **Dr. Keith and Elizabeth Kulow (R)**; **Les Matheson (R)**; **Bob Gramm (R)**; and **Chris Beam (R)**; January 2026: **Jeff Watson (R)** (In memory of Larry Bush); **Dennis Phillips (R)**; and **Dave Parisot (R)** (In memory of Larry Bush).

2025/2026 Business Platinum Donors: (\$1,000+): Apr. 2025: **Florida Power & Light (R)**; **Eglin Federal Credit Union (R)**; Dec., 2025: **Bass, Byrd, Jones & Associates at Merrill Lynch of FWB (R)**.

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OUR MISSION

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

Legislative Corner



Legislative Corner...Identifying Our Nation's Future Air Force Leaders

Congressional appointments to U.S. Service Academies are competitive nominations from Representatives, Senators, or the Vice President. Students in their junior year of high school notify their respective Representative and make their desire to attend a Service Academy known. In the case of Congressman Jimmy Patronis, thirty local students made their desire known that they desired a nomination from him to the USAF Academy. (The Service Academies make the final determination on selection to attend).

In early December, Congressman Patronis' office reached out to me and asked if I would be willing to sit on a board and interview each candidate. I agreed to do this, as I saw it as an important step in helping to identify our nation's future Air Force leaders. Based on my 33 years in uniform and my time as a university president, I felt I was up to the task.

I joined two other individuals as interviewers and for over 10 straight hours, we interviewed the 25 students who made their scheduled interview. Each student was exceptionally qualified academically. Some were equally exceptional athletes, and all were proven leaders in their community. Beyond questions of why the Air Force Academy and why do you want to be an Air Force officer, I found myself delving deeper into the sacrifices we ask of all that don the uniform in defense of our nation. While the Academy is an outstanding institution of higher learning and scores well on the US News and World Report's annual ranking of colleges and universities, its primary reason for being is to develop Air Force leaders. Men and women who, as officers, will lead our Air Force well into the future. Who will meet the challenges that await. Who aren't just looking for a free ride (education).

I appreciated the opportunity to be part of this important first step and to offer my recommendations to the Congressman regarding nominations he should make. From all indications, our nation is in good hands as each of these individuals will make important contributions, whether it be in uniform or not.

H2S (Here to Serve),

Brig Gen Fran Hendricks, USAF Retired
54th President, NWFMOA



Surviving Spouse Corner

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

[Click here for Surviving Spouse Information](#)



Time To Pay Your Dues

It is time to pay your 2026 dues. And, if you haven't done so already, it is way past time to pay your 2025 dues. Please make a check for the amount payable for the next year or beyond.

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

EDITORIAL POLICY

The Defender is a monthly publication of the Northwest Florida Military Officers Association. The purpose of this publication is to communicate with, inform, and educate chapter members. The national MOAA, this local chapter, and this publication are totally nonpartisan.

NWFMOA Shirt Purchase Options



The advertisement features a teal banner with three circular icons: a spool of thread for 'EMBROIDERY', a screen for 'SCREEN PRINTING', and a uniform for 'UNIFORMS'. Below the banner is the 'DDB' logo with the text 'Daisy Day Brands' and 'EMBROIDERY • SCREEN PRINTING • UNIFORMS'. To the right, the address '310 Eglin Parkway, Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32547' and phone number '850-664-2113' are listed. At the bottom, the slogan 'Wear your shirt proudly.' is written in red.

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Here is another option...

Looking for a NWFMOA Chapter shirt. In addition to ordering a shirt, you can also buy your own polo shirt (short or long sleeve) and take it to [American Athletic Uniforms, Inc](#) ([90 Eastview Ave. Valparaiso, FL](#)) to have it embroidered with our patch and your name. Cost of embroidery (Patch + Name) is \$15.



Never Stop Serving



The Council Communiqué

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

Today's Date _____

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This application is for:

Life Member New Member Renewal Surviving Spouse Auxiliary Associate

Make Checks payable to NWFMOA or to Northwest Florida Military Officers Assn. Inc. Check here if you do not want your name, phone number, or email address listed in the printed chapter directories. Membership includes a subscription to *The Defender* for the dues period. We are a charter member of MOAA and recommend that our members belong to the national organization. Our association is also a member of the Florida Council of Chapters, itself an affiliate of MOAA.

Membership Application/ Renewal

New Members joining this year receive membership through December 31 next year for \$25.00

Membership Renewal
1 yr--\$25.00, 2 yr--\$48.00, 3 yr--\$65.00

Life Membership Dues

Age	Dues	Age	Dues
101+	Free	71-75	240.00
96-100	50.00	66-70	275.00
91-95	75.00	61-65	295.00
86-90	110.00	56-60	335.00
81-85	150.00	51-55	360.00
76-80	195.00	<50	395.00

Effective in 2026, Surviving Spouses receive a FREE Life Membership.

Join Us Today



Important Things To Remember

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Update Your Contact Information

Is Your Personal Information Up to Date?

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

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

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



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