THE DEFENDER

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

Vol. 31 No 6 | *Serving All Branches of The Uniformed Services* | *June 2025*

Lunch Meeting & Discussion

When: Thursday **June 5th**
Time: Gathering 1130, Lunch 1200, Program to follow
Place: Fort Walton Yacht Club
180 Ferry Road, NE, FWB
Program: Guest Speaker – Elvira Chiccarelli (LtCol, Ret)

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 https://nwfmoa.flmoaa.org and select the link "Click here to make reservations", or email nwfreservations@gmail.com, or call Fred Westfall at 850-609-8075 to make a reservation.

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One Of Our Own

Lt Col (Dr) Elvira Chiccarelli

Lt Col (Dr) Elvira Chiccarelli retired from the Air Force active and reserve duty. She deployed several times on humanitarian missions, resulting in 1989 Air Force Reserve Dentist Award.

Elvira was honored by the induction to the 2022 Okaloosa County's Women's Hall of Fame and recently gave a presentation (part of which is shown in the picture above) on Women In The Military at the Honoring Our Heroes event on April 29, 2025. She also served as President of the NWFMOA and our ***Defender*** editor.

Elvira has a long history of service to Okaloosa County, helping to start a county dental clinic with used dental chairs from Eglin Air Force Base. She provided dental care there for local residents as well as Vietnamese and Polish refugees. She also had a private office in the area for some 32 years.

Please join us for our **June 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 May 31, 2025.**

From the President's Pen
By Fran Hendricks

Officers & Directors

PRESIDENT: Fran Hendricks: fcashendricks@msn.com
1st VICE PRESIDENT: Jeff Watson: jeffwatson2011@gmail.com
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Kevin Kirby: shotgun0603@yahoo.com
Dick Solt: richdulce@aol.com

DEFENDER EDITOR
Bob Gramm: nwf.defender@gmail.com

WEBMASTER

Fred Westfall: nwfmoa@gmail.com

NWFMOA Earns Three 5-Star Ratings (Chapter, Newsletter, Website)

In 2024, NWFMOA celebrated its 65th year serving the local community. We built on the success of numerous programs we have conducted for years. By partnering with Longwood Elementary School and the Air Force Enlisted Village for Valentines for Veterans, and collaborating with First Sergeants from Eglin, Hurlburt Field, Camp Bull Simons, and Duke Field for our Commissary Gift Card initiative, we positively impacted Veterans, Active-Duty personnel, and their families. Our Scholarship Program awarded 10 scholarships totaling $31,500 to deserving JROTC and ROTC cadets. In September, we hosted a no-cost Community Reception in celebration of our 65th Anniversary. Gen. Kelly, President and CEO of MOAA, his lovely wife, and COL Steve Bond, President, Florida Council of Chapters joined us as we thanked the community for allowing the NWFMOA to serve those presently serving, those who have served, and those who have expressed a desire to serve for the past 65 years.

In recognition of our efforts and impact in 2024, MOAA National awarded the NWFMOA Chapter its highest Chapter Award—5 Stars. This marks the 10th 5-Star Award the Chapter has received since 2014. I commend the 2024 NWFMOA Board for their leadership and the Chapter for its commitment and follow through on all we set out to accomplish.

We also earned 5 Star awards for both our monthly electronic newsletter (*The Defender*) and our website. This marked the 8th consecutive year we have achieved MOAA National's highest designation for both graded areas. The credit for this unprecedented achievement goes to Fred Westfall, our Webmaster and then Editor of *The Defender*.

Not resting on our laurels, the Chapter and 2025 NWFMOA Board is once again building on our prior years' commitment to service and success. We have already hosted Valentines for Veterans, participated in numerous Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Celebrations, and just conducted our most successful NWFMOA Scholarship program to date—we awarded 9 scholarships totaling $55,000. The second half of 2025 looks equally exciting and impactful. We have dynamic speakers scheduled (monthly), Officers Call (July and October), Military Family Appreciation Day (November), Commissary Gift Card Program (November – December), and Wreaths Across America (December). 2025 is shaping up to be another great year of *Comradery with a Purpose*.

Here to Serve,

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

1959 - 2025

Thank You

for helping us celebrate over 66 years of Service to our Community.

Watch for a new banner ad on our website in 2025.

Click HERE now to donate and get your name on the 2025 banner.

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.

There was no drawing last month so this month we will have two.

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

Time To Pay Your Dues

It is time to pay your 2025 dues. And, if you haven't done so already, it is way past time to pay your 2024 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**.

Chaplain's Corner

By: Chaplain Thomas Azar

Easter Reflections

My grandparents came to this country right before World War I. They began their journey at the US consulate and met with a staff member. To prepare for this major shift, they were given a booklet to read, paperwork to fill out and eventually several interviews. They did it the right way and arrived in Boston and opened a business. Their wise choice produced a family line of doctors, lawyers, university professors, departmental chairman, businessmen, to name a few.

When I was ready to go to college, I requested a catalog, read about the history of the school, the various departments and a myriad of subjects and well-respected academic professors. I was required to meet with a counselor to review my initial plan of study and major/minor subjects. I paid the required fees and bought lots of textbooks. We met regularly to re-evaluate my grades and course recommendations for the optimal approach.

When we wanted to buy a house, we went to the real estate office, and they gave us several booklets about their company, neighborhood schools, businesses and additional relevant demographics. We filled out paperwork, wrote lots of checks, met with lawyers, bankers, inspectors and neighborhood leadership. We followed the state's requirements.

When the Lord spoke to me about being a military chaplain, I was interviewed by 3 colonels. Yes, they wanted paperwork, to hear what my goals were and what vision and contributions I could contribute to the core and my country. One asked for my faith testimony.

Every base I served at, young man and woman who wanted to be married had to review the HC booklet if they desired a God-centered chapel wedding. It laid out the purpose of marriage; there was a 8 page questionnaire they were required to fill out.

After the initial interview, there was a pre-wedding course that they took for several months, and then it was up to the discretion of the chaplain whether they would officiate their union in the base chapel.

We were serious about marriage, and we knew the ramifications of those who were ill-prepared. (The majority of our counseling cases revealed the lack of preparation.) Eventually, they were taught God's purpose and given counseling tools that would hopefully provide for a successful and meaningful relationship for the spouses and their children. They had faith, knowledge and a mentor to guide their 'ships' before they left the harbor. Many believe the model of marriage as a horizontal reflection of our vertical relationship with God.

Now, if we make a paradigm shift from the worldly to the spiritual, and you want to have a long, extended, peaceful mind-frame, as we journey through this life into the next, it's important to learn about the author who created this vast universe. God formed us in our mother's womb, ordained our purpose, and offers us new life. The Bible provides guidance and examples for our daily living.

In order, to cross this final border into His 'Promised Land', one has to read the book, meet with local representatives-ministers and priests to learn about membership in the family of God.

We do it for all these earthly institutions that require a process, an interview, and a responsible commitment on our part.

However, many avoid this parallel approach. They don't take seriously their finitude, the afterlife or the Eternal Spirit.

Yes, there's a wall between earth and heaven, and God would love all of us to come live there. "He wants none to perish." It's as fluid as the above scenarios.

Maybe you live in a gated community; heaven is, definitely, a gated community!

What is true and legal for foreigners who want to become American citizens is true for those who want to be heavenly citizens. You cannot enter heaven illegally. St Luke's story of Lazarus and the Rich man clearly demonstrates who goes to heaven and who goes to hell.

Let's not play with fire. Remember we humans have a 100% mortality rate- that is no one gets out of this world alive. Remember our soul is eternal and lives on, some will retire in one of two locations. The choice is ours; not to choose, is making the 'worst' choice!

You just have to read the book and have an interview with his Son and have all your thoughts and motivations of the heart in the right place.

Officers Call

Thursday, May 29

At Doc's Oyster Bar 5-6:30 PM

PUBLIC RECORD

In Memoriam

None 😊

New Members

None

Got a Chapter question?
Change in personal info?
Comment?
Don't know who to ask?
Email: info@nwfmoa.org
We'll get an answer for you.

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.

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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.

1959
2025
66
YEARS
MOAA

Donors for the 66th Anniversary Banner

Thank You All

Monetary or In-Kind Donations
Organizational Donors

Knights of Columbus
(Father Howard J. Lesch Assembly)
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Emerald Bay Golf Club
VFW Harvey F. Eckoff Post 7674
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Steve Bond
Pat and Mary Kluever
Major General Don Litke
Larry Bush
John and JoAnne Wambaugh
Fred and Jan Westfall
Fran and Connie Hendricks

Never Stop Serving

Community Outreach

MOAA Foundation Awards NWFMOA Grant

The NWFMOA was recently notified it was approved to receive a $3,250 MOAA Foundation grant for its Annual Commissary Gift Card Program that assists Junior Enlisted Families in need. This marks the sixth consecutive year we have received a grant for this community outreach imitative.

Last year, we were awarded a $3,000 MOAA Foundation grant and we raised an additional $7,000 for a total of $10,000 which allowed us to directly impact 400 families during the Holidays with $25 Commissary Gift Cards. Working with First Sergeants from Eglin, Hurlburt, Camp Bull Simons, and Duke Field, the cards were distributed to those deemed in most need. Each gift card was accompanied by a letter from the President, NWFMOA that described the program and listed the donors who made the program possible. Debriefs from the First Sergeant after distribution indicated the great appreciation and emotion of receiving a Commissary Gift Card.

Our goal for 2025 is to initially match the $3,250 grant through community donations and then strive to surpass last year's total. If we can raise a grand total of $11,000, we will be able to support 440 junior enlisted families in need. That is 40 more families than we reached last year.

To reach our goal, we invite you to participate. Donations can be made by check or cash and given to any Chapter Board Member. Donations can also be made with a credit card on our website. We welcome the opportunity to add you to our banner of donors (displayed on our website with a minimum donation of $25). Additionally, we encourage you to participate in our monthly Chapter luncheon 50/50…all proceeds go to support this community outreach program.

Bottomline; every $25 we raise will directly impact one junior enlisted family in need. Thank you!

H2S,

Fran Hendricks, Brig Gen, USAF Retired

54th President, NWFMOA

I respectfully request all NWFMOA Members consider sending us pictures of them traveling, etc.

Above top is Jeff Watson, 1st VP, traveling in Vancouver, British Columbia with his NWFMOA Coin. On the right Elvira and I at the Stories of Service (A Reflection on Vietnam) at the Air Force Armament Museum, May 28th.

Bottom left is Jeff Fanto and I at the Okaloosa County Sheriff's Crime Stoppers event at Uptown State. Both Jeff and I are members of the Sunset Vettes Club and brought our Corvettes out for the show. Bottom right is me wearing Rocky Bleier's four Super Bowl Championship rings at the Honoring Our Heroes banquet.

Fran Hendricks
President, NWFMOA

FWB Chamber Honored Vietnam Veterans

by Dave Parisot

On April 28, 29, and 30, the Fort Walton Beach Chamber of Commerce hosted multiple events to recognize and honor our Vietnam era veterans. On **April 28 and 29** from 5:00PM - 8:00PM at the Air Force armament Museum, programs titles **"Honoring Our Heroes – Stories of Service & Voices of Valor"** was presented. Local Air Force and Army veterans shared their experiences on key Vietnam conflict operations, including: Air commando Operations; Prisoners of War Experiences; Son Tay Rescue Mission; Interdiction of the Ho Chi Minh Trail; Evacuation of Saigon and Phnom Penh; and, Recovery of SS Mayaguez. These events also had book signings and panel discussions featuring Vietnam-themed books by local authors: William Walters (Ghostriders 1968 -1975); Richard Barlow Adams (Song Be); Col. Ed Hubbard (Escape From the Box). These events were complimentary and open to all.

The main event of this 3-day program occurred on Wednesday, **April 30th**, from 5:00PM – 9:00PM at the Fort Walton Beach Fairgrounds, 1319 Lewis Turner Blvd. This event, the **"Heroes Tribute Banquet – Honoring our Vietnam Veterans"** includes a buffet dinner.

Scholarship Fund

by Dave Parisot

Defender Article, Scholarship Fund, for June, 2025, by Dave Parisot

On May 1st we held our biggest event of the year, i.e., our annual Scholarship and Awards Luncheon, at the Fort Walton Yacht Club. (Please see other articles in this issue of the Defender for more on this event.)

Many of our **Gold Century Club** members attended with three being given their member certificates at the luncheon. These were **Jeff Watson**, **Dick Solt** and **Michael Barnes**. Over the years, Gold Century Club members have donated over $150,000 for scholarships and are the primary reason our program has grown from awarding five JROTC scholarships totaling $7,500 in 2015 to awarding nine JROTC and ROTC scholarships this year totaling $55,000. Some of these Gold club members also are scholarship sponsors (see list below).

The second factor in scholarship donations is those made by local businesses. This year, **Florida Power & Light** stepped up their donation from being a Business Platinum Donor to become a Scholarship Sponsor (the Florida Power & Light Scholarship). Our Business Platinum Donors for 2025 are **Bass, Byrd, and Associates** at Merrill Lynch Investments, and **Eglin Federal Credit Union** who stepped up their donation from the Gold Business Donor level. Our Gold Business Donors for 2025 are **Step One Automotive Group** with their multiple auto and truck dealerships in our area, **GSS Gear of Fort Walton Beach**, i.e., Gunfighter Shooting Solutions of FWB, and, new

this year is **Daisy Day Brands**. If you are looking for embroidery services or logo-enhanced clothing, see Daisy Day Brands at 310 Eglin Parkway. A heartfelt "Thank You" to these businesses for their support of scholarship funding.

Since my last article we have had some Chapter members make donations to the Century Club of the Scholarship Fund as follows: **Michael Barnes**, **Kevin Kirby**, **Bob Gramm**, **Patrick and Mosla Boab**, and **Dr. Howard and Mrs. Irene Fisher**. Michael's latest donation brings him to membership in the Gold Century Club. I sincerely thank each of you for your continuing donations to our Scholarship Fund.

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); and, **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 Riggenbach** (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): May 2024: **Bob Secrest** (R); **Al Bills** (R); **Bob Cluskey;** and **Dave Parisot** (R) (In memory of Phil Krajeck); **George Colton** (R); August 2024: **Bob Cluskey** (R); **Scott & Janet Berry** (R); **Chuck Merkel** (R); and **Dave Parisot** (R) (In memory of Eileen Arpke); October 2024: **Dave Parisot** (In memory of Jean Dutton); **Jeff Watson** (R); November 2024: **Kay Dent** (R); **Pete Peterzen** (R); and **Karl and Charlotte Eschmann** (R); **Fred and Jan Westfall** (R); **Bob Gramm** (R); **Howard Fisher** (R); and **Dave Parisot** (R) (In memory of Chong Parisot); 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).

2023/2024 Business Platinum Donors: ($1,000+): Nov.2024: **Bass, Byrd & Associates at Merrill Lynch of FWB** (R); Apr. 2024: **Florida Power & Light** (R); **Eglin Federal Credit Union** (R).

MERRILL A BANK OF AMERICA COMPANY (Bass, Byrd, & Associates) FPL Eglin Federal CREDIT UNION

2024 Business Gold Donors ($500 - $749): April 2025: **GSS Gear FWB, LLC** (R); **Daisy Day Brands**; and, **Step One Automotive Group** (R).

2024 Business Silver Donors ($250 - $499): March 2025: **Lisa Jo Spencer, PA, Attorney** (R).

2024 Business Bronze Donors ($100 - $249): April 2025: **Eye M.D. of Niceville. LLC**

Please support our local businesses that have contributed to our scholarship program.

NWFMOA Scholarship Fund: "HELPING TO BUILD FUTURE MILITARY OFFICERS AND LEADERS"

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To make a contribution to the NWFMOA Scholarship Fund Click Here.

The 2025 NWFMOA Scholarship Fund Award winners.
From the left are Capt. Mike Fisher (on behalf of Cadet Caleb McDevitt), Cadet Layth Atrakchi, Cadet Chriscelle Pardillo, Cadet Heidi Edwards, Cadet Penelope Ashby, Cadet Hope Apfelbach, and Cadet Lincoln Dooley. (Missing from photo is Cadet Bella Gibson.)

Nine local JROTC and ROTC Cadets Earn $55,000 Scholarships from the Northwest Florida Military Officers Association

By Dave Parisot, NWFMOA Scholarship Fund

Eight JROTC cadets and one ROTC cadet from seven local schools were honored on May 1 with a total of $55,000 in prestigious scholarships from the Northwest Florida Military Officers Association (NWFMOA) via their Scholarship Fund.

The scholarships were presented at NWFMOA's annual scholarship luncheon at the Fort Walton Yacht Club, recognizing JROTC cadets from Baker, Choctaw, Crestview, Fort Walton Beach, Navarre and Niceville High Schools, and one local ROTC cadet at the University of West Florida Air Force ROTC unit. Factors in selecting the scholarship awardees were academic excellence, leadership, community service, and service to their schools.

The JROTC scholarship recipients are:

Cadet Bella Gibson of Baker School – Florida Power & Light Scholarship of $6,000.
Cadet Heidi Edwards of Crestview High School – Mrs. Joan Gibson Griffin Bush Scholarship of $6,000.
Cadet Layth Atrakchi of Choctawhatchee High School – Dr. Fred and Mrs. Janet Westfall Scholarship of $6,000.
Cadet Chriscelle Pardillo of Fort Walton Beach High School – Mrs. Eileen Arpke Memorial Scholarship of $6,000.
Cadet Madelyn Burdick of Navarre High School – Dr. Howard and Mrs. Irene Fisher Scholarship of $6,000.

Cadet Hope Apfelbach of Navarre High School – Mrs. Chong (Kim) Parisot Memorial Scholarship of $6,000.
Cadet Caleb McDevitt of Navarre High School – Lt. Col. Jim and Mrs. Una Heavener Memorial Scholarship of $9,000.
Cadet Penelope Ashby of Niceville High School – Col. Karl and Mrs. Charlotte Eschmann Scholarship of $6,000.
Cadet Lincoln Dooley of Niceville High School – First Alternate
Cadet Owen Clift of Niceville High School – second Alternate

NWFMOA's ROTC scholarship of $4,000, the Major General Richard Secord Memorial Scholarship, was awarded to **Cadet Mark Almazan** of the UWF Air Force ROTC. Mark is a 2023 graduate of the Fort Walton Beach JROTC.

In addition to these scholarships the NWFMOA also recognized four local graduating high school seniors who have received appointments to our nation's military academies. Those recognized are:

Max Diehl of Niceville High School – United States Naval Academy.
Jackson Hamman of Niceville High School – United States Air Force Academy.
JROTC Cadet Jack Mashburn of Navarre High School – United States Merchant Marine Academy.
JROTC Cadet Lauren Mavity of Navarre High School – United States Merchant Marine Academy.

The Academy Appointees: Jack Mashburn, Lauren Mavity, Jackson Hamman and Max Diehl.

"These cadets are prime examples of leadership, service, academic excellence and community service that define our local JROTC and ROTC programs," said Brig. Gen. Fran Hendricks, USAF Ret., and president of the NWFMOA chapter. "We are incredibly proud of these local students and thankful to be able to invest in their futures, hopefully leading to a commission in one of our armed forces branches. These young men and women represent the very best of Okaloosa and Santa Rosa

Counties." The JROTC scholarships will be paid to the respective colleges of attendance over a two-year period. Scholarship recipients are required to participate in their college's ROTC program.

The NWFMOA Scholarship Fund provides scholarship funds annually to local JROTC and ROTC cadets who exhibit superior academic achievement, leadership, and community service performance. For more information and photos, go to either atplus.com/scholarship/2025/album/index.html or nwfmoa.flmoaa.org/scholarship-fund/ .

At the luncheon, the Presentation of Colors was performed by the Army JROTC Battalion of Baker School. Cadets in the Color Guard were **Zachary Pena**, **Bella Gibson**, **Gunner Walters**, and **Alex Pena**. Thank you for an outstanding performance. Our soloist for singing the National Anthem was **Cadet LCDR Hope Apfelbach** of the Navarre High School Navy JROTC.

Posting of Colors by Baker School Army JROTC Color Guard.

I also want to recognize our JROTC an ROTC instructors at the luncheon: LTC Mike Ramirez of the Army JROTC at Baker School; **Lt. Col. Eric Lazenby** of the AFROTC at Choctawhatchee High School; **WO3 Jo Durm** and **MSGT Anthony Barbour** of the Crestview Army JROTC; **CMSgt Frank Graziano** and **SMSgt Amber Burke** of the Fort Walton Beach High School AFROTC; **CAPT. Michael Fisher** of the Navy JROTC at Navarre High School; **Lt Col Charles Farmer** of the AFROTC at Niceville High School; and, **Lt Col Ross Clark**, detachment commander and Senior Professor of Military Science at the AFROTC at the University of West Florida. At the end of the luncheon, we recognized **WO3 Jo Durm** who is retiring after 16 years as the chief instructor of the Crestview Army JROTC and **CAPT. Michael Fisher** who is retiring after eight years with the Navarre Navy JROTC.

This year we had one previous scholarship awardee of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University who was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the USAF on May 6th. This is **2Lt. Jeffrey Tavarez** who

received our 'Lt. Col. Jim and Mrs. Una Heavener Scholarship' of $4,000 at Choctawhatchee High School AFJROTC in 2021 and our ROTC scholarship of $4,000 last year. He was unable to attend the luncheon but did send a short video thanking NWFMOA and our scholarship donors for the financial support he received via our scholarship programs.

In closing, I want to thank the NWFMOA Scholarship Board of Directors, i.e., Vice President **Kevin Kirby**; Secretary/Treasurer **George Colton**; **Fred Westfall**; **Karl Eschmann**; and **Charles Farmer**. They establish the scholarship policies and procedures and review and score the scholarship applications in March and April each year. They also set the number of scholarships for each year and their dollar amounts based on our financial assets. The only 'pay' they receive is the satisfaction of being able to assist some of our local JROTC and ROTC cadets with their education and becoming commissioned as officers in our armed forces. A special thanks to **Fred Westfall** for his work in setting up our scholarship scoring sheets, putting together the 'slide show' for the social period at the luncheon, and functioning as the 'staff photographer' at the luncheon and posting the photos on our website.

This concludes my 11th year as President of the NWFMOA Scholarship Fund, our most successful to date in scholarship awards. The next activities for 2025 are sending the scholarship checks to the respective colleges and universities on behalf of each cadet after we receive confirmation of their enrollment as full-time students and enrollment in ROTC. Don't be surprised if I 'kick back' a bit for the rest of the year; have a couple of cruises on the books.

NWFMOA Presented MOAA Medals to Seven JROTC Cadets by Dave Parisot

Each year our NWFMOA Chapter presents the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Medal to a junior year cadet of each of the seven high school JROTC units we support at each school's JROTC Awards Program in front of their peer groups and parents. "The MOAA Medal was crafted to recognize leadership and academic achievements of ROTC and JROTC cadets. It is presented annually to specially-selected junior-year students who are participating in ROTC or JROTC programs throughout our country and who exhibit high potential for military leadership. The eight uniformed services from which MOAA draws its membership are listed on the medal and the ribbon colors are the colors of our nation's flag which our armed forces have rallied around during war and peace."

To be eligible for an award, a candidate must

- be in the next-to-last year of an ROTC or JROTC program;
- be in good academic standing;

- be of high moral character;
- demonstrate a high degree of loyalty to the unit, school, and country; and
- demonstrate exceptional potential for military leadership.

Each of the seven high school JROTC units we support has its own JROTC Awards program at which Chapter members award and pin the MOAA Medal to each school's winner in front of their JROTC peer groups and parents. MOAA JROTC Medal Awardees for 2025 are:

Baker School:	***Cadet Jedah Hammond***
Choctawhatchee H.S.:	***Cadet Lillian Mollenbrink***
Crestview H.S.:	***Cadet Nicci Brown***
Fort Walton Beach H.S.:	***Cadet Michael Cavazos***
Navarre H.S:	***Cadet Aidan Harsha***
Niceville H.S:	***Cadet Alex Andrejcik***
Walton H.S.:	***Cadet Kyla Jesky***

We sincerely congratulate each of this year's MOAA Medal winners.

Legislative Corner

MOAA and NWFMOA drew a significant amount of media coverage and community interaction this year for which we are greatly thankful. Numerous media outlets were at our scholarship luncheon, while others published our news release. The community witnessed firsthand the impact of MOAA and NWFMOA when we attended seven JROTC Awards Ceremonies at local area high schools where we again presented our scholarships to the respective recipients and awarded a MOAA Medal to the outstanding Junior Year Cadet.

Interaction with our elected public officials is important to us and our stated mission, so to further recognize each of our scholarship recipients, we reached out to our newly elected Congressman, Jimmy Patronis, and requested a letter of congratulations for each scholarship recipient. Congressman Patronis readily agreed to make this happen. Equally excited to participate in sharing their congratulations were Florida State Senator Don Gaetz and Representative Patt Maney. We thank our Federal and State elected officials for their support of our scholarship program and MOAA/NWFMOA initiatives.

H2S,

Fran Hendricks, Brig Gen, 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 the Member area.

Click here for Surviving Spouse Information

NWFMOA BYLAWS PROPOSED CHANGE

In March, I announced that the NWFMOA Board is recommending a change to the Chapter bylaws. That proposed change effects the dues we charge Surviving Spouses.

Presently, Surviving Spouses assume the status of their deceased spouse. If the member was a Life Member, then the Surviving Spouse is categorized as a Life Member (no dues are charged). If the member was paying dues annually, then the Surviving Spouse is charged dues at half price.

The proposed bylaws change makes all Surviving Spouses (regardless of their deceased spouse's membership status) a Life Member. As a Life Member, they will not be charged dues.

The Chapter is scheduled to vote on the proposal to amend the bylaws during our monthly meeting/lunch on June 5, 2025.

H2S,

Fran Hendricks, Brig Gen, USAF Retired

54th President, NWFMOA

SUPPORT MOAA

Do what you can to support our national organization. To learn what's going on and to find out what you can do go to: http://www.moaa.org/takeaction/ We all will benefit from your efforts.

NWFMOA Shirt Purchase Options

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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

Florida Council of Chapters
Military Officers Association of America

Click to read the FCoC Communique

Click here to join the Military Officers Association of America Basic membership is FREE

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- Legislative News Updates & Advocacy Efforts
- MOAA Newsletters
- Chapter & Council Membership & Involvement
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11:07A CONTEMPORARY
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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.*

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

Surviving Spouses
Pay half of the above rates

Today's Date _____

Last Name First Name Initial

Spouse Phone

Address City State & Zip Code

Email Address

Rank Service MOAA Member Number

☐Regular ☐Reserve ☐National Guard ☐ Active Duty ☐Retired

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 is 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.
**The spouse of a deceased life member is automatically an auxiliary life member

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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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