



Houston Area
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~ Five Star ★★★★★ Chapter ~

President's Message...

February 2023 Issue

Greetings Friends,

We are halfway through February already and February typically is a pretty slow month, however, this month's newsletter is loaded with a lot of great information that hopefully all of us will find useful. Including a wonderful Korean War story about retired naval aviator Capt Royce Williams, taking on seven Russian Migs and downing four of them. His exploits were classified for years.



Our Chapter lunch meeting this month will be at Rudi's and we will be featuring Houston-based 1st Bn 23rd Marines. 1/23Marines is part of the Marine Corps Reserve 4th Division.

Lastly, please tell your colleagues about us and invite them to join us for lunch at one of our monthly get-togethers.

Rob
Robin P. Ritchie, COL, USA (RET)
President

★★★★★

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February 2023...Chapter Events:

Saturday, February 25th, 2023 @ 11:30am-1:30pm
MOAA HA Chapter Meeting

Rudi Lechner's German Restaurant
2503 S Gessner Rd
Houston, TX 77063
RSVP to Rob Ritchie
Email: rpitchie@earthlink.net

Tuesday, February 28th, 2023 @ noon
MOAA HA BOD Meeting

Rudi Lechner's German Restaurant
2503 S Gessner Rd
Houston, TX 77063

Make Your Voice Heard With MOAA's Legislative Action Center

By: Brenden McMahon
FEBRUARY 08, 2023

MOAA's [Legislative Action Center](#) has surpassed expectations since its launch at the start of 2022, allowing members to send tens of thousands of letters, make phone calls, share personal experiences on military- and veteran-related issues, and much more.

Now, at the start of 2023 and a new Congress, the Legislative Action Center will begin with a clean slate. MOAA members will have a chance to engage on new and ongoing issues impacting the uniformed services and veteran communities.



You may think the center looks sparse in the session's early going – there aren't many calls-to-action to send to your legislations, and the [list of MOAA-supported legislation](#) may be minimal. All of this is normal at the start of a new Congress.

The 118th Congress convened Jan. 3. Each Congress lasts two calendar years, and in that time elected officials will introduce thousands of standalone bills. If a bill isn't signed into law during the Congress in which it was introduced, it's considered "dead" and must be reintroduced and restart the legislative process in a new session.

[RELATED: [Ask the New Congress to Make Progress on Concurrent Receipt](#)]

MOAA staffers will spend the next several months [communicating our legislative priorities](#) on Capitol Hill and engaging with legislators to introduce critical legislation to benefit servicemembers, veterans, their families, and survivors.

What Can MOAA Members Do in the Meantime?

It is critical that MOAA members, and the wider uniformed service and veteran communities, remain engaged as the new session builds steam. You can do this in several ways:

- **Check back with the [Legislative Action Center](#).** MOAA will be adding new calls to action, more MOAA-supported legislation, and other key updates regarding the association's legislative priorities throughout the year.
- **Find your [local MOAA chapter](#).** Hundreds of MOAA affiliates across the nation offer a new way to engage with your community. You can also meet, collaborate, and socialize with fellow servicemembers and military spouses.
- **Check out [online](#) and [printed publications](#).** MOAA's email newsletter and magazine are two key ways members can stay up to date on the association's legislative advocacy.

Legislative Action Center 101

MOAA's Legislative Action Center offers members a plethora of features to make their voices heard on Capitol Hill and take an active role in MOAA's advocacy:

- **Campaigns to contact federal legislators:** MOAA's action center enables virtual advocates to send letters, make phone calls, and share the association's advocacy priorities on [social media](#) as well.
- **MOAA's key advocacy issues:** Want to know what MOAA is doing for the population groups of interest to you, then check out MOAA's [Key Advocacy Issues](#) to learn more about what MOAA is lobbying for on behalf of these key groups.

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Make Your Voice Heard With MOAA's Legislative Action Center ...Continued from previous page...

- **MOAA-supported legislation:** On average, every two-year congressional session introduces over 10,000 individual bills. Use this [dedicated page](#) to find each bill MOAA supports in the current session.
- **Log your interactions with lawmakers:** The new [log an interaction](#) feature enables virtual advocates to provide MOAA with information about their meetings with lawmakers.
- **Look up your elected officials' contact information:** Unsure how to contact your lawmakers, or even who your elected officials are? The [directory feature](#) not only finds their names, but provides detailed contact information for multiple offices, as well as links to their social media profiles.

To make the most of these features, here are some best practices when using the platform:

- **Enable cookies.** MOAA's Legislative Action Center offers members the option to remain signed in on any device where you've already accessed the platform. This means you will not have to reenter your information every time you want to send a call to action to your legislators. However, cookies needs to be enabled on your devices so the center can keep you logged in. If you don't know how to manage cookies, these links will help you get started on [Internet Explorer or Edge](#), [Safari](#), [Chrome](#), and [Firefox](#).
- **Address not recognized?** Sometimes (not often) a member's address won't be recognized in the action center's [registration form](#). Unfortunately, MOAA does not manage that part of the form; it pulls data from Google. If your address isn't recognized, we recommend using a next-door address or another address near you so you can access the platform. Alternatively, you can [add your address to Google](#).
- **MOAA's action center tutorial.** First-time, and seasoned, users can review commonly asked questions about the center. This is a good place to start if you are troubleshooting an issue with the platform.

While MOAA's Legislative Action Center is a powerful tool, its power stems from the dedication of MOAA's members and their continued engagement with lawmakers on the issues impacting the uniformed services and veteran communities. As much as MOAA fights for you, MOAA needs you to fight alongside us, as well; check out the [Legislative Action Center](#) now.



MOAA Chapter Luncheon
February 25, 2023
1130-1330
Guest Speaker
LtCol Russell Fluker
Inspector-Instructor 1st BN 23rd Marines

*(See Page 9 for
LtCol Russell Fluker's Bio)*

Meal options: chicken schnitzel, pork schnitzel or spinach quiche
Meal includes main, sides, dessert and coffee/tea
Cash Bar

Price: \$30.00 per person



Please RSVP to Rob Ritchie
Email: rpritchie@earthlink.net
Phone: 713-818-0408



Venue Address:
2503 S. Gessner
Houston, TX 77063

70 Years After Dogfight Over Korea, MOAA Member Honored With Navy Cross



Capt. Royce Williams, USN (Ret), left, was joined by Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro, right, and other dignitaries for his Navy Cross award ceremony Jan. 20 in San Diego. (Photos by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class T. Logan Keown/Navy)

By: Kipp Hanley
JANUARY 24, 2023

More than 70 years after his daring aerial exploits against seven Soviet MiGs during the Korean War, Capt. Royce Williams, USN (Ret), was awarded the Navy Cross in front of family and friends on Jan. 20 in San Diego.

Secretary of the Navy [Carlos Del Toro](#) presented the Navy's second-highest honor to the 97-year-old MOAA member at a ceremony at the San Diego Air & Space Museum in Balboa Park.

"First, I was surprised [to receive the award]," Williams told MOAA on Jan. 23. "Once I got over that, I felt very

lucky. I know the meaning of the Navy Cross, and I am honored to be a participant. It makes me feel jolly good."

The ceremony included speeches from a number of dignitaries, a video of Williams describing his harrowing experience, and a pre-recorded thank you message from *Top Gun* actor Tom Cruise.

A Secret Showdown

On Nov. 18, 1952, Williams shot down at least four of the seven Soviet MiGs he encountered after his team of F9F-5 Panthers had conducted a raid of the Hoeryong industrial complex near the Korea-Soviet Union border. Because of the secret nature of the mission, Williams' efforts were classified and went largely unrecognized until Russian author Igor Seidov chronicled the dogfight in his 2014 book [Red Devils Over the Yalu](#).

According to Seidov's book, only one of the seven MiGs who surprised then-Lt. Williams and his wingman, then-Lt. j.g. Dave Rowlands, made it back to Russia.

Rowlands pursued one of the MiGs out of formation, leaving Williams to deal with the other six. As the MiGs buzzed by him, Williams was able to shoot down the trail plane before entering a high stakes cat-and-mouse game in blizzard-like conditions. The end result of a 35-minute dogfight: four downed MiGs, one damaged MiG, and Williams' badly beat-up Panther.

After his aerial heroics, Williams made a perfect landing on the USS *Oriskany* (CVA-34) despite having to navigate his bullet-riddled plane through snow squalls and even some friendly fire.

He received a Silver Star and credit for one downed plane and one damaged plane, but he did not speak of that day until Korean War documents were declassified five decades later.

"Your actions that day kept you free, it kept your shipmates free ... indeed it kept all of us free," Del Toro told the San Diego crowd. "I pray your example continues to shine brightly, as an inspiration to all our currently serving men and women in uniform as well as the thousands of those we need to join our ranks today so that we never forget that freedom must always be defended."

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70 Years After Dogfight Over Korea, MOAA Member Honored With Navy Cross

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A Hidden Story

Williams' son Bruce, who was just 4 years old at the time of dad's mission, considers his father a hero no matter how many planes he shot down. He had an inkling of his father's exploits at a young age thanks to a little snooping in the garage when he was in middle school.

In 1962, Bruce discovered a now-defunct men's lifestyle magazine in his family's garage called *True* that talked about a daring aerial exploit during the Korean War.

"I think it was a racy magazine at the time, not meant for my eyes," Bruce said. "But it had a story about the dogfight. I don't recall the details, but I remember being surprised to read about that. I knew that he had been in one, but here was something in a national magazine at the time. But in terms of him against the seven MiGs, I didn't learn about that until much later. ... Hearing about and reading about the minute-by-minute action is like a super video game."

A Higher Honor?

One advocate for Williams' recognition is hopeful the Navy Cross award will serve as the impetus for the aviation legend to receive the Medal of Honor.

Steve Lewandowski, a former Navy lieutenant and American Legion Post 416 commander, worked to secure that award via legislation – an amendment to the House version of the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act would have awarded Williams a Medal of Honor, but it was not included in the final version of the bill.

"I'm confident that we will be able to leverage that official recognition to the Medal of Honor, which he richly deserves," Lewandowski said. "As was stated at the awards ceremony, 'He flew what was perhaps the single greatest combat mission ever.'" ★



From left, Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro, Navy Cross recipient Capt. Royce Williams, and Adm. Sam Paparo, commander of U.S. Pacific Fleet, pose as part of Williams' award ceremony Jan. 20 in San Diego.

Capt. Royce Williams, center, offers a salute during his Navy Cross award ceremony Jan. 20 in San Diego.



Here's How MOAA-Backed Legislation Will Improve Your Health Care

By: Karen Ruedisueli
FEBRUARY 08, 2023

The FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), signed into law Dec. 23, 2022, includes several key provisions addressing MOAA priorities and advancing improvements in the military health care benefit.

In addition to a five-year halt on medical billet cuts, the law includes provisions addressing problems MOAA has worked for several years, including delays in transferring specialty medical care during PCS moves, TRICARE Dental Program network reductions, and barriers to accessing mental health care.



Photo by Joe Raedle/Getty Images

[TAKE ACTION: Help MOAA Fight Cuts to the TRICARE Pharmacy Network]

Here's a bit more about the key provisions addressing these issues:

Improvement of referrals for specialty care under TRICARE Prime during permanent changes of station (Section 703). Requires TRICARE to provide Prime beneficiaries undergoing a PCS with referrals for specialty care at the new duty station before leaving the current location. This will allow families to get on specialty provider waitlists before they move to reduce delays and gaps in care for chronic conditions and prenatal care. This has been a long-standing goal for MOAA and was one of our recommendations at the House Armed Services Military Personnel subcommittee hearing in February 2020.

Improvements to TRICARE dental program (Section 701). Requires DoD to modify the TRICARE Dental Program (TDP), effective Jan. 1, 2026, to give beneficiaries dental plan options from two to four national dental insurance carriers. The legislation also provides for reduced premiums and copays for junior enlisted families, E-4 and below. MOAA has advocated for TDP protections and improvements since many dentists left the network due to slashed reimbursements with the transition to United Concordia in 2017.

We appreciate Congress' diligence in developing a TDP solution after the initial plan had to be scrapped due to implementation problems. We urge Congress and DoD to ensure the modified construct maintains an option comparable to current TDP coverage, premiums, and cost sharing so dental care remains affordable for all uniformed services families.

[RELATED: MOAA's TRICARE Guide]

Improvements relating to behavioral health care available under military health system (Section 737). MOAA appreciates Congress directing "grow our own" initiatives to address behavioral health provider shortages, including a requirement for DoD to start a scholarship pilot program to cover tuition and fees for a graduate program in clinical social work, counseling, or related field, and a student loan repayment assistance program in exchange for service of equal duration in the military health system. This provision also requires a report on the feasibility of establishing graduate degree programs in counseling and social work, as well as expanding the clinical psychology program within the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU).

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Here's How MOAA-Backed Legislation Will Improve Your Health Care Continued from previous page...

Audit of behavioral health care network providers listed in TRICARE directory (Section 705). Requires a Government Accountability Office (GAO) audit of TRICARE mental health provider directories focused on determining functional availability of providers to include the number of duplicate listings, the number available and accepting new TRICARE patients, the number no longer practicing, and the number that could not be reached.

The provision also requires an assessment of the adequacy of behavioral health care providers under the TRICARE program and recommendations on how to improve TRICARE network provider availability. MOAA appreciates this step to provide greater transparency on the actual number of mental health clinicians available to TRICARE beneficiaries – a key step in understanding and addressing mental health care access challenges.

[RELATED: [MOAA Discusses Health Care Priorities With New DHA Director](#)]

Walter Reed Report

The Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) also included report language expressing disappointment in the declining numbers of military health care professionals assigned to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC) and the resulting negative impact on its operations.

To address this, the committee directed the Defense Health Agency (DHA) to submit a report to Congress documenting WRNMMC staffing; providing a joint manning document for WRNMMC that ensures its enduring status as a world-class medical center; and identifying any personnel shortfalls and submitting a plan to address them.

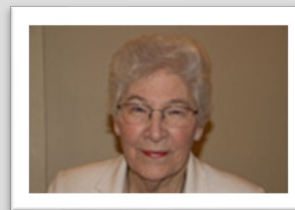
MOAA appreciates these provisions and report language in the FY 2023 NDAA and will continue efforts in the 118th Congress to ensure the high-quality health care servicemembers, retirees, their families, and survivors deserve. ★

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Surviving Spouse Corner:

Survivor Benefit Plan Update

By: Nancy Mullen
JANUARY 30, 2023



Photo by Elizabeth Fraser/Arlington National Cemetery

The FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act terminated the so-called “widows tax,” allowing eligible military surviving spouses to collect the full Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) and Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) in full, with no offset (no reduction) after a three-year phase-in period. We are now entering the third and final phase. What happens now?

Survivor benefits. DIC, SBP, and the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) were increased by the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of 8.7% with the January 2023 payments. Beginning Feb. 1, 2023, eligible surviving spouses will receive their full SBP payment from the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) and their full DIC payment from the VA without offset. The SSIA payment will stop, as this payment essentially becomes part of the full

SBP payment. If you recall, the SSIA was a temporary solution to the offset, which is no longer necessary due to the aforementioned legislation. Although the SSIA goes away, the total these surviving spouses receive in their name will not be less than what was received the month prior for these specific benefits. There is no change to DIC other than the COLA increase.

[UPDATED MONTHLY: [MOAA's Surviving Spouse Corner](#)]

Child Option Annuitants. Beginning Feb. 1, 2023, the annuity will transfer to the servicemember's surviving spouse provided they are an eligible spouse and have completed the appropriate paperwork for the transfer. If the surviving children are currently receiving the annuity, they have been receiving the full SBP, plus COLA increases, so what they receive in January 2023 will be the amount the eligible surviving spouse will receive. If the surviving children have already aged out of the program, the SBP will be recalculated to incorporate all prior years' COLAs. You can read more by [clicking here](#) or [here](#). You will be able to sign up for MyPay once the annuity transfers to you by [clicking here](#). Please note that recent changes in the SBP law do not impact the retiree child option SBP election, only that for the post-9/11 active duty child option election that was primarily made due to the SBP-DIC offset rules.

Eligible surviving spouses should have received a letter from DFAS in late 2022 detailing the background of the change, an example calculation, and a personalized SBP estimate. (Please note these were estimates only.) Find additional details about these updates from [DFAS](#) and [MOAA](#). Be sure to follow the [MOAA Surviving Spouses and Friends Facebook page](#) as well.

Please note this article is not intended to address all possible scenarios. And remember, military retirees who previously opted out of SBP will soon have a second chance to enroll. [Click here](#) to read a recent MOAA article on the topic.★

By: Dan Gutierrez
FEBRUARY 16, 2023



LET'S NOT FORGET!

Being a history buff, I've decided to provide, as a contribution to the Newsletter, some remembrances about our military history. For example, the month of February offers some important events and milestones that we should not forget.

For example, on February 2, 1901, the Army Nurse Corps was established. This brought memories to me of my own experience in Vietnam. I spent time in the hospital at Cam Rhan Bay in 1968. What I observed as I watched those nurses in action, was nothing short of pure courage and supreme dedication. I feel the nurses' memorial at the Vietnam wall captured their sacrifice perfectly. To me the statues are a vivid portrayal of what they gave.

The month of February also saw the USO incorporated. How many times in my travels I have availed myself of the USO's hospitality I can't say, but I remember a kid seventeen years old getting a break from basic training at Fort Knox, Kentucky and taking the bus shuttle to Louisville. Once there, I found I had nothing to do. I was too young to go into the clubs and bars. The only choice, the USO club.

February 13, 1943, was the date in which the Marine Corps Women's Reserve was established. This was right in the middle of World War II – they would be needed, then and now.

One date that I never forget is February 19, 1945. This was one year and one day after my birth and therefore it sticks with me. On that day, the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Marine divisions stormed the shores of Iwo Jima. A battle that was estimated to last 5 to 7 days, instead went on for 5 to 7 weeks. About 70,000 Marines engaged a force of 23,000 Japanese defenders. The enemy was well prepared and made the Marines pay for every inch of that rock. But the courage and intrepidity of the "Leathernecks" and Navy corpsmen who attended them, are of such magnitude that it defies any attempt of description. After seven weeks of savage "no quarters" fighting, 7,000 Marines lay dead (10% of the force) with another 20,000 wounded in action. Practically the entire Japanese garrison died with just 216 taken prisoners. For those of us who fought in subsequent wars, battles like Iwo Jima leave us with a sense of stunned horror and wonder. As Admiral of the Fleet Chester Nimitz remarked, "this is where uncommon valor was a common virtue."



Lieutenant Colonel Russell Fluker – Guest Speaker on February 25, 2023



A native of Kirbyville, Texas, Lieutenant Colonel (LtCol) Russell Fluker attended Texas A&M University, graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, and commissioned through the Platoon Leaders Course (PLC) program in May 2006.

Following The Basic School and the Infantry Officer Course, LtCol Fluker was assigned to 2d Battalion, 8th Marines at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina in the summer of 2007 where he served as a rifle platoon commander in Company F, deploying to Ramadi, Iraq in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM from October 2007 – May 2008. As executive officer with Company F, LtCol Fluker deployed in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in summer 2009 to the Garmsir District, Helmand Province, Afghanistan, participating in Operation Khanjari. In January 2010, he was assigned as the assistant battalion operations officer.

In May 2010, LtCol Fluker transferred to the School of Infantry West and was assigned as the company executive officer for Student Administration Company, Headquarters and Support Battalion. Throughout this tour, he served as the company commander for Student

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Scam Roundup: Busy Season for Fraud Targeting Servicemembers, Veterans, and More

By: Kevin Lilley
FEBRUARY 01, 2023

While the holiday season brought a traditional uptick in various types of scams, recent media reports show no signs of a slowdown in the new year. No matter what your financial situation, your spending habits, or your tech-savviness, it's likely you'll find yourself a target.

Here are just some of the groups facing increased threat levels in recent weeks:

Veterans

Warnings about scams related to the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act aren't new, but they haven't let up. A recent press release from West Virginia's attorney general outlined a typical scam tactic – fraudsters reach out to veterans via phone, email, or social media claiming to represent the VA, then either seek upfront payment to expedite fake claims or simply steal the veteran's identity.

The rapid increase in veterans eligible for VA care under the PACT Act, including many who are unfamiliar with VA practices, makes for a tempting target. Check out this fact sheet (PDF) for some simple do's and don'ts to avoid such scams, and be sure to visit VA.gov/PACT and other trusted resources for answers to benefits-related questions.

[RELATED: [MOAA.org/PACTResources](https://moaa.org/PACTResources)]

Servicemembers

Servicemembers at “several military installations” received calls from scammers pretending to represent the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS), the agency reported in January. And a Military.com report highlighted scam alerts from Army installations in Georgia and Arizona, as well as the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y.

The targets appear to be new soldiers and cadets, with fraudsters impersonating fellow soldiers. The victims are told there's a problem with their pay, and the only way to solve it involves sending money via PayPal or similar fund-transfer programs.

DFAS “does not make unsolicited calls regarding debts or pay record errors, nor do we ever ask for payments via phone calls using online peer-to-peer money transfer systems,” per the agency's report.

Fans of Fake ‘Generals’

A 52-year-old Texas man scammed more than \$1.6 million from seniors in 11 states under the guise of “General Miller” – a four-star officer who claimed online to need thousands of dollars to ship personal belongings back to the U.S.

One Rhode Island widow sent a check for \$60,000 to a company created by the scammer, according to a Justice Department press release, and was preparing to send more when the scam was discovered.

“The conspirator feigned a personal, and sometimes romantic, interest in his victims,” according to the release.

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Scam Roundup: Busy Season for Fraud Targeting Servicemembers, Veterans, and More

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It's far from the first time the persona of high-ranking servicemember has been used to secure the trust of an online victim. Some scammers even pretend to be real generals.

Think you or a family member could be a target? Check out these resources from the [FBI](#), [Secret Service](#), and [Federal Trade Commission](#) to stay safe.

More From MOAA

Want more? Check out the following MOAA.org resources:

- From our financial and benefits expert: [Protect Yourself From These 5 Common Fraud Schemes](#)
- Three-part series: [Don't Be Scammed](#)
- Recorded webinars (available to Premium and Life members): [An Overview of Scams and Frauds](#) | [Outsmart the Scammers: How to Spot and Avoid Financial Fraud](#) | [Protecting Yourself From Cybercrime and Scams](#)

MOAA is also a partner in the [Cybercrime Support Network's Military and Veteran Program](#), which aims to protect servicemembers, veterans, and military families from falling victim to fraud. Find more information on their [blog](#). ★

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Lieutenant Colonel Russell Fluker *Continued from Page 9...*

Administration Company; company commander of Company C, Infantry Training Battalion; and operations officer for Infantry Training Battalion – and completed a Graduate Certificate in Advanced International Affairs from The George Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University.

In May 2013, LtCol Fluker attended Expeditionary Warfare School (EWS), graduating with honors. He then reported to 3d Battalion, 3d Marines at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii and was assigned as the assistant battalion operations officer. In September 2014, LtCol Fluker assumed command of Company K and led the company on deployment in support of the Unit Deployment Program (UDP). In July 2015, he assumed command of Weapons Company, served as the battalion fire support coordinator, led the company on deployment in support of the UDP, and was recognized with the 2015 III MEF Outstanding Officer Leadership Award.

In March 2017, LtCol Fluker reported to Marine Barracks Washington for duties as Headquarters and Service Company Commander, served as a 2018 parade commander, and completed a Master of International Service at American University's School of International Service.

In June 2019, LtCol Fluker attended the School of Advanced Warfighting, received a Master of Operational Studies, and executed orders for a follow-on assignment as the Northeast Asia Plans Officer in the G-5, III Marine Expeditionary Force.

LtCol Fluker assumed command as Inspector-Instructor 1st Battalion, 23d Marines in Houston, Texas on 24 June 2022. His personal decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with gold star in lieu of second award, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with two gold stars in lieu of third award, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and the Combat Action Ribbon.

LtCol Fluker and his wife, Christy – also from Kirbyville – married in May 2006 and have two sons, Caden, born in December 2009; Riley, born in December 2012; and one daughter, Bailey, born in April 2015. ★



Waiting-Patience or Practice? ISAIAH 40:31

“They that wait on the Lord
Will renew their strength
They will mount up with
Wings as Eagles
They will run and not be weary
They will walk and not faint.”

This month the war in Ukraine has passed the one year mark. Probably most of us have been praying for the end of the war and for peace to reign. But that is not on the near horizon. The madman in Russia continues with his reign of terror on the Ukrainian People. We ask ourselves and God, “How long will you let this continue?” And God answers with silence. There are many times in our lives when we wish that God (and others) would hurry up. We are all old enough to know that we do not have control of the times, our actions and those of others, and circumstances surrounding those actions and events.

We also know that God is the one who does have control. He has had that control since creation and will continue for eternity. He knows the big picture, the whys and the how's and the way things will begin and end. Scripture tells us that He is the Alpha and the Omega...The A to Z. Our perspective is a minute particle of that eternal picture. When I think of Putin's Ukrainian terror and my prayers I join with Tevya and his prayer for the Czar in “Fiddler on the Roof”. “God, I pray for the Czar and that You'll keep him far away from me.” My prayer is more like “God protect and hide the Ukrainian Citizens and Soldiers. Use the Ukrainian Soldiers to take care of the wicked and help the innocent Russian Soldiers to defect.”

I believe that peace and the end of war is part of God's plan but human interaction seems to screw things up. God has given all person's freedom to act. We choose to act in accordance with God's will and purpose and sin tempts us to act against God's will and purposes. That is freedom of choice. Genesis tells us that we are created in God's Image but that sin entered in by free choice and works in our lives against that Image. Our faith and God's Redemption in our lives gives us the power to overcome the slavery to sin, bad choices, words and actions. (Read Romans Chapter 7.)

Events, challenges, setbacks and successes in our lives can bring us closer to God or alienate us from God. Our relationship with God, whether it be in church, individually through prayer, interaction with likeminded friends or with the Holy Scriptures gives us the ability to wait and act accordingly. God's will be that we are always to become closer to our Creator. God has been and will always be there! With you, remember, Immanuel-God is with us. His hope gives us our hope. His hope is that we come closer to Him even through the worst circumstances as well as the best circumstances. His Hope is our Hope. It is our action to accept that His love always surrounds us. That was true of the slaves in America who wrote and sang the spirituals we still sing. It was true of the Israelites in Egypt who were slaves for 400 years. It is true of the Ukrainians who are currently suffering in the atrocities of war. And it is true for us who are currently working through trying to solve our own problems. When we come to the end of our thoughts and prayers, we can be assured that God is still with us, listening and acting. Faith is knowing that He is God and if we look up, down or sideways, He is still our hope. He'll give us the patience and will to practice our faith and be empowered by the faith that we practice.

~ David Essells, USAR, MAJ, RET

MOAA HA Chapter Meeting Saturday, January 28th, 2022



Rob Ritchie



Dan Gutierrez



Judith Thomas



Gene & Joan Tulich



Kathy Frank



Mike Martin



"Red" O'Laughlin



Alan Ostendorp



John Nicholson



**Paul Brennan &
Stancie Chamberlain**



Ed Memi



William Johnson



Bang Do



Pat & Ingrid Clark

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Chapter Newsletter Editor

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*We need YOU...
to remain a
MOAA HA Member!*



Debating whether to renew your chapter membership?

Talking to a potential new member?

Benefits to belonging to a chapter:

- **Camaraderie and Connections:** when you attend chapter functions, actively serve on a committee, or take a prominent leadership role, you forge lasting ties with other MOAA members.
- **Community Involvement:** Membership provide opportunities to contribute to your community in a variety of ways, from providing scholarships to local students, to supporting causes that support wounded warriors and their families.
- **Legislative Advocacy:** We advocate for the entire military community-all ranks. Members play a critical role in advancing legislation in both Austin and Washington, D.C. This grassroots advocacy is key to MOAA achieving its legislative goals.

Chapter dues reminders will be emailed/sent out in November to those members needing renewal. We are on a calendar year for our chapter dues.

Annual renewal is \$30 for one year, \$20 for each additional year paid with renewal. Surviving Spouse \$15 initial membership; \$10 annual renewal.

Membership Application on the last page!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

MOAA's Core Mission

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the country's leading organization protecting the rights of uniformed servicemembers and their families. MOAA's constituents proudly hail from every branch of the uniformed services. To them, we have made the same promise that they have made to their country: Never Stop Serving.

MOAA's greatest mission is to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through the tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our nation's capital. For more than 90 years, MOAA has supported legislation that benefits the uniformed services community and has remained equally vigilant when fighting to stop legislation that threatens our livelihood. The larger our numbers, the greater our voice. For more detailed legislative actions see [MOAA | Take Action Center \(quorum.us\)](http://MOAA | Take Action Center (quorum.us))

Name: _____
(Please print) Last First Initial Rank

Branch _____ Status _____ MOAA Nat'l ID _____ *

Spouse's First Name: _____ Tel. for Directory _____

Home Address: _____

Email: _____

Dues: Regular Membership – \$30 first year; annual renewal \$30 (Discount for multiple years if paid with renewal: \$20 for each add'l. year **paid with renewal**)
Surviving Spouse – \$15 first year; annual renewal \$10 (same discount for multiple years)

Chapter Assistance Fund

\$100.00 \$50.00 \$25.00 Other _____

Make check payable to MOAA-HA and mail to:

MOAA-HA
PO Box 18372
Sugar Land, TX 77496



For more information, call COL Robin Ritchie, 713-818-0408

**If not a MOAA national member, another benefit of chapter membership is the opportunity to become a national MOAA member at the BASIC LEVEL for free! If you would like to do so, please indicate here:*

YES NO

Signature: _____