

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT COL CHARLES DALCOURT USA RET

# GREETINGS!



Hello to all and welcome to December. The year 2020 has been an incredibly interesting year in many ways. It has tested the resolve and resilience of individuals and families; exposed vulnerabilities and strengths of organizations and institutions; and has evoked both the examination and investigation of our Nation's foundation and its calling. Despite the challenges, our chapter has continued to move forward...to improve processes and find ways to overcome threats and trials. That's what good teams do. We have a very good team.

### Finishing Strong

As I entreated a few months ago, I ask again that you please stay the course. Your engagement across MOAA's areas of concern is important and your continued advocacy is imperative. We need all available members to run through the finish line. Please keep pressing "send" on those emails and messages to decision-makers and key influencers, in Florida and beyond, that touch issues relevant to military service-members, veterans, spouses, and families. Please use your voice to help retain and secure the benefits, entitlements, and protections our colleagues have earned. Remember, the strength of your voice is not tied to volume

of its sound, rather it is based on the relevance of your words the evidence of care surrounding them. Stay the course!

### Chapter Needs

Bringing the "stay the course" theme home to our local chapter, I offer the following for your consideration and action. The MOAA Tampa Chapter has enduring programs and relationships in our Chapter's portfolio that grant credibility and an upstanding reputation to this team. That acknowledged, it is also our responsibility to continue growing in areas of need and significance to our members, potential members, and those in our broader Military Coalition.

There are myriad opportunities for our Chapter to support MOAA National's and the Florida Council's strategic initiatives. Career and transition assistance, medical awareness and preparedness, and advancing our understanding and support of Guard and Reserve Force requirements are essential areas in which our Chapter endeavors to impact...to make a difference. To do so, we need help. We need members to step up in whatever way you can and share the burden. We've been relying on a few solid, sacrificial, and selfless members, for some time now, to cover all the bases.

We have the potential to accomplish wonderful things for this community and to grow in relevance and influence. Opportunities for service span several committees and do not require more than four to eight hours a month of your time. I invite you to contact Geoff Harrington, our Chapter's Secretary, before the year's end for more information. We would like to enter 2021 with a substantial base of personnel that are ready to engage specific, planned targets and targets of opportunity. Again, we need you involved...not just on the roster, but active in our ranks.

### Chapter Meetings

We will prevail! That's our mantra and we are sticking to it. After considerable effort and coordination with local venues to acquire safe and viable meeting spaces, we were thwarted by nature in November, then by COVID-19 concerns this month. Notwithstanding, I am so very proud of the work our board has done to make our meetings happen.

In November, we bounced back from Tropical Storm Eta's threats and held our monthly luncheon via Zoom. Fortunately, we will enjoy our scheduled guest speaker, COL Courtney Finkbeiner, and the same venue, the Columbia Centennial Museum, in January 2021. This month's challenge was the perceived resurgence of the COVID-19 virus and the threat of exposing our members to not-fully or unmitigated risks. Timing was of the essence, and the board, after careful deliberation, decided in the interest of best protecting our Chapter's members.

Our Member of the Month for December is MAJ Scotty Cleland (USAF, Retired). Scotty's sacrifice, commitment, and dedication to our Chapter has been exceptional and his service enabling. Please be sure to join us in a virtual salute to Scotty via email in December and we will recognize him at the Chapter's luncheon in January.

### Wrapping up:

In closing, on behalf of the Board of Directors I extend our fondest wishes for you all to have a very special, safe, and celebratory holiday season. I hope you all are well, and that God grants us all the strength to run through the finish line...to stay engaged, connected, and optimistic. Thank you in advance for your continued focus and commitment to our mission. Our servicemembers need our support...they expect our leadership. Thanks again for all you do.

All the best!

Charles

## NOTICE:

**THE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON SCHEDULED FOR 17 DECEMBER 2020 AT PALMA-CEIA GOLF COUNTRY CLUB HAS BEEN CANCELLED!**

Tentatively mark your calendars for the following luncheon event: 14 JANUARY 2021, 11:30 am, In-person Installation of the 2021 Board of Directors at Columbia Centennial Museum in Ybor City. Stay tuned for more details to follow by e-mail from our Communications director.

*"On behalf of our Board of Directors and out of an abundance of caution, all of our MOAA Tampa Chapter meetings (including Zoom) through the end of 2020 are suspended. Our decision to temporarily cease gathering is congruent with efforts exercised across the Nation aimed to protect us all from the effects of the COVID-19 virus. Moreover, the heart of our decision prioritizes the protection of our Chapter's unique demographic that meets the criteria of the vulnerable or at risk population. We sincerely appreciate your consideration and understanding."*

**REMINDER:  
PUBLICATION DEADLINE  
FOR THE JANUARY ISSUE  
IS  
20 DECEMBER 2020**

NOTICE: if you have a change of address, please notify our membership team--Bill Schneider at 813 977-2572 geowillyl@aol.com or Tom South 813

975-5025 tsouth1811@gmail.com

## LEGISLATIVE LOWDOWN

BY LTC REGINALD WILLIAMS,  
USA RET

For more information, visit MOAA National's Legislative Action Center



As The Retrospect is being delivered to you, MOAA continues to advocate for your benefits as we enter the holiday season. As the NDAA goes to conference, MOAA focus its efforts to protect pay, healthcare, and other benefits our Veterans have earned. That is at the National level. At the chapter level, we must continue take action by advocating through our Congressperson and by continuing to look out for one another on a personal level especially during the holiday season and as we are in the midst of a pandemic. For this issue I will focus on MOAA continued support to VA initiatives and your earned benefits.

### MOAA Pledges Continued Support to VA Suicide Prevention Initiative

MOAA leadership recently reaffirmed the organization's pledge to continue its work on a national plan to connect veterans in distress and facilitate research into suicide.

Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret), President and CEO of MOAA, joined a virtual meeting with VA leaders Nov. 5 to sign a commitment to actively engage association employees and members in suicide prevention efforts and to increase the awareness of mental health issues. The commitment is part of the VA initiative known as the President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicide (PRE-

VENTS), signed by President Donald Trump on March 5, 2019.

"We're all in," Atkins said during the virtual meeting. "We've been involved in the administration's PREVENTS map from the start. I'm convinced if we at least involve ourselves, talk to people, check on people, that we're going to contribute to hopefully reducing the incidents of suicides."

Atkins was invited to the White House to witness the signing of the initiative last year. He has emphasized the significance of military members continuing to support each other, thinking back on his time as a commander for the 20th Fighter Wing at Shaw Air Force Base, S.C.

That's where he met a civilian staff member who would later confide in him that she previously had suicidal ideations. The interaction struck him, Atkins said, as it reinforced that obvious signs of distress are not always apparent. Checking in with friends and family can be a lifeline for people who may not outwardly show signs of distress, he said.

"You don't see it unless you're engaged," he said. "That's the intersection where I think we can help - through discussion and caring."

Death by suicide affects civilians and servicemembers. The VA conducts the largest

national analysis of veteran suicide rates each year, according to the department. Between 2008 and 2017, more than 6,000 deaths of veterans were determined to be suicides.

DoD has its own initiatives to support active duty servicemembers, while the PREVENTS concept is aimed toward veterans. It offers recommendations on how to best equip state and local governments, engage faith-based communities, and expand the existing research ecosystem to continue to refine treatments and improve veteran engagement efforts.

Cheryl Mason, national ambassador of the PREVENTS Task Force and chair of the VA's Board of Veterans Appeals, thanked MOAA for its continued commitment to support veterans by creating awareness.

Moving forward, MOAA has pledged to continue education efforts through publications to inform members and encourage chapter and council involvement at the state and local level. MOAA's government relations team will work with the national task force to develop and support policies to improve suicide prevention and community collaboration and integration.

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LEGISLATIVE LOWDOWN cont'd:

### Retirees: Here's Why COLA Is a Battlefield for Your Earned Benefits

Once you retire, increases to your retired pay are tied to the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).

Unless Congress says otherwise.

The fight over COLA is at the core of MOAA's mission to protect your service-earned entitlements. Below, you'll learn about the tactics on the Hill regarding this issue and MOAA's efforts to date to preserve the value of your retirement benefit. In a follow-up article.

But first, a bit about how the math works for all who are serving now, regardless of the retirement plan.

#### Before COLA

Many servicemembers from all eight uniformed services, and their families, are somewhat familiar with their retirement plan, whether it be High-Three, REDUX, or the Blended Retirement System. And there remains barely a handful of servicemembers eligible for Final Pay retirement, which is only applicable to those who first entered service prior to Sept. 8, 1980.

For all retirees, regardless of retirement plan, the Military Pay Table\* in place on the retirement effective date serves as the basis on which their retirement is calculated. Increases to the pay table itself, by law, are tied to the Employment Cost Index (ECI) from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. If you are eyeing retirement, you want to ensure those pay raises are taking effect; your retirement pay depends on them.

While the pay raises are codified in law, that same law allows for possible reductions down to zero depending on circumstances as determined by the president. Congress can also adjust the pay tables in either direction in their drafting of legislation for Authorizations or Appropriations. MOAA continues to engage Congress to ensure these pay raises survive such options.

#### Challenging COLA: The 1980s

History is replete with attempts, some successful, to marginalize or even eliminate COLA for military retirees. Budget controls and other fiscal priorities are often the cause, and a lack of appreciation for a career of service catalyzes approval on the Hill and in the White House.

It's all about money - and attempts to minimize mandatory spending to harvest those funds for other programs. Here is an overview of some of the past efforts:

1982: The Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1982 delayed the effective date of COLA from the first of March, as was the law, to the first of April 1983, then May 1984, and then June of 1986.

1983: In the omnibus act the very next year, Congress codified in law its intention to continue finding ways to reduce outlays to military retirees, stating that a "reduction of these unacceptably high deficits requires a comprehensive plan to slow the growth of Federal spending, including military and entitlement spending, and to increase revenues."

1985: The Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, also referred to as the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Act, failed to include military retired pay in the exemptions that included Social Security, Tier 1 Railroad Retirement, veterans compensation, and pensions. The bill halted automatic spending increases (save the exemptions), which included COLA increases for military retirees. The impacts were broad, resulting in mandatory cuts to programs and outlays to achieve established budget caps, and introducing a new use of an old word: sequestration.

(This act was the impetus to the formation of The Military Coalition in 1985. MOAA - then TROA, The Retired Officers Association - and the Non Commissioned Officers Association co-lead a group of 15 associations who marched on Capitol Hill in protest over the exclusion of military retirees from the exemption list.)

1986: The president's budget for FY 1987 proposed eliminating COLA in 1987 for military retirees. However, due to the engagement led by MOAA and The Military Coalition, Congress passed legislation counter to the administration's wishes, restoring COLA through at least 1991 with a House vote of 305-70 and a 61-25 vote in the Senate.

#### Challenging COLA: 1991-2012

COLA was further continued after 1991, likely in part thanks to operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, which increased overall support for the troops.

In the aftermath of Sept. 11, 2001, we experienced another surge of support from the general population and Congress. Military missions received broader media coverage than in previous conflicts, leading to a better understanding of sacrifice.

This brings us to a new era of concern, certain to be as detrimental as any of the previous assaults on COLA. We pick up the timeline to continue defining the battlefield, and to get the attention of all those currently serving in uniform and all

working-age retirees under the age of 62.

2010: The president appointed the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform, also known as the Simpson-Bowles Commission. Its job, per the executive order establishing the commission, was to identify "policies to improve the fiscal situation in the medium term and to achieve fiscal sustainability over the long run. Specifically, the Commission shall propose recommendations designed to balance the budget. ..."

One of its recommendations, which it said would save \$17 billion through 2020, was to defer all COLA "for retirees in the current system until age 62, including for civilian and military retirees who retire well before a conventional retirement age. In place of annual increases, provide a one-time catch-up adjustment at age 62 to increase the benefit to the amount that would have been payable had full COLAs been in effect."

You read that correctly - the recommendation was for no COLA until you reach 62, with a catch-up at that point but no effort to make up the lost income.

Fortunately, the final vote on the plan failed within the commission. A version of this plan with fewer tax increases, rolled into a bill, was defeated by the House 382-38.

#### Challenging COLA: COLA Minus 1 Percent

2013: The government shut down for 16 days in October, impacting 800,000 employees. To halt the shutdown, Congress passed an interim continuing resolution.

That December, still reeling from the shutdown and continued challenges in finding common ground, the Senate met to discuss the House-passed Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2014, to avoid another government shutdown. Christmas was one week away.

That resolution, which passed the House 332-94 on Dec. 12, included language that would cut any COLA increase for military retirees under age 62 by one percent. Any increase of less than a percent would mean no raise for these retirees, though the law prohibited any negative adjustment.

Many in the Senate were opposed to the COLA reduction. With the provision's effective date of Dec. 1, 2015, there was presumably enough time to submit legislation to overcome this injustice; however, there would need to be a pay-for to have a chance. Another pressing factor on the Senate's calendar was the pending National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which had not yet passed.

Given these circumstances and absolutely zero tolerance for another government shutdown, the Senate approved the House version 64-36, and the president signed the resolution the day after Christmas. "COLA minus 1 percent" became law.

2014: In January, just over a month since the president signed the legislation, MOAA Board Chair Gen. John Tilelli Jr., USA (Ret), presented testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee. With him were Gen. Gordon Sullivan, USA (Ret), from the Association of the U.S. Army (AUSA) and Master Sgt. Richard Delaney from The Retired Enlisted Association (TREA) - all members of The Military Coalition. Their testimonies regarding the impact of the COLA reductions were compelling and heartfelt. A MOAA-prepared chart showed the compounded cost to a retiring E-7, who would lose \$83,000, or a retiring O-5, who would lose over \$124,000 by age 62.

MOAA and the The Military Coalition continued to build on the momentum from this hearing. Visits to the Hill, phone calls, and letters all made a difference in the eventual solution to this atrocious attempt to reduce a retiree's pay to fund other programs.

In February, a member of Congress stated his support for measures to repeal COLA minus 1 percent, citing MOAA's example of the \$83,000 loss to a typical enlisted retiree after 20 years of service. The measure was attached to an energy bill already in motion, thus speeding the process with wide support up front. The House passed it 326-90, the Senate followed suit 95-3, and the president signed the law Feb. 15, averting a significant loss to those already retired and all those who first became members of the uniformed services prior to Jan. 1, 2014.

#### What's Next

MOAA continues to watch the next moves on Capitol Hill and at DoD aimed toward reducing outlays for retired military pay.

This story is not over: With a mounting national deficit already past \$3.3 trillion, and a national debt over \$27 trillion, we can expect a reprise of budget cuts and extreme caps - sequestration will have a new life. Such changes to the economic landscape will put defense spending on its fiscal heels, fostering many ideas as to how to keep modernizing ... and how to find the money to do it.

Stay tuned for MOAA's assessment of these future challenges, and what we intend to do to ensure we capture what will be the impact to you and your family today and the foreseeable future.

\* DoD manages the Military Pay Tables for all eight uniformed services. As a result, MOAA uses the term "Military Pay" and similar pay or retirement references for all uniformed services.

### MOAA Continues Push to Protect Pay Raise, Medical Benefits as Budget Deadline Nears

The Senate Appropriations Committee released the texts of all 12 appropriation bills for FY 2021 on Nov. 10, including a defense appropriations package totaling \$688 billion.

The bill would provide the necessary funding for DoD for the new fiscal year, which began Oct. 1. The federal government and its agencies are operating under a continuing resolution at FY 2020 spending levels, which is due to expire Dec. 11.

Members of Congress face a narrowing timeline to pass a budget before the December deadline; if they can't, they'll need to pass another continuing resolution to avoid a government shutdown. Initial indications from the congressional leaders appeared positive that both chambers would pass the appropriations bills before the close of the year. However, each passing day Congress fails to act makes it increasingly more difficult for lawmakers to finish their work.

Congressional leaders may opt for another stopgap spending bill, potentially through either February or March of next year. However, recent reports show leaders from both parties lining up behind an appropriations omnibus - one bill covering the entire government - in lieu of a continuing resolution. Signs point to the president approving this approach, though the administration has taken issue with it in the past.

Why is this critical to MOAA members? Limping along under continuing resolutions prevents DoD from enacting meaningful reforms and improvements, including many MOAA-supported measures that could become law as part of the still-in-discussion FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

MOAA-Supported Provisions in Both House and Senate Defense Appropriations Bills.

So far there are two MOAA-supported provisions that appear in both the House and Senate versions of the FY 2021 defense appropriations bill.

Military Health System (MHS) Reform. MOAA has been actively advocating for a halt to proposed cuts to military medical capacity until the Defense Health Agency conducts a comprehensive reassessment of civilian medical capacity to ensure continued beneficiary access to high quality care. The Senate defense funding bill underscores MOAA's concerns and would require DoD to submit detailed implementation plans prior to the obligation of funds to close or restructure any military treatment facilities (MTFs).

Uniformed Services Pay Raise. Both Senate and House versions of the defense appropriations bill will provide the funds for a 3% pay raise for active duty servicemembers. This pay raise would be effective as of January 1, 2021, and is in line with the benchmark established by the Employment Cost Index (ECI).

#### Next Steps and How You Can Help

The Senate Appropriations Committee must vote on the 12 appropriations bills before they can advance to the Senate floor. It remains to be seen if the Senate and the House will agree on a single omnibus package to include most, if not all, of the appropriations bills into a single package. The House and Senate will still need to reconcile any differences between the two versions before moving forward. Lawmakers are also up against mounting pressure for another COVID-19 relief package, which adds more uncertainty to whether they will meet the Dec. 11 deadline.

Richard Shelby (R-Ala.), chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said he and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) agree they are "probably 90% together on" the 2021 appropriations bills. There are significant hurdles that will need to be settled though; for example, the Senate committee's appropriations bills do not include any emergency pandemic funds, so agreement must be reached on how much relief funding can be expected if a compromise is reached - and whether such funding will be included in the appropriations package or in a separate bill.

Contact your elected officials and ask them to pass a federal budget by Dec. 11 and remind them continuing resolutions stall plans to modernize DoD and improve the lives of servicemembers, military families, retirees, and veterans.

Happy Holidays and Take action now! [MOAA Take Action Center](#)

Sources:

- 1) www.moaa.org, article by Amanda Dolasinski, November 10, 2020
- 2) www.moaa.org, article by Dan Merry, November 10, 2020
- 3) www.moaa.org, article by Brenden McMahon, November 18, 2020 (Updated November 19, 2020)

# THE TAMPA CHAPTER OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (MOAA)

2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS



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## MOAA MISSION STATEMENT

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a nonprofit veterans' association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors. Membership is open to those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, or MOAA and their surviving spouses.

### Tampa Chapter



Military Officers Association of America

## TAMPA CHAPTER MISSION:

To maintain a strong national defense and to ensure our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors.

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# FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA—TRAVELING DURING A PANDEMIC

By Sara Marks, CAPT, NC, USN (Ret)

A dear friend of mine called me in August and asked if I would help her drive her daughter's car from San Diego across country in mid-September. At first I was a bit hesitant to get on an airplane due to pandemic concerns, but then decided that life is full of risk. Weighing the fear of this virus, while calculating safety precautions versus the anticipation of an adventure, I made the airline reservation. During this crazy time, the airlines waived many of their rules, so I was able to book a first class seat using my frequent flyer miles! I have to add, it was a bit challenging trying to eat and drink on the airplane. It was expected to re-mask after each sip of a drink or bite of food. Thank goodness I was only flying one way.

I must admit there was great joy for me in planning the drive across our Great Nation. However, there were new considerations, including the fires out west, what was open, if advanced notice or reservations were required, and who knew that it would be necessary to contact the Alabama and Florida Highway Patrol Departments to ensure that I-10 was passible after Hurricane Sally hit Orange Beach, Alabama and surrounding areas and the Pensacola, Florida vicinity.

Other planning factors included "What does one pack when traveling during a pandemic?" Well, masks and hand sanitizer for certain. Of course I added disposable gloves, just in case, and cleaning wipes. The usual amount of clothes to pack for a short stay in San Diego and then plenty of other clothes for the drive across country to avoid doing laundry. Most important of all, I brought my military skills of flexibility, patience, a smile and a healthy dose of humor. I was once told that the most valuable thing to bring on a deployment is a sense of humor.

After landing in San Diego, the order of business was to help my friend's daughter with her deployment preparations. I was only in San Diego for a total of a day and half, but it seemed we accomplished five days' worth of tasks in that brief period of time! My friend's daughter moved from her apartment, stored her belongings in a storage unit, brought necessities to her ship's quarters, and items for pre-deployment workups. Of course there were other errands involved, but

we did manage to have a lovely dinner in the Gas Lamp District of San Diego, and a wonderful tour of her ship. I must say that the water front has changed significantly since my last day on active duty seven years ago. I still feel so connected as one of my assignments in the Navy was working on experimenting with role on/role off medical missions with the precursors to the current Littoral Combat Ships.



Before leaving San Diego, I did manage to see a few friends. We wore masks when indoors and kept our physical distance, but it sure was nice to see old friends again.



tain dating back at least 1400 years!

After dropping her daughter off to her ship, my friend and I completed our workup assistant tasks and became free agents as we started our driving adventure back to Tampa. Next stop Tucson, Arizona. It was a long drive, but how beautiful the desert can be driving I-8 with a stop in Dateland, California for a Date Shake! Once on I-10 we made great time heading to Tucson with a spontaneous stop to admire the petroglyphs of Painted Rock Mountain



After spending the night outside of Tucson, we visited dear friends of mine, a Navy Nurse with whom I served and her husband, also a veteran. So in these pandemic days we kept our social distance at their house and wore our masks inside. Once outside, we felt safe taking our masks off while keeping our distance and had a lovely breakfast. About an hour's drive away, we visited "The town too tough to die," also known as Tombstone, AZ. It was fun to watch the reenactment of "The Gunfight at the O.K. Corral" and then interesting to visit the Boothill Cemetery where Tom and Frank McLaury and Billy Clanton, the unfortunate casualties of the gunfight, are buried. There was a sign indicating they were murdered by the Earp's.

Next we hit the road, drove through another time zone, and spent the night in Las Cruces. Due to New Mexico requiring quarantining to visit their sites, we limited our drive through to the most southern part of the state. However, the White Sands National Park, our newest national park, was open on a limited basis to the public. It was worth the stop to see the absolutely beautiful white sands that remind me of being at the beaches here in Florida, though no shore line in sight. The water table is only two to three feet below the surface, so the sand was surprisingly cool to the touch. The view also reminds one of being in snow, especially when watching people sled down the sand dunes. We met other visitors, some who were fleeing the fires in California and heading to destinations east.



Part of a driving adventure is traveling on the back roads. So instead of travel-

ing on I-10, we left White Sands National Park and went through the mountains of New Mexico in the direction of Carlsbad. It was a wonderful scenic route. Of course we found fun places to stop. Who knew there were pistachios in NM! Oh, and because of this pandemic, more than once my friend and I would get out of the car, make an "about face" and get our masks! So a new adventure was to remember to wear our masks every time we got out of the car when making a stop! It was a long drive to our next destination in Texas, but a what a beautiful drive, even seeing the oil refineries lighting the night sky along the way.

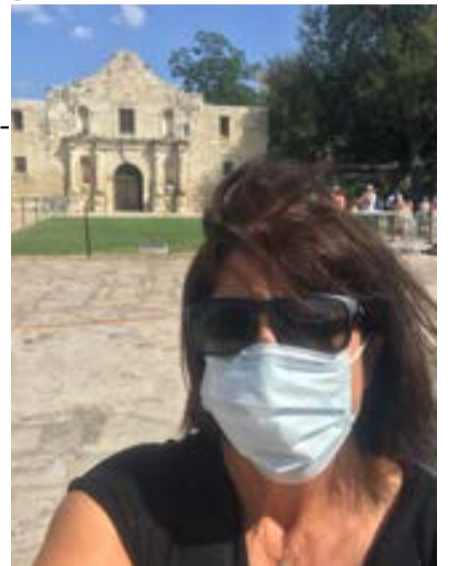


Driving across country it's easy to appreciate the vastness of our Great Nation and the wide open spaces out west. Each of our days consisted of driving anywhere from six to ten hours in a day with a tourist stop of some sort each day. Most of our stops were outside adventures. So after leaving our hotel in Stockton, Texas,

we headed to Fredericksburg to explore as much as we could before stopping in San Antonio for two nights and a break from driving. Hotels were very vigilant with their cleaning and their check in procedures. Basically there was no maid service during a stay, but the front desk was always accommodating with meeting any additional needs. Unfortunately the breakfasts were of a "grab and go" nature. I don't think I want to look at another blueberry muffin. I'll have to ask my friend, but she may still have a muffin or two still in her daughter's car!



With a short stay in Fredericksburg in the hill country of Texas, we did enjoy a wonderful German meal, and not far from the town visited LBJ's Ranch which is both a Texas State Park and National Historical Park. There is so much more to explore in that beautiful part of Texas, but we needed to head to San Antonio for a good night's sleep and a much needed break from four days of long hours of driving.



Staying in a boutique hotel was yet another experience, and no blueberry muffins for breakfast! This time we ordered breakfast at the front desk and had a choice of microwaved bacon, toast, cereal, orange juice and milk to bring back to the room and dine on the balcony. The view of the Tower of the Americas was lovely. The River Walk was a short two block walk away and once again met up with dear friends who live in the area. We carried our masks, and since we were outside only wore them

inside buildings or if we weren't able to maintain six feet from other pedestrians on the River Walk. A boat tour of the River Walk was a must as well as a visit to the Alamo!



After a wonderful two night stay in San Antonio, off to New Orleans to see with my youngest sister. It was such a treat to see family on this trip. I wasn't even expecting to travel when

this crazy pandemic presented itself to the world. I love seeing the Big Easy, but enjoyed seeing family more. It was a quick overnight visit, but not without some New Orleans red beans and rice prepared by my brother-in-law, who is an amazing cook.

Two days more days of hard driving, my friend dropped me back home in Tampa, and then made her way to West Virginia. Driving from sea to shining sea with a dear friend, seeing family and friends along the way, and exploring as much of our greatly blessed Nation as we could was amazing, despite this crazy pandemic world. So remember, always pack your sense of humor and after driving across country let's not forget to thank all the truck



drivers for keeping our supply lines open!



# Notes from the Editor: Col Carol Zieres USA Ret



With the ever-increasing tidal wave of new Covid cases sweeping the nation this holiday season, regrettably your board has been faced with the difficult decision to cancel our 2020 in-person Christmas luncheon. I know this is a big disappointment for all, but skipping large gatherings for the

holiday season of 2020 might just ensure you get to see those friends and family members in 2021. On that note, modern technology has made it easier for loved ones to stay in touch through the internet (social media), but in my opinion, there's no substitute for giving or receiving a good old-fashioned telephone call to a friend you haven't seen or talked to in a long time. It wasn't that long ago when telephone plans used to charge long-distance rates on phone calls; now most calling plans have unlimited talk time for FREE. This is a good Segway for the introduction of an initiative by CAPT Sara Marks, the Tampa Chapter "Buddy Check" program that you'll read about in this edition of the Retrospect. I encourage you to participate in this out-reach program that is designed to connect socially with other MOAA Tampa Chapter members on a regular basis to let them know they are not forgotten during this time of social isolation due to the pandemic. This program is also intended to be a retention tool for our chapter.

Our Member of the Month, voted by the chapter's board of directors, recognizes "excellence of service" of individuals in the MOAA Tampa chapter. Our honorary December, Member of the Month, is Maj. Fred "Scotty" Cleland, USAF (Ret) for his patriotism and outstanding service in support of MOAA Tampa Chapter and its signature charity, Operation Helping Hand.

Member Spotlight column. Tampa Chapter welcomes newly joined member, FR. C. Timothy Corcoran, III (LCDR, USN, Ret and Catholic Priest) who hails from Kansas City, MO! He has a long and distinguished career that began as a Navy Line Officer to entering Law School, and then culminating in the Priesthood (Theology).

As this is my last edition of the RETROSPECT

newsletter as your editor, my parting shot is to remind all members to consider contributing to your newsletter with stories including such topics as military history, individual biographies, the role of military spouses, special events of interest to members; any vignettes of military or veterans service, holiday, commemorative or celebratory themes, etc.

It has been a pleasure to serve YOU as newsletter Editor!

I want to especially thank the two publishers with whom I've worked very closely over the past 12 months: Ms. Melissa Marison and Ms. Gayle Hill, as well as my Assistant Editor, CAPT Sara Marks. I couldn't have accomplished this journey without you!

And to all of my MOAA friends, I wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and joyous holiday season. The pandemic has given a whole new meaning to the song by Bing Crosby, first released in 1945, "I'll Be Home For Christmas." Even though you may be spending a lot of time at home during this pandemic and perhaps even spending this holiday season alone, remember our Troops this holiday season who are serving overseas far away from their homes. Our Prayers go out to them, and to our first responders and medical personnel who may be separated from their families during the holidays, as well.

Please continue to stay healthy and safe - NEVER STOP SERVING!

Carol Zieres, COL, USA (Ret)

Editor

THE RETROSPECT is published monthly by the Tampa Chapter of the Military Officer's Association of America (MOAA), P.O. Box 6383, MacDill Air Force Base, FL 33608-0383. The Tampa Chapter is a 501-©19 tax exempt veterans organization not associated with the Department of Defense and is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

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## OUR EDITORIAL POLICY:

MOAA National, the Florida Council of Chapters, and the Tampa Chapter are nonpartisan organizations. Our chapter membership is open to all Military officers (Commissioned and warrant), including Active Duty, National Guard, Reserve, former officers, and spouses/surviving spouses of military officers. Our luncheon meetings are held 1130 hours every second Thursday of the month, unless otherwise indicated. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, all luncheons at the Mac Dill AFB, Surf's Edge Club, have been suspended until further notice. Stay tuned for announcements of luncheon locations and other updates to be disseminated to chapter members via e-mail, newsletter, website and Facebook postings as needed. We appreciate your patience as we continue to navigate the challenges of this global pandemic.

## ON THE WEB:

Tampa Chapter <http://moaatampa.org>

Communications directed to specific board members may be made by accessing their contact Information listed under "ABOUT MOAA TAMPA CHAPTER" and "LEADERSHIP."

A password protected MEMBER DIRECTORY is posted on the website under the "MEMBERSHIP" category

FL COUNCIL: [www.moaaf.org](http://www.moaaf.org)

MOAA NATIONAL: [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org)

OPERATION HELPING HAND: [www.operationhelpinghandtampa.com](http://www.operationhelpinghandtampa.com)

TAKE ACTION: <http://www.moaa.org/Content/Take-Action/Top-Issues/Top-Issues.aspx>

As a member of MOAA, you are entitled to exclusive member benefits and discounts. Find out more about our member-only services and offers or explore the topics that most interest you.

# UPDATE OPERATION HELPING HAND



LTC JIM GRIFFIN  
Chairman, OPHH

"As long as we are needed, Operation Helping Hand will be there..."



It cannot be stressed enough how important it is going to be for us to continue to do our part to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19 throughout the holiday season. We can all enjoy our holidays with friends and families as long as we continue to practice the social distancing and the use of face coverings.

Hopefully, with the latest information released on the excellent success of the vaccine that will be out in the next few weeks, we can safely return to a new normal. All of the volunteers and staff of OPERATION HELPING HAND eagerly await the day when we can resume our monthly dinners to honor the wounded and injured and their families.

Even during these tough times, we continue to receive donations from our fantastic supporters like you! We are putting the final touches on this year's calendar. It will be mailed

out before the Christmas holidays begin. This year's calendar is a special throwback calendar to highlight all of the great events and patients since 2004.

All of the OPERATION HELPING HAND vital programs of service to our wounded and injured and their families have continued without any interruption. We need your continued support to allow us to continue these vital programs of service to our wounded and injured and their families. This support can be through donations by check or by using the website ([OPERATION-HELPINGHANDTAMPA.COM](http://OPERATION-HELPINGHANDTAMPA.COM))

Every great anything in life, whether it is a company, a nonprofit, or an individual, they all have one thing in common and that is resilience and perseverance. They have all at one time failed. But it is the resilience, it's the perseverance, it's the will to

keep moving forward, it's the willingness to learn and develop and let those things develop you.

Our wish for all of you folks from OPERATION HELPING HAND is to have a safe and very MERRY CHRISTMAS!

**OUR TREMENDOUS GROUP OF VOLUNTEERS MAKE ALL OF THIS POSSIBLE!**

“Operation Helping Hand” invites you to



# Bobby A's Backyard BBQ



*Our New Date*

**Sat December 5th \*\*\* 2-6pm**  
**Bru Florida Growler Bar**  
**8729 Gunn Highway Odessa**

*You Da Man,*

Families welcome! Come celebrate the Holiday Season and support “Operation Helping Hand” in its commitment to serving our wounded active duty military and their families.

OpHH is a 16-year-old local all-volunteer 501c3 charity. (96% of all funds raised benefit our military families.)

- 
- ♦ Enjoy BBQ brisket, turkey, burgers, beer and good fixin’s.....
  - ♦ Bring your lawn chair and a covered dish—optional.
  - ♦ \$15 at the door is appreciated.
- 



The event will take place at the rear of Bru Florida Growler Bar. Parking available in front parking lot and at rear of the building.

*Bringing a dish to share? Let us know ahead of time so we don't double up on baked beans!*  
**Questions? Call/ text Robert at 813 789 5732.**

## Chapter Member Spot-light Fr. C. Timothy Corcoran, III, LCDR, USN, RET

Fr. Tim was born in Kansas City, MO. He grew up mostly in Washington, DC, where he was graduated from St. John's College, a De La Salle Christian Brothers high school, in 1963.



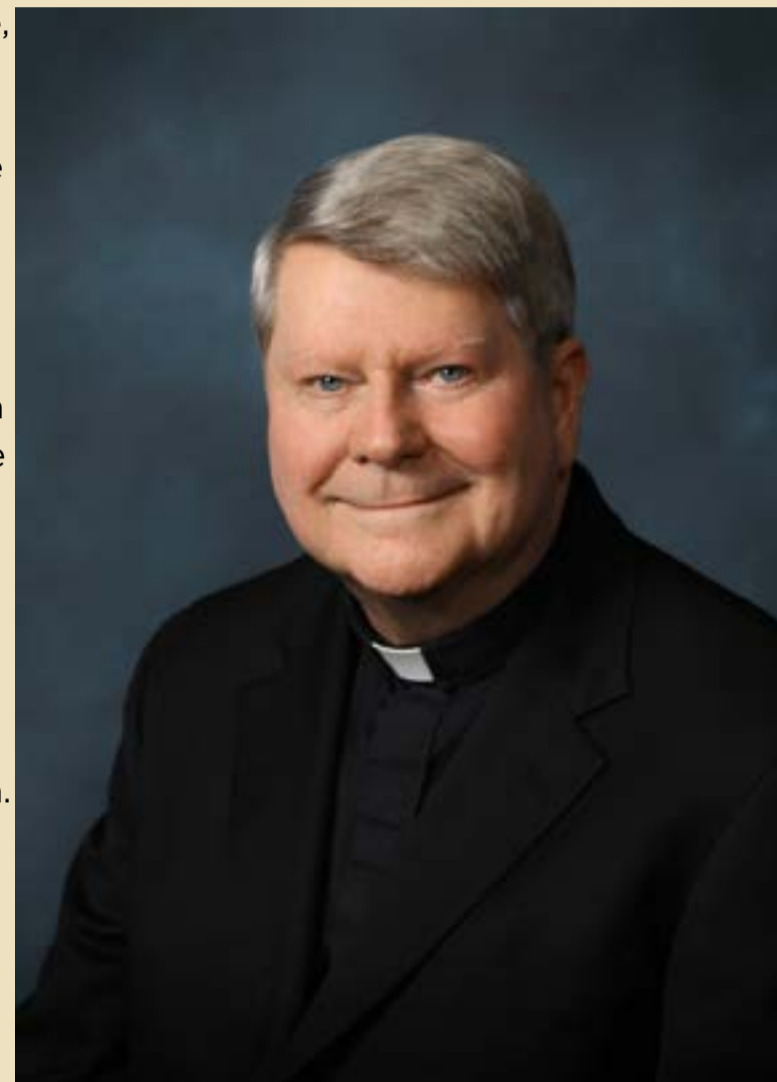
Fr. Tim studied for a year at the U. S. Naval Academy and then completed college at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1967. After graduation and commissioning through the NROTC program (with his Naval Academy class), Fr. Tim served three years on active duty in the U. S. Navy as a line officer. He served on destroyers and as a Naval Intelligence Liaison Officer in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam, providing intelligence and planning and participating in coastal and riverine combat operations, mostly with PCFs ("Swift" boats). He retired from the Naval Reserve as a lieutenant commander in 1991.

Following law school at the University of Virginia in 1973, Fr. Tim practiced law in Tampa. He also served for 14 years as a United States bankruptcy judge, retiring in 2003. He has chaired several committees of The Florida Bar and the Section of Litigation of the American Bar Association. He is a past president of the Hillsborough County Bar Association.

After four years of study, Fr. Tim received his Master of Divinity degree from Pope St. John XXIII National Seminary, Weston, MA, in 2012. Bishop Robert N. Lynch ordained Fr. Tim a priest of the Roman Catholic Diocese

of St. Petersburg on May 19, 2012. His first assignment as a priest was as parochial vicar at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Dunedin. In July 2013, he was assigned as parochial vicar at St. Mary Church in Tampa; May 2016, he was appointed parochial administrator there; in July 2018, he was appointed pastor.

Fr. Tim reads, sails, plays golf and tennis, and enjoys music, especially classical, jazz, and the American popular song. Fr. Tim follows major league baseball and is a rabid Rays and Yankees fan. Notably, Fr. Tim successfully survived four years during the seminary behind enemy lines in the heart of Red Sox Nation.



The Marine's Toys for Tots program helps bring the joy of Christmas to less fortunate children. Although our December Christmas luncheon has been cancelled, you can still support this charitable organization by sending a check payable to: "Toys for Tots" to the address below:

Toys For Tots Coordinator  
5121 West Gandy Blvd  
Tampa, FL 33611

For Toy drop-offs: GOOGLE "TOYS FOR TOTS DROP LOCATION NEAR ME"  
Thank you for your consideration in making a child's Christmas a little happier.

### BULLETIN BOARD

#### CARING FOR OUR "SHUT-IN" MEMBERS

Our Chapter wants to become aware of members who are hospitalized, homebound, in care facilities or just plain sick and has provided a way for you to inform us. Please contact CDR Geoff Harrington USNR Ret at (813) 926-7988 so that he may call or send cards to let them know they are missed. Alternatively, you may send an e-mail to:

[TampaMOAA.Secretary@gmail.com](mailto:TampaMOAA.Secretary@gmail.com)

CDR Geoff Harrington USNR, Ret, Sick Call Chairman

### IMPORTANT DATES IN DECEMBER 2020

7 DECEMBER - Pearl Harbor Day, commemorates the Japanese attack on the U.S. Naval base at Pearl Harbor. The attack began at dawn on December 7, 1941. It crippled the U.S. Pacific Fleet and caused the U.S. to enter World War II.

10 DECEMBER - Hanukkah aka (Chanukah) the Festival of Lights begins at sundown.

13 DECEMBER 1636 - Birthday of the National Guard, is the oldest component of the U.S. Armed Forces and one of the nation's longest-enduring institutions.

21 DECEMBER - Winter Solstice marks the beginning of winter and is the shortest day of the year.

25 DECEMBER - Christmas Day, commemorating the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Although the exact date of his birth is not known, it has been celebrated on December 25th by the Western (Roman Catholic) Church since 336 A.D. Christmas has both a strong religious and traditional meaning. It creates, within us, a sense of kindness and good-will for one another and a sense of family and belonging.

31 DECEMBER - New Year's Eve, the final evening of the Gregorian calendar year.

# COALITION CORNER

Submitted by: BGEN Henrik Larsen



Dear MOAA members,

Greetings from all of us at the international part of the great Coalition associated with US Central Command and US Special Operations Command to all of you associated with MOAA.

The holidays are just around the corner. 2020 is coming to an end. We will be referring to 2020 for a very long time. A lot of things have happened this year, but mostly we think about COVID and the severe impact on our daily life. I remember Jim Griffin mentioning that it took a virus to temporarily end the monthly Operation Helping Hands dinners at the VA hospital after almost 200 consecutive events. The virus also brought the

famous International Night to its knees, and indeed what is the most valuable interaction between us and the surrounding community.

I believe it would be fair to state that 2021, in many ways, has a lot to offer. When it comes to COVID it can only get better - and there is a realistic chance for that to occur next year to include establishing some kind of

new normal. Facing tough challenges always offers possibilities. Together we need to reach out for these and somehow make sure that we don't miss obvious opportunities - lessons identified, if you will, and do our utmost to transfer those into lessons learned. It is always a privilege being onboard a team responsible for establishing the way ahead. I believe the key word here is responsibility. From a coalition perspective we will do whatever it takes to ensure a safe return to normality.

On behalf of all the members of the International Coalition at MacDill AFB, I wish you, your families and loved ones a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone again as soon as the situation allows for in person interaction - and rest assured we are planning to host an International Night in 2021. We are also determined to get back supporting Operation Helping Hands in 2021. It is going to be a great year - a year that we will be referring to for a very long time.

All the best,

BGEN Henrik Larsen  
Danish Senior National Representative to US CENTCOM  
Chairman of the Coalition

## TAMPA MOAA BOARD MEETING AND VIRTUAL LUNCHEON PHOTOS NOVEMBER



- The white tablecloth draped over the table represents the purity of their response to our country's call to arms.
- The empty chair depicts an unknown face, representing no specific Soldier, Sailor, Airman, or Marine, but all who are not here with us.
- The table itself is round to show that our concern for them is never ending.
- The Bible represents faith in a higher power and the pledge to our country, founded as one nation under God.
- The black napkin stands for the emptiness these warriors have left in the hearts of their families and friends. A Purple Heart medal can be pinned to the napkin.
- The single red rose reminds us of their families and loved ones. The red ribbon represents the love of our country, which inspired them to answer the nation's call.
- The yellow candle and its yellow ribbon symbolize the everlasting hope for a joyous reunion with those yet accounted for.
- The slices of lemon on the bread plate remind us of their bitter fate.
- The salt upon the bread plate represent the tears of their families.



## Holiday Buddy Check

**WE MISS YOU! WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR THE HOLIDAYS? CAN WE TALK?**

“Tampa MOAA Chapter cares about all of our members. During this time of prolonged social isolation and suspended Chapter meetings, we believe it is important to connect with each other. We are seeking volunteers to do a “Holiday Buddy Check” call to our members to wish them well during this holiday season.

If you can spare a few minutes to make some calls, please contact Sara Marks, Editor, MOAA Tampa Chapter The Retrospect at [sara\\_swims@hotmail.com](mailto:sara_swims@hotmail.com) or (401) 855-3954 NLT 7 Dec 2020.”



## CHAPTER MEMBER OF THE MONTH FRED "SCOTTY" CLELAND

I enlisted in the Air Force on Jan. 13, 1953 in Minneapolis, Minnesota and served for 20 years, retiring on Jan.31, 1973 from Goldsborough, North Carolina. I took my basic training in California and basic maintenance school in Amarillo, Texas. My first assignment was Ellsworth AFB, S. Dakota. I was a mechanic on B-36s and then on B-52s. In Dec.1959, I was accepted into the OCS school in Lackland, AFB, Texas and received my commission in June, 1960.

From there I was sent to basic navigation school in Harlingen, Tx. and then on to Bomb/nave school at Mather AFB, Cal.



Upon graduation I was sent to Grand Forks,

N. Dakota to be a crew member on the new B-52H models. In June of 1968, I was transferred to MCCoy AFB, Orlando, FL where I flew 3 tours in Viet Nam. I was then transferred

to Goldsborough, NC for my 4th tour in Vietnam. They wanted to send me back for a 5th tour and I resigned my regular commission and retired. I felt that I had done my share after 215 combat mis-

sions. Among my many decorations is the Distinguished Flying Cross.

Most of my flying career was spent as standboard navigator and the chief of standboard crew Radar/Navigation.

I am a life member of MOAA National

and a current member in good standing of the Tampa Chapter. I have been an active member for MANY years, serving as Registrations Chairman for most of that time. I have also been active in Operation Helping Hand (OHH) activities to include "sign up" for servers at the monthly OHH dinners. CAPT. Bob Silah was the one who recruited me to be "Santa" which I have done every year since.



### The Soldiers Night Before Christmas

The Soldiers Night Before Christmas  
Twas the night before Christmas, he lived all alone,  
In a one bedroom house made of plaster & stone.  
I had come down the chimney with presents to give  
And to see just who in this home did live.  
I looked all about a strange sight I did see,  
No tinsel, no presents, not even a tree.  
No stocking by the fire, just boots filled with sand,  
On the wall hung pictures of far distant lands.  
With medals and badges, awards of all kind  
A sober thought came through my mind.  
For this house was different, so dark and dreary,  
I knew I had found the home of a soldier, once I could see clearly.  
I heard stories about them, I had to see more  
So I walked down the hall and pushed open the door.  
And there he lay sleeping silent alone,  
Curled up on the floor in his one bedroom home.  
His face so gentle, his room in such disorder,  
Not how I pictured a United States soldier.  
Was this the hero of whom I'd just read?  
Curled up in his poncho, a floor for his bed?  
His head was clean shaven, his weathered face tan,  
I soon understood this was more than a man.  
For I realized the families that I saw that night  
Owed their lives to these men who were willing to fight.  
Soon 'round the world, the children would play,  
And grownups would celebrate on a bright Christmas day.  
They all enjoyed freedom each month of the year,  
Because of soldiers like this one lying here.  
I couldn't help wonder how many lay alone  
On a cold Christmas Eve in a land far from home.  
Just the very thought brought a tear to my eye,  
I dropped to my knees and started to cry.  
The soldier awakened and I heard a rough voice,  
"Santa don't cry, this life is my choice;  
I fight for freedom, I don't ask for more,  
my life is my God, my country, my Corps."  
With that he rolled over and drifted off into sleep,

I couldn't control it, I continued to weep.  
I watched him for hours, so silent and still,  
I noticed he shivered from the cold night's chill.  
So I took off my jacket, the one made of red,  
And I covered this Soldier from his toes to his head.  
And I put on his T-shirt of gray and black,  
With an eagle and an Army patch embroidered on back.  
And although it barely fit me, I began to swell with pride,  
And for a shining moment, I was United States Army deep inside.  
I didn't want to leave him on that cold dark night,  
This guardian of honor so willing to fight.  
Then the soldier rolled over, whispered with a voice so clean and  
pure,  
"Carry on Santa, it's Christmas Day, all is secure."  
One look at my watch, and I knew he was right,  
Merry Christmas my friend, and to all a good night!





## MOAA Tampa Chapter Join Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Service \_\_\_\_\_

Status \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ cell (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth Month \_\_\_\_\_ Day \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency contact: Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

MOAA National Member Number \_\_\_\_\_

**Tampa Chapter annual dues: \$25.00 (There is no dues requirement for active duty personnel or surviving spouse)**

**MOAA National annual dues: \$48.00. You can join National**

**MOAA at their website: [moaa.org](http://moaa.org)**

**MOAA National Lifetime dues: Based on age.**

**Range: \$851-\$0**

**You can bring the completed form to any event or you can mail it with the \$25.00 check made out to:**

**“MOAA Tampa Chapter”, to:**

**Bill Schneider**

**15888 Sanctuary Dr.**

**Tampa, FL 33647**

## Mask Myths and Tips

Information shared by Ms. Renee Brunelle - Tampa Chapter Surviving Spouse Liaison

SeniorLivingU

# MASK MYTHS AND TIPS!

### TIP:

*Wear a MASK,*

**NOT A CHIN GUARD.**



Cloth face coverings and disposable masks are designed to be worn over your nose and mouth to contain your respiratory droplets. If everyone wears a mask, it keeps germs from spreading – but you must wear it over your face and nose for it to work.

### TIP:

*Always take a moment to*

**CHECK YOUR MASK FOR DAMAGE.**



Any rips or tears in a mask makes it ineffective. You should change out your mask if it becomes wet, soiled or shows signs of wear. If using a cloth face covering, you should wash it after every use. Just like other materials, they can become contaminated by bacteria and viruses in our environment and can cause an infection if they go without being cleaned.

**MYTH:** *Wearing a mask can cause carbon dioxide poisoning.*

**TRUTH: MASK HAVE BEEN USED FOR YEARS WITH NO ILL EFFECTS.**

Whether homemade, or surgical grade, face masks do not trap anywhere near enough carbon dioxide to be harmful. The risk of carbon dioxide poisoning, or hypercapnia, is practically nonexistent. The American Lung Association has also addressed that any suggestion that masks reduce oxygen intake is false. Masks are safe when worn properly.

**MYTH:** *Masks don't actually protect you from Covid-19.*

**TRUTH: MASKS REDUCE RISK OF SPREADING TO ABOUT 3%.**

As proven by a review of over 172 different studies worldwide. In the U.S. alone, states that require wearing masks in public since the spring have prevented anywhere from 230,000 to 450,000 new COVID-19 cases. Covid-19 is spread by respiratory droplets that are released into the air when we sneeze, cough, yell, or talk. Using a mask properly is effective in containing those droplets and protecting others.

**MYTH:** *Masks protect others, but not me.*

**TRUTH: MASK HELP PROTECT EVERYONE.**

A recent study in the New England Journal of Medicine illustrates just how effective any type of face mask can be at trapping droplets that are released when talking, which is the primary form of COVID-19 transmission. Masks are also an indirect reminder not to touch your face, which is another way they can protect the wearer.

# A Christmas Collage - Christmas Past





Richard & Joan Rhine

Operation Helping Hand Christmas Dinner at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital in 2019...

...how times have changed during Covid-19 in 2020

Photographs/PPT by R.F. Sawallesh



## Sorry, Grinch. Virus Won't Stop NORAD from Tracking Santa

Children of the world can rest easy. The global pandemic won't stop them from tracking Santa Claus' progress as he delivers gifts around the globe on Christmas Eve.

The North American Aerospace Defense Command has announced that NORAD will track Santa on Dec. 24, just as it has done for 65 years. But



there will be some changes: Not every child will be able to get through to a volunteer at NORAD's call center to check on Santa's whereabouts, as they have in years before.

Normally, 150-160 volunteers crowd into a conference room at Peterson Air Force Base in

Colorado Springs, taking two-hour shifts to answer the phones as eager children call to see if Santa and his sleigh have reached their rooftops. All together, 1,500 people over 20 hours have participated in the call center in the past, fielding more than 130,000 phone calls, beginning at 6 a.m. Eastern time on Christmas Eve.

This year, due to safety restrictions forced by the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of volunteers has been drastically cut to what NORAD expects will be fewer than 10 people per shift.

"We understand this is a time-honored tradition, and we know undoubtedly there is going to be some disappointment," said NORAD spokesman Preston Schlachter. "But we're trying to keep it safe for everyone involved."

So, some callers may be able to once again get through to a member of the military or other volunteer when they dial the NORAD Tracks Santa toll-free number, 1-877-Hi-NORAD. But others will get a recorded update on Santa's current location.

Schlachter said NORAD will largely be limiting volunteers to people who already work there and their immediate families. But that could be expanded a bit as the time gets closer. He said that this year volunteers will answer health questions and have their temperature checked when they arrive, and a cleaning crew will wipe down surfaces throughout the day. There will be wipes and other supplies available, and between shifts the entire calling area will be sanitized before the next group comes in.

Faced with concerns about the virus, officials at NORAD have worked for weeks to figure out a way to ensure that the much-beloved tradition could go on.

The military command has been fielding calls since 1955, when Air Force Col. Harry Shoup — the commander on duty at NORAD's predecessor, the Continental Air Defense Command — fielded a call from a child who dialed a misprinted telephone number in a newspaper department store ad, thinking she was calling Santa.

A fast-thinking Shoup quickly assured his caller that he was. And the tradition began.

Today, most early calls come from Japan and Europe, and as the day goes on the callers from the U.S. and Canada climb.

Besides the call center, the NORAD Tracks Santa website — [noradsanta.org](http://noradsanta.org) — as well as social media pages, Amazon Alexa, Onstar and a new mobile app will still be available with up-to-the-minute details on Santa's location. A social media team will operate from a separate conference room at the base.

The tracking Santa apps will soon be available on Google Play and the Apple App Store.

18 Nov 2020

The Associated Press | By Lolita C. Baldor

## 4 Ways You Can Still Spoil Your Loved Ones This Holiday Season

With the economy struggling the way it is, this is going to be a tough holiday season for a lot of us. This year hasn't exactly been gumdrops and sugar plum fairies, after all.

COVID-19 is still a huge problem, so the weather out there is frightful.

Are you worried you can't afford to spoil your loved ones the way they deserve? Don't despair. Instead, pour yourself a cup of hot cocoa and check out our four tips for saving the holidays:

### 1. Get Creative

Can't afford to buy gifts? Tap into your creative side. Think about what



your loved ones might like and make your own holiday gifts. You don't have to be Martha Stewart, either. It's more about the gesture than making some kind of perfectly crafted artisanal present.

Here are just a few ideas. Framed pictures. Look through your

digital photos of family and friends. Scope out affordable picture frames at thrift stores or dollar stores. Once you know what size frames you have, get the highest-resolution copies of your chosen photos and have them printed to size at CVS, Walgreens or Walmart. Each print usually costs less than \$1.

Family cookbook. Ask relatives to share their recipes. Maybe Grandma has a box of handwritten ones you can convert. Create an accessible digital version online or assemble your own hard copy. Free and low-cost templates and software are available if you want to do it yourself. With a little effort on your part, this could be a treasured gift for generations to come. Knitted and crocheted goods. These are truly one-of-a-kind gifts, too, and baked goods are always welcome. Yum.

### 2. Cut Your Monthly Bills

If you need to free up extra room in your budget, a good place to start is to cut back on your monthly bills -- like, for instance, your current car insurance.

In most places, it's straight up illegal not to have it, so you've probably accepted that you're going to pay through the nose for it. But you don't have to.

A free website called Savvy will help you find the best rates -- in just 30 seconds. In fact, it saves people an average of \$826 a year.

All you have to do is connect your current insurance, then Savvy will search hundreds of insurers for a better price on the same coverage. It'll even help you cancel your old policy and get you a refund from your current insurer. And it's totally free.

### 3. Save a Little Each Week

Start now and set aside a little bit of money every week -- whatever you can afford.

Everyone's situation is a little different. But if you commit right now to saving a certain amount of money each week, you can scrape together a nice little fund to buy holiday gifts, especially if you take our next tip to heart ...

### 4. Think Outside the Big Box Store

An increasing number of gift shoppers are staying out of the big box stores and turning to online marketplaces such as Etsy, eBay and the Amazon Marketplace. This holiday season, consumers are expected to purchase heavily from these websites, according to various forecasts and surveys.

It's not just because of COVID-19, either. Online-savvy shoppers can find some pretty sweet deals this way.

You can find handmade or vintage items on Etsy. You can discover unique or obscure items on eBay. You can find just about anything on Amazon's Marketplace. And if something goes wrong with the transaction, each of these marketplaces has ways to protect you.

It's also worth seeing what you can find locally. Keep tabs on Facebook Marketplace and Offerup to see if your neighbors are selling anything for a good deal. Sometimes, you can find almost-new items available for a lot less!

To sum up: Even if the Grinch has stolen your bank balance this year, you can still celebrate with style and show your loved ones you care.

All it takes is some willpower, some forethought and a dash of holiday magic.

-- This story was originally published by The Penny Hoarder.

## Army-Navy Game to be held at West Point for first time since World War II

Submitted by: CAPT Sara Marks, NC, USN (Ret)

The 121st Army-Navy Game will be hosted by the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York, this December, marking the first time it has been played at a home site since World War II, the two service academies' athletic directors announced Friday.



The game was supposed to be held in Philadelphia, but it was moved after Pennsylvania placed attendance restrictions on outdoor events due

to the coronavirus pandemic. Those limits would not have allowed the entire Corps of Cadets and Brigade of Midshipmen to attend, according to a West Point statement. Instead, the game will be held at West Point's Michie Stadium on Dec. 12. There will likely not be fan attendance allowed at the stadium beyond the Corps of Cadets and Brigade of Midshipmen, the statement added. Midshipmen and cadets, however, will be present and some COVID-19 mitigation measures are expected for those individuals, said West Point spokesman Lt. Col. Christopher Ophardt. Planning is still underway, but Ophardt told Army Times precautions for these types of events typically include segregation of attendees and COVID-19 tests 48 hours before their arrival.

"We want to thank the City of Philadelphia, the Eagles and all involved in the planning for their efforts to navigate this historic game in the current COVID-19 climate," said Army athletic director Mike Buddie in the statement. "We are excited about this historic opportunity to host Navy and

the Brigade." West Point Superintendent Lt. Gen. Darryl A. Williams said hosting the "Army-Navy Game on West Point will be the safest way for the Cadets and Midshipmen to experience" the event. "Every effort was made to create a safe and acceptable environment for the Brigade, the Corps and our public while meeting city and state requirements," said Navy athletic director Chet Gladchuk in the statement. "However, medical conditions and protocols dictate the environment in which we live."

The last time the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, hosted the game was in 1942. West Point last hosted in 1943. The two schools also rotated hosting the first four games from 1890-1893.

Navy leads in the series 61 wins versus Army's 52. The game will be televised by CBS Sports at 3 p.m. EST on Dec. 12.

Source: <https://www.armytimes.com>

## Maverick's Favorite Fighter Jet Is Getting Its Own Monument

Submitted by: COL Carol Zieres, USA (Ret)

A new monument dedicated to the U.S. Navy's F-14 Tomcat fighter, made famous by the movie "Top Gun," will be unveiled in Pensacola, Florida, on Wednesday.

The F-14 Tomcat Monument Association will debut a paneled monument at the National Naval Aviation Museum, dedicated to 68 service members who died flying the famed aircraft, ac-



ording to a news release. The monument, which features laser-etched storyboard panels displaying the Tomcat in action, also honors the maintenance crews who kept the F-14 flying for more than 30 years.

"This new monument will enhance the display of what is not only an iconic aircraft in the history of naval aviation, but an iconic spot on our campus," said Sterling Gilliam, the museum director and a retired Navy captain, in the release. The presentation comes just a few weeks shy of the 50th anniversary of the F-14's maiden flight on Dec. 21, 1970.

The F-14 monument is one of three the association has created. In June, the nonprofit group dedicated the first obelisk-shaped memorial in Virginia Beach's Naval Aviation Monument Park. The third is planned for San Diego, home of the Navy's "Top Gun" Fighter Weapons School.

The Pensacola monument joins the last Grumman-made F-14 to fly a combat mission, which was dedicated at the museum shortly after its final flight over Iraq in 2006 -- the same year the Navy retired the airframe.

The featured jet -- converted from an A to D model in the early 1990s -- flew its first combat missions over Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom and its last 224 combat sorties over Iraq before Strike Fighter Squadron 213 of Naval Air Station Oceana, Virginia, turned it over to the museum, according to a museum

factsheet.

While the F-14 was manufactured to fill a gap created by the Navy's ill-fated F-111B program, a carrier-based offshoot of the Air Force's F-111A Aardvark, it soon became the face of naval aviation. It was an all-weather, variable swept-wing, twin-engine fighter with a strike range of up to 100 miles from its target -- thanks to its AIM-54 Phoenix long-range, air-to-air missiles.

"At peak employment, 30 Navy squadrons operated F-14s," according to the museum. The Tomcat also briefly flew security patrols over Vietnam.

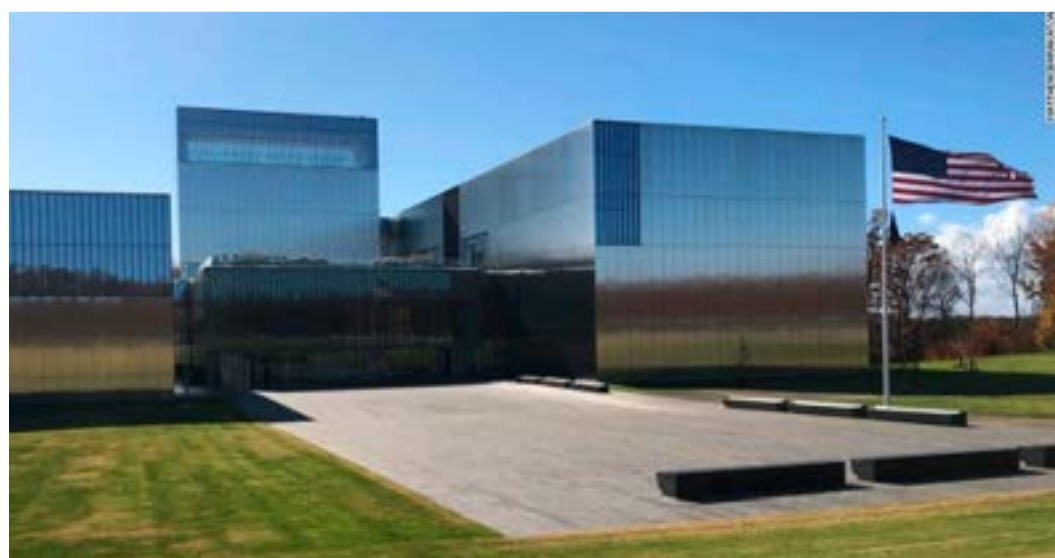
The F-14 gained public prominence in 1986, when actor Tom Cruise portrayed Lt. Pete Mitchell, call sign "Maverick," piloting the aircraft in nail-biting aerial dogfights on the silver screen in "Top Gun."

The F-14 association, which has worked on the monument project for more than two years, is made up of former aircrew, maintainers, civil servants, contractors, and those who "just plain love the F-14 aircraft," according to its website.

17 Nov 2020  
Military.com | By Oriana Pawlyk

## The National Museum of the United States Army officially opens to the public on Veteran's Day

Submitted by: COL Carol Zieres, USA (Ret)



The National Museum of the United States Army opened to the public on Veteran's Day.

The museum, located approximately 30 minutes south of Washington D.C. on 84 acres of land at Fort Belvoir in Virginia, honors the service of the more than 30 million men and women who have donned an Army uniform since 1775, according to a news release.

A live-streamed virtual opening ceremony took place on opening day, and Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy, among others, made remarks during the ceremony.

The public and privately-funded museum cost \$200 million to build, and construction broke ground in 2016, the release said. The 185,000 square-foot main building will display Army artifacts, documents, images and artwork, most of which have never been seen by the public.

A few notable artifacts will be on display: The M3 Bradley Cavalry Fighting Vehicle that led the 2003 charge from Kuwait to Baghdad, the M4A3E2 Sherman "Jumbo" Tank that broke through German lines during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II, and one of the few remaining "Higgins boats" that carried U.S. troops ashore to Normandy on D-Day during World War II. "The U.S. Army has greatly aided the nation's progress and prosperity. Soldiers have conducted countless missions in the areas of exploration and discovery, science and technology, communications and cooperation, and recovery and disaster relief," retired Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, chairman of the Army Historical Foundation, said in 2016.

"Nearly every major event in our nation's history has involved the U.S. Army, and this Museum will ensure those contributions and sacrifices are not lost to time."

## THE BOARD NEEDS YOUR HELP

The Board of Directors have been informed the Club is no-longer an option for our monthly luncheons. It is now an active duty primary facility and can no longer be considered for our use. That means that we must find a place off-base for our monthly luncheons.

For Nov. we used the Columbia Centennial Museum. Beyond that date, the chapter remains “homeless” until we find another venue.

We have had a few suggestions now we must get serious. We need your help in finding a place to call home. If you have any recommendations, even if you have submitted them with the survey in the past, please send them again.

We need the name and location along with a name and phone number for us to contact. We must have adequate parking for the restaurant to be considered. The Board will form a Committee to take all recommendations in consideration and will visit and make sure the costs are reasonable for the value offered.

We have been spoiled by having an on Base Club for our luncheons, we should not expect to receive such low costs in the future. Please send all recommendations to Dick Siegman at [dicknick2@msn.com](mailto:dicknick2@msn.com) as soon as possible. You will be advised as to the Boards Recommendations as soon as we consolidate and evaluate. Thank You for your assistance.

Richard E. Siegman, Lt. Col. USAF Ret. Tampa Chapter, MOAA, Board of Directors



## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

CHAPLAIN (COL) BERNARD H LIEVING JR USA RET

As I write this article the final results of our presidential election nineteen-days-ago are still not known. Hopefully, by the time you read this article all the court cases will be decided, all the recounting will be completed and we will all know who our next President will be. When the winning political party celebrations are over the question with which our nation will be confronted is, “Are the political divisions so deep that there is no room for reconciliation?”

The process of reconciliation in the midst of the depth of the divisions we face will not be easy. The relationships which have been broken, the disharmony which has evolved, and the lack of good faith which has brought about this separation will require both sides to not judge, condemn, evaluate, classify, or label. Being nonjudgmental will not be easy for either political side. Yet the truth is that we are one people, united under the fifty-starred flag we MOAA members proudly served in and out of our varied uniforms.

Reconciling means breaking down the dividing walls that separate us and showing the world through our actions toward others that our desire is for peace. When that happens we can all leave our weapons at the door and enter into the process of restoring relationships and resolving conflicts with those who live different lifestyles, with people who do not think as we think, speak as we speak, or act as we act. It can happen if we are willing to work at it.

## HAVE YOU VISITED OUR WEBSITE AND ‘LIKED’ OUR FACEBOOK PAGE?

[WWW.MOAAATAMPA.ORG](http://WWW.MOAAATAMPA.ORG) and Facebook: [MOAA Tampa Chapter](#)

The MOAA Tampa website is a comprehensive and valuable tool that you can use to make the most of your MOAA Membership. Some of the things you can find on our website include:

**Events Calendar:** We have a new “Events” page where you will find an updated calendar, displaying our upcoming MOAA events, as well as events happening with Operation Helping Hand. Click on our [Events Page](#) to check it out!

**Photo Gallery of Events:** This is our photo gallery, where you will see all of the photos during our luncheons, special meetings, conventions and more! If you’ve had your picture taken at our events, you can likely find it by scrolling through our [Photo Gallery](#)!

**Newsletters:** Here you will find the latest volume of The Retrospect, our award winning Tampa Chapter Newsletter. You can also access archived versions of The Retrospect for reference and research. In addition, you can find archived versions of the Military Spouse Newsletter, which has been merged into The Retrospect starting in August 2019. Visit [The Retrospect](#) page to read on!

**Member Directory:** You can access an electronic version of our Member Directory on our website. The list is password protected for safety of our private information, but MOAA Tampa Chapter Members can be provided the pass-word to access. You can also download an Excel version of the list once permitted into the page. Check out the [Member Directory](#) now!

**Facebook:** Visit us on Facebook at [“MOAA Tampa Chapter”](#) where you can scroll through our photo albums, like and share our posts, and stay up to date on Tampa Chapter news and events.

[WWW.MOAAATAMPA.ORG](http://WWW.MOAAATAMPA.ORG)



# “NEVER STOP SERVING”