

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT: COL CHARLES DALCOURT USA RET

GREETINGS!



objective standards, chapters provided answers to questions regarding grassroots advocacy, community engagements, recruiting and retention, leadership succession, and accomplishments achieved in response to the pandemic. In every area, our Chapter stood tall and could articulate tangible efforts that met or exceeded expectations. This past week, we were officially notified that Tampa MOAA Chapter earned another 5-star rating!

Thanks to all our volunteers that give of themselves to enable the progress and growth of the Chapter. Thanks to our members for embracing change, the relevant modifications of methods, and the strategic approach we've taken to ensure our governance and business practices set the standard. I appreciate your membership and moreover, value your contribution to this Chapter.

Member of the Month

This month we are pleased and privileged to honor Colonel William "Bill" Schneider (USA Retired). An incredible advocate for our Chapter, Bill's presence, contributions, and insights drive action both in and out of our board room. His service to our Chapter is longstanding and his impact immeasurable. Whether toiling through membership data, collecting funds at Operation Helping Hand events, communicating the context of standing policies, or sharing his heart with JROTC cadets at award ceremonies and the like, Bill

is truly an inspiring soul. He leads by example and lives in service to others.

Please join us on 9 September at our monthly luncheon, in-person or virtually, as we honor Bill. Also, please be sure to read his biographical information later in this newsletter. The first two lines will pull you into his story.

Wrapping up:

In closing, I remain thankful for the opportunity to serve you. Know that several volunteers, on and off your Board of Directors, are working diligently to support our organization. I encourage you to come alongside us and help where, when, and in any manner you can. There's a strength you have that's needed in our fight. I offer again that service and commitment, advocacy and advancement, enablement and encouragement are all things that we offer in great measure to our Nation and those that continue to serve. Please be well and commit to sharing the gifts you have been given.

All the best,
Charles Dalcourt

Greetings to all and thanks for reading our September 2021 newsletter. It's a privilege to share with both the members of our Chapter and friends around the Nation our Chapter's initiatives and successes. We have been very fortunate to have enjoyed a year of growth in membership and an expansion of capabilities. Thanks to all that regularly contribute their time, talent, and ideas to increase our impact in Tampa and across the globe.

Great News

Earlier this year, the Chapter self-nominated itself for MOAA's annual Council and Chapter Levels of Excellence Award for performance in 2020. Evaluated against long-standing

UPCOMING EVENTS

2 Sept
10:00 AM
Board of Directors Meeting

9 Sept
11:30 Chapter Luncheon
Columbia Restaurant Siboney Room
(See page 6)

16 Sept
Operation Helping Hand Dinner
Location Embassy Suites, USF
(See page 5)

10 December - 6:00PM-10:00PM
Winter Gala YOU ARE INVITED!
For more info email:
tampamoaa.event@gmail.com
(See page 6)

WANT TO PLACE AN AD
(See page 6)

REMINDER:

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

FOR THE OCTOBER ISSUE IS

20 SEPTEMBER 2021

Please submit articles in a Word Document and photos in JPEG

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

LEGISLATIVE LOWDOWN



BY LTC REGINALD WILLIAMS, USA RET

As Congress comes from recess, they have some work to accomplish in order to finalize the Authorization and Appropriations Bills. In the mean time we have some work to do as well and I would like to galvanize our chapter members to go online, call, write, and meet with our respective legislators in order to gain support for those Bills that impact our servicemembers, veterans, retirees, family members and communities. This is time to Take Action and Get it Done! So let's get right to it!

Advocacy in Action Update: It's Not Too Late to Reach Out to Your Lawmakers¹

MOAA's Advocacy in Action, launched in May, has gone a

long way to energize our grassroots efforts to make sure Congress is aware of our concerns in three areas. Here's where legislation connected to these issues.

Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Reform – Veterans Burn Pit Exposure Recognition Act

- [H.R. 2436](#): 45 co-sponsors
- [S. 437](#): 38 co-sponsors

Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Reform – Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Act

- [H.R. 2127](#): 51 co-sponsors
- [S. 927](#): 13 co-sponsors

Basic Needs Allowance – Military Hunger Prevention Act

- [H.R. 2339](#): 57 co-sponsors
- [S. 1488](#): 23 co-sponsors

Parity for TRICARE Young Adults

- [H.R. 475](#): 74 co-sponsors
- [S. 1972](#): 6 co-sponsors

Each of these topics has a continuing story, and each is in a different stage of the legislative process – some are emerging and gaining traction, and some are already being supported by the House and Senate Armed Services Committees as part of their respective drafts of the FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Whether making up ground or getting close to the finish line, we need all of you to continue engaging your members of Congress throughout the summer period to keep these issues at the forefront – remember, your legislators are in the receive mode.

Here is a rundown of each of these topics and where they

stand in the legislative process:

Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Reform

There has been resounding support from our members on this issue, with over 10,000 messages sent to legislators nationally.

TAKE ACTION: Ask Your Lawmaker to Support Toxic Exposure Reform Omnibus Bills

Even with this level of support, we must remain engaged with our legislators to make sure they know the importance of toxic exposure reform as one of MOAA's priorities. With the House and Senate proposing different versions of this reform, we need to keep communicating with the Hill to ensure MOAA's views are included in a consensus omnibus bill.

Basic Needs Allowance

Provisions of the Military Hunger Prevention Act appear in both the House and Senate draft versions of the NDAA. Grassroots support has delivered over 5,200 messages to legislators so far across MOAA, but we can use much more to ensure this important legislation makes it through the combined final drafting process known as the conference committee.

TAKE ACTION: Ask Your Lawmaker to Help Young Military Families

This is a great opportunity for you to show your support for our junior servicemembers and their families.

Parity for TRICARE Young Adults

MOAA members have sent over 3,300 messages to their legislators which helped establish a base of support with 80 co-sponsors, but it was not enough to encourage the Armed Services committees to include this legislation in their NDAA draft.

continued on next page

TAKE ACTION: Ask Your Lawmakers to Fix the TRICARE Young Adult Coverage Gap

Support MOAA's NDAA Efforts

You can make your voice heard on these MOAA priorities by asking your lawmakers to co-sponsor bills addressing these issues in the current legislative session. The more support these bills have, the better the chance of their inclusion in the final NDAA:

- [Fix the TRICARE Young Adult Coverage Gap](#)
- [Support the Military Hunger Prevention Act](#)
- [Support Concurrent Receipt](#)
- [Support Legislation Extending TRICARE Coverage to Certain 'Gray Area' Retirees](#)
- [Support the Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act](#)
- [Secure Health Care for Servicemembers in the Selected Reserve](#)
- [Support the Retained Skilled Veterans Act](#)
- [Ask Your Lawmakers to Support the Major Richard Star Act](#)
- [Ask Your Lawmakers to Preserve the National Cemetery Benefit](#)

VA Announces 3 New Presumptive Conditions Connected to Burn Pit Exposure²

The VA announced it will begin processing claims for the chronic disabilities of asthma, rhinitis, and sinusitis, to include rhinosinusitis, as of Aug. 5, with servicemembers who deployed in Southwest Asia during the Gulf War and in response to the Global War on Terror eligible to have their claims fast-tracked.

This welcome news for thousands of veterans reflects the impact of MOAA and other veterans service organizations (VSOs) working to influence Congress on comprehensive toxic exposure reform, and shows the VA is watching Hill activity on this issue very closely. The nearly 10,000 emails MOAA members sent to Congress and over 350 meetings with lawmakers on the topic helped shape the debate in a way that would not have been possible without grassroots support.

It also highlights the need for an enduring, comprehensive process – like the one MOAA has backed. The underlying evidence the VA used to make this decision, provided in supplemental material shared alongside the rules in the Federal Register, comes from multiple sources and studies dating back to 2010: This shows the VA decision could have been made earlier, given they have the authority to do so.

Rule Details

Servicemembers whose conditions manifested and diagnosed within 10 years of qualifying service, are eligible to have their claims fast-tracked by the VA if they served:

- In the Southwest Asia theater of operations beginning Aug. 2, 1990, to the present (to include Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the neutral zone between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, the Gulf of Aden, the Gulf of Oman, the Persian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea and the airspace above these locations), or
- In Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Syria, or Djibouti beginning Sept. 19, 2001 to the present.

The VA will be conducting outreach regarding the expanded eligibility for these conditions and has encouraged all veterans suffering from them to [file a claim](#).

The VA released these rules as an “interim final rule,” which allows for interested stakeholders to offer feedback on the rule but still allows the department to accept and process claims as of the Aug. 5 publication date. Individuals who previously filed a disability claim and were denied service-connection for one of these conditions will need to refile with the VA for review.

The decision comes after the VA conducted an internal review process and deemed the evidence sufficient based on their review of National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) report and other evidence.

What's Next

VA Secretary Denis McDonough has promised to put veterans first, and the VA is backing up such words with these kinds of actions. MOAA is encouraged by the first round of the VA's new process – now transparency with VSOs and

codifying a science-based approach are needed to help veterans quickly. The way VA approves presumptives should not change depending upon department leadership.

The addition of these presumptives is critical and will help tens of thousands of veterans, but our work is not done. MOAA's ask for comprehensive reforms will be revisited by Congress after the August recess. Additionally, Congress needs to ensure the VA is resourced for the additional claims stemming from these new presumptives.

Reserve Component Benefits Are at Risk. Ask Your House Member to Act Now³

While the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) remains in its early stages, initial drafts released by the Armed Services Committees reveal some potential wins for servicemembers in the reserve component (RC). Included in the Senate bill summary is a provision to provide Aviation Career Incentive Pay (ACIP) and Hazardous Duty Incentive Pay (HDIP) parity for the reserve and active components.

Over the past year, members of the reserve component have proven how valuable they are serving overseas, securing our border, or helping to protect our communities with COVID-19 relief operations – all part of the component's largest mobilization since World War II. Members fought forest fires, supported law enforcement, issued vaccines, and provided emergency evacuation from floods.

Hazardous Duty and Flight pay were well earned by these servicemembers, and fixing the incentive pay disparity would ensure those who are required to maintain a proficiency earn the same as their active duty counterparts.

Our nation has increasingly relied on the RC during emergencies, and parity of benefits is an important part of retention. Correcting this parity gap now is essential after the revelation that those in the National Guard are twice as likely to be experiencing food insecurity as the general population.

Passing this legislation would potentially mean hundreds of dollars into some servicemembers' pockets each month. Here's a look at some monthly incentive rates, and how much RC members stand to gain if Congress closes the gap between them and their active duty counterparts:

Aviators

- **Active Officer (with over six years' service):** \$650-\$700
- **Reserve Component Officer (with over six years):** \$52-\$57

Aircrew

- **Active enlisted:** \$150-\$240
- **RC enlisted:** \$12-\$20
- **Active warrant officer:** \$150-\$215
- **RC warrant officer:** \$12-\$17
- **Active officer:** \$150-\$250
- **RC officer:** \$12-\$20

Parachute Duty (High Altitude, Low Opening)

- **Active:** \$150-\$225
- **RC:** \$12-\$20

Other Hazardous Duties: These offer \$150 per month to active duty members and \$12 to RC members. Examples include:

- Demolition
- Experimental stress
- Flight deck
- Exposure to highly toxic pesticides
- Laboratory duty utilizing live dangerous viruses or bacteria
- Toxic fuels and propellants
- Handling chemical munitions
- Maritime visit, board, search, seizure (VBSS)
- Weapons of mass destruction civil support (WMDCS) team
- Diving

Despite efforts to fix this in last year's NDAA, the language left holes that would allow DoD to pay a lesser monthly rate to reserve component members who have the same proficiencies. This year's language works to close that loophole and adds ACIP alongside HDIP.

While the Senate has included the fix in its NDAA draft, it is unclear if the House will adopt this important provision. Your House member needs to hear from you to know this is a priority for this year's NDAA. Act now and support reserve component pay parity.

NDAA Update: What's In, What's Out (So Far), and What's Next⁴

Key House and Senate committees have marked up their chamber's versions of the FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), adding several MOAA-backed provisions early in the legislative process. Here is what MOAA knows about the FY 2022 NDAA, and how you can help keep pressure on lawmakers to ensure key improvements remain in the legislation or are added in the coming weeks:

Active Component

IN: Basic Needs Allowance. Provisions of the Military Hunger Prevention Act, one of MOAA's three Advocacy in Action issues this year, appear in both the House and Senate versions of the NDAA.

Reserve Component

IN: Parity of Special and Incentive Pays. The Senate bill summary includes the requirement for parity of special and incentive pays for servicemembers of the reserve and active components.

Health Care

IN: Stopping Medical Billet Cuts. MOAA's ongoing work on the medical billet cuts issue succeeded in continued oversight efforts by the HASC.

IN: Stopping "China Rx." MOAA has repeatedly raised concerns about U.S. reliance on overseas prescription drug manufacturing and active ingredient production.

IN: Better Mental Health Care. Improving access to mental health care for military families was one of MOAA's top priorities this year, and the HASC MilPers mark includes two reporting requirements addressing this issue: One directs DoD to assess the impact of TRICARE copay increases on utilization of mental health visits, while the other requires DoD to review options for improving recruitment and retention of mental health providers in the military health system.

OUT: Fixing TRICARE Gaps. Legislation addressing TRICARE parity gaps – for young adult dependents and National Guard and Reserve servicemembers – is not included in the draft bill.

Families

IN: Better BAH. MOAA has received feedback from currently serving families regarding difficulties finding acceptable, affordable housing following increases in the rental market nationwide.

IN: Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) Advisory Council. The MilPers mark establishes guidelines to create an advisory council to provide feedback to DoD on ways to improve the EFMP.

IN: Servicemember Parental Support. MOAA recognizes the importance of legislation increasing flexibility and support to military families who choose to become parents and enhancing physical, mental, and psychological health and well-being during a stressful period.

IN: Military Child Care Improvements. Finding affordable, accessible child care continues to be a primary concern for military families.

Retirees

OUT: Concurrent Receipt Reform. It is very disappointing to see the [Major Richard Star Act](#) (S. 344/H.R. 1282) has so far not been included in this year's NDAA.

Please remember to take action! [Visit MOAA's Take Action Center](#)

Sources:

- 1) [www.moaa.org](#), article by Dan Merry, August 10, 2021
- 2) [www.moaa.org](#), article by Cory Titus, August 10, 2021
- 3) [www.moaa.org](#), article by Cory Titus, August 18, 2021
- 4) [www.moaa.org](#), article by MOAA Government Relations Staff, Aug. 03, 2021

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



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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



5 Star MOAA Chapter
2002, 2004-2017, 2019, 2020



2020 Recipient of the
5 Star Col. Marvin J. Harris
Communications Award



Chairman of the Joint Chief's
Outstanding Public Service Award

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.

GENERAL CONTACT INFO:

The Tampa Chapter of the
Military Officers Association of America
Post Office Box 6383
Tampa, FL 33608-0383
E-Mail: TampaMOAA.Secretary@gmail.com



August Luncheon Guest Speaker: Kimberly Overman, Vice Chair, District 7 – Countywide Board of County Commissioners



A 37-year resident of the Tampa Bay area, Kimberly Overman was elected to the County Commission in 2018. Kimberly earned a Bachelor of Science in Agricultural and Resource Economics Degree from the University of Maryland, raised two children and launched and ran several successful businesses. She is a Certified Financial Planner and former CEO of a fee-only registered investment advisory firm and owner of The Heights Exchange, LLC, a commercial space in Seminole Heights.

She also re-created a business chamber of commerce for the Tampa urban core. A long-time advocate of smart planning, economic growth, strong families, sustainable communities, and the importance of education,

Commissioner Overman has a long history of public service volunteerism and community involvement.

The Commissioner currently serves on the following boards and councils:

- Affordable Housing Advisory Board (Chair),
- Commission on Human Trafficking (Chair),
- Transportation Management Area Leadership Group (includes MPO/TPO representatives from Pasco, Pinellas & Hillsborough County) (Chair),
- Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority (HART),
- Transportation Planning Organization,
- Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County,
- Public Safety Coordinating Council,
- Liaison for the Department of Defense - Greater Tampa Chamber of Commerce MacDill Air Force Base Support Committee, and
- Hillsborough County Hospital Authority

**September Luncheon Guest Speaker: Vice Admiral (VADM) James Malloy, Deputy Commander, U.S. Central Command.

VADM Malloy has understandably been detained the last two months due to world events, and we so hope that he'll be able to speak in September.



Notes from the Editor: CAPT Sara Marks, NC, USN (Ret)



So much in the world has changed since the pandemic began. I've often said, "Just when I knew all the answers, they changed all the questions!" I fall back on the "adapt and overcome" adage and most importantly turn to prayer. So much is happening with evacuation of Americans and our Afghan allies from Afghanistan, but also remembering

that it was 20 years ago when 9-11 happened. In the August issue of the newsletter one riveting story was highlighted from Carol Zieres, but more chapter members shared their memories of where they were on 9-11 so take the time to read their stories. I was also in Sarasota on August 14th where they were rededicating the Kissing Sailor Statue in the Unconditional Surrender Park. A fellow shipmate and friend of mine, Jerry O'Donnell, who was there to share the story of two people immortalized in Life magazine with the famous kiss of the Navy Sailor and the Nurse in Times Square. Read the story of George Mendonsa and Greta Zimmer Friedman who were always so proud to be associated with such a happy event, the end of World War II. Praying for more happy events, but also praying for all affected by Hurricane Ida.

Looking forward to our next luncheon, Vice Admiral Malloy, Deputy Commander of CENTCOM rescheduled his talk from our luncheon in July and August luncheon, and we hope that with the most recent world events that his schedule will allow him to come this month. With the current world events we look forward to hearing his perspective. Hillsborough County Commissioner District 7 and Countywide Vice Chair, Kimberly Overman spoke at the August luncheon and provided an overview of transportation and road projects in Hillsborough County. She was very informative, and her impressive bio is provided.

As I prepare for each edition of The Retrospect, I always love talking to our members highlighted each month in our newsletter. Our chapter wouldn't be successful without you. 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 September, Member of the Month, is Col William "Bill" Schneider, USA, Ret for his patriotism and outstanding service in support of the MOAA Tampa Chapter. Bill, I've come to know you since my time in the MOAA Tampa Chapter, and so love your dry sense of humor and so appreciate your dedication as our 1st Vice President, Membership Chair and running the Scholarship Program. Also take the time to read about our Chapter Member Spot-light, LTC Ruth VanDyke, USA, Ret. Ruth, you've amazing! You are involved in so many community endeavors, but what I admire most about you is your dedication to your family. Congratulations to Ben Ritter for being honored at James A. Haley VA in August.

Lots of important dates in the month of September. Articles are provided for Patriot Day (9-11), Suicide awareness month, Happy Birthday to U.S. Air Force, VJ Day September 2, 1945, the day that Japan formally signed unconditional surrender papers in Tokyo Harbor and many other articles that I hope you'll find interesting and informative. I especially want to thank BG Larsen for providing monthly updates on our Coalition Partners. We loved your quiz last month and learned so much!

Chapter Members, this is your newsletter so please share your 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. Send me your stories!

"I've said before I believe this land was set aside in an uncommon way, that some divine plan must have placed this continent between the oceans to be found by people from every corner of the Earth, but who had one thing in common and that was a special love of faith and freedom and peace. – Ronald Reagan.

Let us never forget. - NEVER STOP SERVING!

Sara Marks, CAPT NC USN (Ret)

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(c)(19) tax exempt veterans' organization not associated with the Department of Defense and is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

MOAA National, the Florida Council of Chapters, and the Tampa Chapter are non-partisan organizations. The views expressed in individually signed articles and the advertisements that appear in this publication/website do not reflect an endorsement by MOAA or this affiliate. Articles in the newsletter/website are the opinions solely of the individual authors and do not necessarily express the policy or opinions of the newsletter's editor or publisher, nor do they reflect an endorsement by the Tampa Chapter or the National organization of the Military Officers Association of America, unless so indicated. The views expressed in individually signed articles do not necessarily reflect Chapter policy.

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 each month at the Colombia Restaurant Sibodney Room in Ybor City and available to attend via Zoom.

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 MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY is posted on the website under the "MEMBERSHIP" category.

FL COUNCIL of CHAPTERS: www.moaafl.org

MOAA NATIONAL: www.moaa.org

OPERATION HELPING HAND: www.operationhelpinghandtampa.com

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

MOAA's News Listing. Click for the latest news and resources from MOAA. www.moaa.org

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

At 1800, SEPTEMBER 16, OPERATION HELPING HAND will resume our monthly dinners at the EMBASSY SUITES, USF location. The HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE has stepped up to the plate and will sponsor the first dinner. Thanks to our many loyal sponsors of the monthly dinners, we have all of the dinners sponsored through MARCH 2022. We cannot thank the following folks enough for their continued sponsorship:

- HCSO
- BOOZ ALLEN HAMILTON
- CELESTAR CORP.
- CAE USA
- SOF MISSIONS
- ARMA GLOBAL CORP
- BLUE BELL ICE CREAM
- MIKE'S PIES
- FREEDOM HIGH SCHOOL JROTC

Our dinners will be limited to 100 attendees. The reservation instructions are detailed on the OPERATIONHELPINGHANDTAMPA.COM WEBSITE. Call (813) 771-6744 for reservations. **YOU MUST MAKE RESERVATIONS TO ATTEND –NO WALKUPS!** We will ZOOM to the patients in the SCI who are not able to attend the dinners. Those that can attend and their families are more than welcome to attend.

A very special thanks to BARBARA TYLER, the events service manager, who has been most helpful in agreeing to our many demands. The venue is fantastic! The menu for each dinner will be fantastic! We are once again very happy to be providing this additional support to the wounded and injured and their families.

OPERATION HELPING HAND remains as an all volunteer 501 (c)(3) organization, in which 96.5% of all donations received goes for the support of our vital projects.

OPERATION HELPING HAND will need your continued support to allow us to continue our vital program of service to our wounded and injured and their families.

This support can be through donations by checks or using our website (OPERATION-HELPINGHANDTAMPA.COM) or can be made through AMAZONSMILE AT [HTTPS://ORG.AMAZON.COM](https://ORG.AMAZON.COM).

STAY SAFE, HEALTHY, AND RESILIENT!

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




LTC JIM GRIFFIN
Chairman, OPHH

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



Calling Tampa MOAA members who work for local, national and international corporations.
How would you like to see your corporation's logo in the March 22, 2022 Bob Silah Memorial Golf Tournament at MacDill AFB?
Plan early, Contact tigerpaw65@verizon.net.



SEPTEMBER CHAPTER MEMBER SPOTLIGHT LTC RUTH VANDYKE, USA (RET)

Ruth VanDyke enlisted in the Women's Army Corps in July 1973 and attended Defense Language school, (Russian) in Monterey CA and code breaking school at Ft. Devens MA before getting an ROTC scholarship and commissioned as a 2LT in the US Army Chemical Corps. After serving on active duty for 22 years, Ruth retired and followed her husband Lewis around the country. She worked with battalion spouses and Chemical School spouses to help family members and taught Army Family Team building, while working part time on requirements generation for the Chem Bio Defense program.



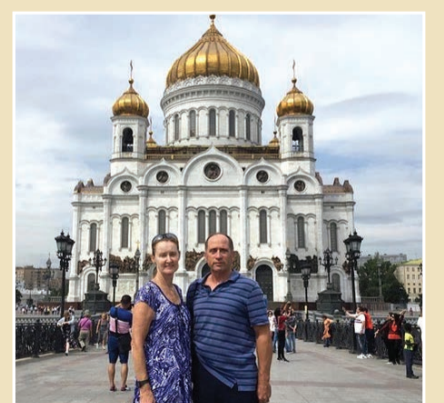
been a Rotarian since 1995, and has served in all club level positions, including president of 3 different clubs. Serving as the Assistant Governor for District 6890 in 2011, she was also selected that year, as the Rotarian leader for a 2012 cultural and vocational Group Study Exchange between District 6890 (Hillsborough, Hardee, Highlands and Polk counties) and District 2490, Israel. She served as District Rotary Annual Giving Chair in 2008 and District Rotary Foundation Matching Grants Chair, 2012-2015, resulting in matching grants for adolescent heart surgeries, hydroponic garden projects, solar power and water projects as well and supporting local charities, in excess of \$150K a year of matching funds.

In 2016 Ruth was chosen as one of four women statewide, to be honored with a Jewish Museum of Florida/Florida International University, "Breaking the Glass Ceiling Award" at a ceremony in Miami, and for being one of the first women to receive an ROTC scholarship resulting in a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army. Also, for her selection as the first Combatting Weapons of Mass Destruction Liaison officer from the Joint Staff (Pentagon) to Special Operations Command. Additionally, she authored an award winning historical fiction series, chronicling the challenges the first female ROTC commissioned Officers and West Point graduates faced in the 1970's and 1980's.



In 2017 she was honored at the Army Women's Foundation Annual Hall of Fame induction ceremony for preserving the history of women serving in the post-Vietnam, all volunteer Army by authoring the Guardians of Peace historical Fiction series.

In 2018 she was asked to serve on the Executive Board for the Army Women's Foundation and continues to serve on that board.

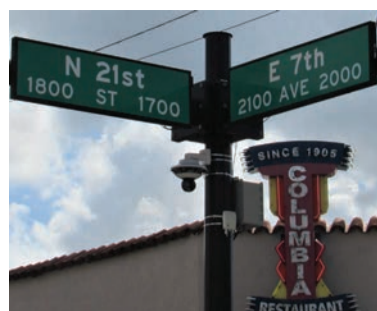


In 2019 she was asked to be the Central Florida Military Women's Memorial (located at the entrance to Arlington Cemetery) ambassador and remains active in that role. Her responsibilities include raising awareness of the mission of the women's memorial/museum by giving presentations to educational institutions, military and veterans support groups and civic organizations. In this role, Ruth presents "Living Legend" awards to local women who served their country in wartime and participate in local Military and Veteran Support Organizations activities such as the Tampa Bay Women's Military Veterans Conference and the upcoming DAV conventions.

Most recently Ruth was inducted into the Tampa Bay Area Committee on Foreign Relations in 2020.

Ruth is married to fellow Tampa MOAA chapter Member COL Lewis VanDyke, USA (Ret), and they recently celebrated their 39th wedding Anniversary.

Currently an active member of the Ybor City Rotary Club and currently serves as a director for the club nonprofit foundation and is the community service chair. Ruth has



SEPTEMBER LUNCHEON MEETING

EVENT: Chapter Monthly Luncheon Meeting
DATE: Thursday, 9 September **TIME:** 1130 hours
LOCATION: Columbia Restaurant, Siboney Room 2117 E 7th Ave, Ybor City
RESERVATIONS: Call 813-676-4676 and follow prompts OR via email at:
moaatampa.reservations@gmail.com



REMEMBER a reservation made is a reservation paid.

Reservations must be made by NOON Friday, 3 September. Reservations are limited to 60.

CANCELLATIONS must be made by NOON Monday, 6 September by calling 813-676-4676

COST: Event cost \$30 payable by check or with cash. **MASKS:** Masks are optional but encouraged.

DRESS CODE: During periods when Daylight Savings is in effect, proper attire is business casual (slacks/shirts with collar).

MENU: 1905 Salad, Cuban Bread and Butter, Arroz con Pollo, Roast Pork, Seasonal Fresh Vegetables, Black Beans, Platanos, Coffee, Iced Tea, Soft drinks and Dessert

PARKING: Across the street from and behind the Columbia Restaurant

Luncheon reminders are sent via email. If you are not receiving the reminders, please call 813-948-7539 or send an email to lutzgranny89@gmail.com to be added to the distribution list.

If you are unable to attend in person, the luncheon meeting will be available via ZOOM:

One Tap Mobile: US: [+13126266799](tel:+13126266799), [82337120870](tel:+182337120870)#, ..., *548433# or [+16465588656](tel:+16465588656), [82337120870](tel:+182337120870)#, ..., *548433#

Meeting URL: <https://triple-strand-global-solutions.zoom.us/j/82337120870?pwd=bldLM2dMNjBtajZtZWdoeGNGWTh4UT09&from=addon>

By telephone - Dial: US: [+1 312 626 6799](tel:+13126266799) or [+1 646 558 8656](tel:+16465588656) (Meeting ID and Passcode will be needed)

Meeting ID: **823 3712 0870** Passcode: **548433**

IMPORTANT DATES IN SEPTEMBER 2021

National Suicide Prevention Month

2 Sept V-J Day

6 Sept Labor Day

11 Sept Patriot Day

17-23 Sept Constitution Week

17 Sept Citizenship Day/Constitution Day

17 Sept National POW/MIA Recognition Day

18 Sept Air Force (USAF) Birthday

18 Sept Office of the Sec. of Defense Birthday

18 Sept Air National Guard Birthday

21-28 Sept Warrior Games

26 Sept Gold Star Mother's Day

27 Sept Yom Kippur

29 Sept Rosh Hashanah (at sunset)

29 Sept VFW Day

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

CDR Geoff Harrington USNR, Ret, Sick Call Chairman



Smile.Amazon and The MOAA Foundation

Do you ordinarily order from Amazon.com? Want to do some good while you shop? Use Smile.Amazon.

com (not Amazon.com) and let Amazon contribute to The MOAA Foundation. Why The MOAA Foundation – because it provides assistance to over 100,000 military and veteran families and their survivor each year! All you do is go to smile.amazon.com, enter your Amazon email address or your mobile phone number and your password, select The MOAA Foundation as your charity, and place your order as usual. Not a different password to remember!

Amazon contributes 0.5% of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the MOAA Foundation. The MOAA Foundation (TMF, EIN 46-4219250), a 501c(3) charitable subsidiary of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), offers grants to MOAA, its councils and chapters in support of career development and community outreach programs and services.

If you want to see more about the Foundation, go to the MOAA site, www.MOAA.org (at the home page, go to the bottom and select the Site Map to find the MOAA Foundation).

WANT TO ADVERTISE IN THE RETROSPECT OR KNOW A BUSINESS THAT DOES!!!

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 1/2 Page Ad: \$1000 • 1/4 Page Ad: \$500 • 1/8 Page Ad: \$250
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YOU ARE INVITED!

THE TAMPA CHAPTER OF THE
 MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

FRIDAY DECEMBER 10, 2021

6:00PM - 10:00PM



INAUGURAL FUNDRAISER

WINTER Gala

Private COUNTRY CLUB
 1601 S MacDILL AVE
 TAMPA, FL 33629

TAMPA CHAPTER'S COMMUNITY OUTREACH INITIATIVES IN SUPPORT OF:
 HOMELESS VETERANS IN THE LOCAL AREA
 THE VETERANS TREATMENT COURT
 TRANSITION OF MILITARY VETERANS RELEASED FROM ACTIVE DUTY OR RECENTLY RETIRED
 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAMS APPLICABLE TO COLLEGE/ TRADE OR VOCATION SCHOOLS
 FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 813.681.9602 OR EMAIL TAMPAMOAA.EVENT@GMAIL.COM
WWW.MOAAATAMPA.ORG

August Luncheon Photos

Photo credits: Bob Sawallesh and Sara Marks



Coalition Corner

Submitted by: **BGEN Henrik Larsen**

Dear MOAA members,

History is full of events we did not foresee coming. Last week I had no idea that the Coalition and CENTCOM would be part of launching a major evacuation operation this weekend (August 14th) getting our national citizens and local Afghan citizens who have been supporting our efforts for almost twenty years out of Afghanistan.

We did not foresee the fall of Kabul happening the way it actually did. As you will all appreciate the political and military coordination efforts at all levels in our respective capitals and locally at the International Airport in Kabul have been a ALTAFGORENDE priority. In my opinion all necessary military resources have been allocated to address and execute the evacuation from Kabul in an extremely fluent and complex situation. Many nations are doing their best to assist within their means and capabilities.

Whenever we are experiencing a headwind - whenever we are experiencing a steep uphill situation - whenever we are facing uncertainty about facts on the ground, we have to remind ourselves that it is exactly in those circumstances we have to prove that we are able to perform. And...we are getting a lot of people safely out of Afghanistan working 24/7 since last weekend (mid-August). As a joint team combining our efforts, we are able to act fast and effectively in uncertainty allowing us to adapt to the current context whenever required.

I am writing this input having just left Tampa International Airport inbound to Chicago and from there moving on to Copenhagen back in Denmark to attend some national conferences etc. I am fully aware that the situation will have changed by the time this September edition of The Retrospect is released. This is simply a snapshot of "History in its making".

It was a great pleasure being able to bring my colleagues from Sweden and Uzbekistan along for the August MOAA luncheon. In September it will be a privilege to introduce the Senior National Representatives from Yemen and Belgium during the luncheon.

Unfortunately, we have had to suspend some of the social activities associated with the Coalition due to the COVID upsurge. We hope it's just a small bump in the road and that all remain safe.

On behalf of all of us from the Coalition we are striving to do our best. I wish you all a happy September.

All the best,

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



CAPTAIN PETER OSTBRING, SWEDISH NAVY

My military career started in 1988 when I was called upon to do my mandatory national military service. That was the starting point of a lifelong career in the Swedish Armed Forces. The first part of my career was spent on submarines. I have held posts as sonar operator, chief navigator, communications officer, weapons officer, executive officer and I have held the post at Commanding officer on 4 submarines of two different classes. In all I've spent 17 years on submarines.

When handing over command of my last CO post I have held a number of shore-based posts as Chief of Staff at the Submarine Flotilla and the Naval logistics battlegroup as well as senior naval officer and head of the Joint Operations command centre at the Swedish Joint Forces Command.

International posts include Commanding the Swedish Submarine detachment posted to San Diego, California (where we on a bilateral basis trained the US Navy on ways to handle the conventional submarine threat). This post included being the Swedish liaison officer to US Third Fleet, Pacific Fleet and US Submarine Force Pacific. I have also been deployed to Sudan and South Sudan as Chief operations officer for UN Mission to Sudan. Other international post includes being the Swedish Liaison officer to United Kingdom's Permanent Joint Headquarters and deputy Defence Attaché to the United Kingdom and Ireland.

As of 1 February 2021 I am enjoying my time as Senior National Representative and Liaison officer to US Central Command and head of the Swedish Contingent posted in Tampa.



My wife, Vivian, has recently joined me here in Tampa and we are taking full advantage of everything that's on offer in this beautiful part of the US. We have two adult daughters and they will grant us with their presence for as many vacation trips as the current covid pandemic and daddy's wallet would allow.

The duration of my post here in Tampa is extended until 28 February 2024. That gives us plenty of time to explore the US beyond the borders of Tampa and Florida. Our travel plans include New York, Washington DC, New

Orleans, St. Louis, Savannah, Charleston, the Caribbean and if possible – Hawaii. To go all in on the American experience I have purchased an Indian motorcycle. Of course my wife claims that's nothing but a severe midlife crisis.

Our place of residence in Sweden is the World Heritage city of Karlskrona, even though we are both born and raised in the city of Lund in the south of Sweden.

Sweden is the largest country on the Scandinavian Peninsula and measures some 495,000 square kilometers. Most of the country is unpopulated or very scarcely populated. The landscape is magnificent and home of the midnight sun. I'll be at your service should like to know more about our piece of the world.



BEN RITTER HONORED AT THE JAMES A. HALEY VA

—Submitted by Jeanne Richard, LTC USAF (Ret)



On July 15, 2021, Joe Battle, Medical Center Director of the James A Haley Veterans' Hospital, unveiled a picture of MOAA Tampa Chapter's honorary member, Ben Ritter. The picture now hangs on the wall close to the dining room in the Spinal Cord Building.

This unveiling was in appreciation of Ben's dedication while in uniform and as a civilian. Congratulations Ben!!!

CHAPTER MEMBER OF THE MONTH COL WILLIAM "BILL" SCHNEIDER, USA RET

Bill was born at a very young age. He planned it that way so he would have lots of time to get to know his family and friends before he ran off and joined the Infantry. His boyhood years were spent with his three brothers spending their winters in northern New Jersey and their summers at the Jersey Shore. His first job, at age 15, was as a second mate on a deep-sea fishing boat. Much later, he met his wife Georgia in a beach bar and invited her to join him for lunch. She declined. Two years later, he proposed to her while driving through the Lincoln Tunnel. She accepted.

Bill's military career began upon receiving a commission through the ROTC program at Saint Peter's University in New Jersey where he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Liberal Arts. He later earned a master's degree in Public Administration from Central Michigan University and a master's degree equivalent from the Naval War College.

As an infantry second lieutenant, his initial assignment was as a tank platoon leader in the Second Armored Division at Fort Hood, Texas. That convinced him he did not want to spend the rest of his career in a tank motor pool.

He returned to civilian life as a management trainee with Railway Express in New York City. That convinced him he did not want to spend the rest of his career in a railroad loading terminal.

Bill remained active in the reserve and was invited to return to active duty when the Vietnam War began to heat up. He accepted and was assigned to the 7th Infantry Division at Fort Ord, CA. Following that assignment, he spent two of the next three years in Vietnam. As a captain

assigned to the First Cavalry Division, he served as a civil affairs officer tasked to win the minds and hearts of the local folks with limited success. As a major, he served with the Fourth Infantry Division as an infantry battalion S-3 and later at the division level as the command and staff briefing officer. His combat decorations include the Distinguished Flying Cross, four Bronze Stars, three Air Medals and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. Following his second tour in Vietnam, he was assigned as instructor and course director at the United States Military Academy, West Point.

While most Infantrymen were being assigned to locations no gentleman would visit, let alone live, Bill's follow-on assignments took him and his family to resort like locations such as Honolulu, Newport, Monterey and New York City.

His terminal assignment, selected by his wife, was as Senior Advisor to the Commanding General, 42d Infantry Division, New York Army National Guard, headquartered in New York City. This is the famous Rainbow Division organized by the then Colonel Douglas MacArthur for deployment to Europe in World War I.

Following that assignment and upon his retirement, he was awarded the New York State Meritorious Service Award from Governor Mario Cuomo. His peacetime



awards include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Award, Joint Service Commendation Medal and the Army Commendation Medal.

Along the way, his wife started Jazzercise franchises in Georgia, California and New York. While in New York City, she co-sponsored an exercise clothing fashion show with Mikhail Baryshnikov, the famous Russian Dancer. Following his retirement from the military, Bill was instructor and Department Chair at Florida Metropolitan University, Lakeland campus. In his leisure time, he officiates NCAA Track and Field meets.

Bill's community involvement has included Chairman, Tampa Palms Covenants Committee, Secretary, Sanctuary at Tampa Palms HOA. His volunteer work has included group facilitator at The Spring of Tampa Bay and The Compassionate Friends of America.

He and his wife are active with the Catholic Student Center at USF, he as an usher and she as a Eucharistic Minister and lector.

Bill and Georgia live in Tampa Palms. They have four children and four grandchildren.



CONGRATULATIONS MOAA TAMPA ON WINNING THE 2020 LEVELS OF EXCELLENCE FIVE-STAR AWARD!!!



From: **MOAA Chapters**
Date: Fri, Aug 20, 2021, 16:51
Subject: LOE Winners and Guidance for MOAA's Annual Meeting
To: Charles Dalcourt

"Dear Colonel Dalcourt:

Congratulations on your chapter's selection as a 2020 Levels of Excellence Five-Star Award winner! Thank you for your efforts throughout 2020 to contribute to grassroots advocacy, impactful community service, and membership growth; and "well-done" on achieving success during a particularly challenging year.

Sincerely,

Erin E. Stone, CAPT, JAGC, USN
Senior Director, Council and Chapter Affairs
Military Officers Association of America
201 N. Washington Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
1-800-234-MOAA (6622)/703-838-8108



How We Help and Why You Should Join!

The TAMPA CHAPTER-MOAA, one of the largest and recognized as one of the top chapters in the Nation, has a very basic and focused approach for all officers on Active duty, Reserve, National Guard, and retired officers—WE’VE GOT YOUR BACK!

Some of the local community outreach our Tampa MOAA chapter members are involved with include: Veterans Treatment Court, Operation Helping Hand, funding local MOAA Scholarships, Transition support from military life, coordinating with our MacDill AFB Coalition partners with chapter activities, our Chapter Buddy Check initiative, and supporting the local ROTC/JROTC.

NEVER STOP SERVING!

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 _____

Wartime Service – please enter conflict name(s) and dates of service (over):

Conflict(s): _____ Dates _____

Tampa Chapter Annual Dues: \$25.00

(There is no dues requirement for active-duty personnel or a surviving spouse; you MUST be a member of National MOAA)

MOAA National Annual Dues: (Premium Level – \$48.00; Basic Level – No Cost for 1 year)

You can join National MOAA at their website: <https://www.moaa.org/content/join-moaa/why-join-moaa/>

MOAA National Lifetime Dues: Lifetime dues are based on the member’s age. The cost ranges from \$0 to \$851 and there is no cost (free) for age 100+.

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 Drive, Tampa, FL 33647; email questions to : TampaMOAA.Membership@gmail.com

** The chapter has my permission to list my name and rank as a new member in our chapter newsletter.

Yes _____ No _____

<u>Conflict</u>	<u>Dates*</u>
World War II	7 Dec 1941 – 31 Dec 1946
Korean War	27 Jun 1950 – 31 Jan 1955
Vietnam Era	5 Aug 1964 – 7 May 1975
Vietnam (in country)	28 Feb 1961 – 7 May 1975
Gulf War	2 Aug 1990 – 6 Apr 1991
Lebanon, Grenada, Panama	1982 -83; 1983; 1989 – 1990
Afghanistan (OEF)	7 Oct 2001 – 28 Dec – 2014
Afghanistan (OES)	1 Jan 2015 – 17 Aug 2017
Islamic War (OIR)	15 Oct 2014 – present
OR No service during any of these periods of time	

* dates are generally accurate per Congressional Research Service



Surviving Spouse Corner:

Submitted By Renee Brunelle

Alternative Places for Assistance and Support

Retiree Activities Office/RAC:

We are fortunate to have a Retiree Activities Office here at MacDill Air Force Base located in between the BX and Commissary. The staff is made up of all-volunteers including Surviving Spouses. Though they are located on the Air Force Base they serve all branches of the military. They are able to assist with Space-A Travel, Tax Preparation, Counseling, Assistance with ID card renewals, Retiree Pay & Benefits, Will development and information on military burial details at National cemeteries.

Their Operating Hours are generally 9AM to 3PM Monday – Friday

Telephone: (813) 828-4555

When COVID is not restriction group interaction, they work with the Base Commander to provide a Retiree Appreciate Day each year.

Additionally, there are alternative locations throughout the United States near different military installations. Simply Google searching should show if there is an office near you if not living in Tampa Bay at the time.

Survivor Outreach Services/SOS:

Florida is broken into 5 areas of coverage that SOS assists the next of kin after the Casualty Assistance Officer has completed the list of required tasks. They are generally there to assist Active Duty families but often are able to assist retirees as well.

For the Greater Tampa Bay area the Telephone Contact is (803) 751-2680. They are normally scheduled to assist for two years after the servicemember has passed, but I was told that they are available to answer any questions if possible after the initial two years and/or for Retirees.

MEDICAL CORNER

Military deploying medical assistance teams to battle COVID-19 surges

— The Associated Press



— Air Force Capt. Kimberly Warstler, R.N., stationed at Keesler Air Force Base, Miss., dons proper personal protective equipment to enter a room with a COVID-19 positive patient at the Del Sol Medical Center in El Paso, Texas, Nov. 13, 2020. DoD is preparing to ramp up deployments of uniformed medical personnel to local hospitals. (Sgt. Samantha Hall/Army)

As a surge of coronavirus cases continues to ravage parts of the southern U.S., the Defense Department is preparing to [send in medical personnel](#) as reinforcement.

Five teams of roughly 20 doctors, nurses and respiratory therapists are getting spun up to mobilize to local hospitals to help overburdened health care staff, as parts of the country experience new highs in daily deaths and new cases.

The first is headed to Lafayette, Louisiana, the state with the [highest infection rate in the country](#) and one of the lowest [vaccination rates](#), at fewer than 40 percent.

“We expect that there could be additional requests from other states for other teams, and so that’s why we’re being prepared to stand up five teams,” Pentagon spokesman John Kirby said.

The announcement is reminiscent of the situation in spring 2020, when military medical personnel deployed around the country to help overburdened hospitals in New York, Los Angeles and more.

After deploying hospital ships to New York and Los Angeles from March to May 2020, planners found more efficiency with sending uniformed medical staff directly into hospitals, which continued for much of last year and into 2021.

Beyond Louisiana, [states reporting the highest numbers of new cases](#), including hospitalizations and deaths, include Florida, Hawaii, Oregon and Mississippi.

10 THINGS WE KNOW TO BE TRUE: SURVIVING SUICIDE LOSS

by TAPS Suicide Postvention Team



Whether in the early days following our loss or years later in our grief journeys, we gain so much from experiences shared by fellow survivors, knowledge learned from education, and insights and perspective shared by experts and guest speakers at TAPS events. We remember and internalize the advice and guidance that resonates with us and what offers us hope to make it through each day. Many of these suggestions are time tested truths we have come to believe in and refer back to for healing. Now we’d like to share them with you.



You are not alone. Grief can feel very isolating, but you don’t have to walk this journey alone. We’ve been down the road you’re traveling, and we’re here for you.



You will not always feel this much pain. As time passes, the hurt you feel now will change. We know from experience that your emotional pain will subside and soften with time. It won’t always feel like it does right now.



Most people who die by suicide do not want to die; they want their pain to end. Whatever pain brought our loved ones to end their lives, it inhibited them from thinking clearly and from fully comprehending the heartbreak their suicides would cause.



It’s not your fault. Suicide is rarely the result of just one person, conversation, or event. It usually involves multiple, complex factors that culminate in a “perfect storm.”



You cannot prevent what you cannot predict. There was no way you could have known it would happen that very day, at that precise moment. You cannot control the thoughts and actions of others.



Eventually, the questions will cease to be so all encompassing. “Why?” “What if?” Most of us who have experienced suicide loss wrestle with these and other questions for a long time. This is normal. It helps us to learn enough “to suffice,” to process our thoughts so that we can eventually find peace.



What you tell yourself matters. How you talk to yourself about what happened can shape the experience of your grief journey. Trust what you know about your loved one, and choose to tell yourself the story that best helps you heal.



Suicide is not a reflection of love. People who die by suicide may have believed they were a burden to the people they love. They thought that their families would be better off without them. Whereas we know this to be untrue, our loved ones could not see clearly through the fog of their emotional pain.



How you cope with this is up to you. You didn’t choose for this to happen to you, but you do get to decide how to respond to it. You have a say in how you heal.



Love never ends. When your loved one died, the love you shared didn’t just stop. Your relationship continues. Keep the positive memories alive in all that you do.

About the Team

The TAPS Suicide Prevention & Postvention Team is a division of the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) that addresses the challenge of suicide in the military, the veteran community, and across the nation. This team of dedicated professionals draws from a powerful combination of clinical expertise, survivor “lived experience,” and TAPS own best practices in peer-to-peer grief support to care for those who have lost loved ones to suicide and help others prevent more loss.



Visit taps.org/suicide

Call us 24/7 at

800.959.TAPS (8277)

Afghanistan, Let’s Talk About It

Due to Veterans from all eras reacting to the events in Afghanistan, such as withdrawal and take over by the Taliban, VA is working quickly to share VA resources, call center information, peer support, and other community services.

VA Resources:

Vet Centers – Discuss how you feel with other Veterans in these community-based counseling centers. 70% of Vet Center staff are Veterans. Call 1-877-927-8387 or find one near you.

Click on the link for more resources.

<https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/93577/lets-talk-about-afghanistan-resources-veterans-families/>



Patriot Day in the USA 2021

September 11

Source: Awareness Days: <https://www.awarenessdays.com/awareness-days-calendar/patriot-day-in-the-usa-2021/>

Patriot Day is a United States national observance that honors the memory of those who were killed in the September 11 attacks. It was first observed in 2002, after the proclamation by President George W. Bush.

On September 11, 2001 al-Qaeda launched a series of coordinated terrorist attacks upon the United States, killing almost 3,000 people. In the immediate aftermath of the tragic events, President proclaimed September 14, 2001 as a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance for the Victims of the Terrorist Attacks on September 11, 2001. A year later, September 11 was made a national day of mourning referred to as Patriot Day. This observance has been proclaimed annually since 2002.

In 2009, President Barack Obama rededicated it as Patriot Day and National Day of Service and Remembrance. It is not a public holiday therefore government offices, educational institutions and businesses do not close on this day. On Patriot Day, the national flag is flown at half-mast on all United States government buildings and establishments. Individuals are also encouraged to display flags on their homes.



National POW/MIA Recognition Day

—Article from <https://militarybenefits.info/pow-mia-recognition-day/>

The third Friday in September is recognized as POW/MIA Day, a time to remember the sacrifices of prisoners of war (POW) and servicemembers who are missing in action (MIA). Until 1979, there was no formal recognition day set aside for these important men and women in uniform.

POW/MIA Day will be observed on Friday, September 17, 2021.



[National Former Prisoner of War Recognition Day](#) will be observed on Friday, April 9, 2021.

The first observance of POW/MIA day included a remembrance ceremony at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. but since that time, the Pentagon is the site for the Department of Defense's "official" observance, with other ceremonies happening at military installations and elsewhere.

There are many different ways communities choose to observe this day; even the National Park Service has observations at selected sites. Private organizations such as Veterans Of Foreign Wars also observes the day with events and activities at individual "outposts" nationwide.

The familiar POW/MIA flag, so closely associated with the observance, actually pre-dates it. According to DoDLive.Mil, in 1971 a military spouse named Mary Hoff contacted a private company to request a flag to honor those missing in action or prisoners of war (one of whom was her husband). A World War 2 pilot named Newt Heisley created the now-iconic design.

The POW/MIA flag is intended to be flown just below the United States flag, which is how it is displayed at the White House; it is the only flag (according to the Department of Defense) to do so at that location.

The [Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency \(DPAA\)](#) official site says more than 83,000 service members are missing from conflicts from World War Two to the present time. Of that number, the majority (more than 73,000) are missing from World War Two. The number of POW/MIAs from the Korean conflict number just above 7,000.

[Vietnam](#) has over 1,600 listed, with the Cold War at 126 servicemembers listed as POW/MIA. Conflicts since 1991 have six people still unaccounted for.

Of the more than 83,000 service members listed as POW/MIAs, approximately half are "presumed lost at sea" according to DPAA.mil. Roughly 75% of the entire number of POW/MIAs are thought to be in the Asia/Pacific theater of operations.

Repatriation efforts-cooperative projects with other nations to bring POW/MIAs back home-are ongoing. Efforts in Vietnam and Korea are ongoing, and there are still identifications

being made on remains from World War 2. The Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency is tasked with making continuous efforts to account for the some 83,000 service members who still have not come home from conflicts around the globe. POW/MIA Day is but one moment in that ongoing effort, but it's an important one.

National League of Families' POW/MIA flag

The [National League of Families' POW/MIA flag](#), aka the POW flag, is to be flown at major military installations, national cemeteries, post offices, VA medical facilities, the World War II Memorial, Korean War Veterans Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the official offices of the secretaries of state, defense and veterans affairs, the director of the selective service system and the White House. This observance is one of six days throughout the year that Congress has mandated the flying of the National League of Families' POW/MIA flag. The other days are [Armed Forces Day](#), [Memorial Day](#), [Flag Day](#), [Independence Day](#) and [Veterans Day](#).



Mrs. Michael Hoff, an MIA wife, first recognized the need for a symbol of our POW/MIAs in 1970 and set the wheels in motion to have a flag designed to represent our missing soldiers. The POW/MIA flag is the only flag ever displayed in the US Capitol Rotunda and other than the American flag it is the only flag ever to fly over the White House.

Observances

Observances are held across the country on military installations, ships at sea, state capitols, schools and veterans' facilities. A Pentagon ceremony featuring members of each branch of military service is held annually on National POW/MIA Recognition Day. Local POW/MIA ceremonies are encouraged throughout POW/MIA Recognition Week.

Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA)

The DPAA is responsible for the fullest possible accounting of missing personnel to their families and the nation. When American personnel remain captive, missing, or otherwise unaccounted-for at the conclusion of hostilities, the DPAA becomes the responsible agent for determining the fate of the missing and where possible, recovering them alive or recovering and identifying the remains of the dead. The DPAA facilities are located at Hickam Air Force Base in Hawaii.

“Dedicated to those who were imprisoned and in memory of those still missing. May we not forget their sacrifice.”

Kabul Evacuation Flight Sets C-17 Record with 823 on Board

— By Brian W. Everstine Source: [Air Force Magazine](#)

The Aug. 15 C-17 evacuation flight from Kabul set a new record—by far—for the number of passengers carried on a Globemaster III flight at 823 people, a dramatic rise from the initially reported number on the flight.

The crew of the C-17, call sign REACH871 from the 816th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron at Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, decided for themselves to take off from Hamid Karzai International Airport with the plane packed full of Afghan evacuees because of a “dynamic security environment” as the situation at the airport deteriorated.

A photograph of the flight, first posted on the unofficial “[Air Force amn/nco/snco](#)” Facebook page, has gone viral around the world showcasing the USAF airlift mission out of Afghanistan. Air Mobility Command, in a statement Aug. 20, said the initial count of 643 included only adults sitting in bus seats after the C-17 landed at Al Udeid. It did not include the 183 children sitting on adult laps.

[Audio](#) of a radio or other voice call between the C-17 and a control center posted online included a controller asking the aircraft, “How many people do you think are on your jet? Eight hundred people on your jet? Holy cow. OK. Hey, well, good job getting off the ground.”



—Photo AP News

The crew, all from the 6th Airlift Squadron at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, N.J., and deployed to the 816th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, consisted of aircraft commander Lt. Col. Eric Kut, Capt. Cory Jackson, 1st Lt. Mark Lawson, loadmaster Tech. Sgt. Justin Triola, loadmaster Airman 1st Class Nicolas Baron, Staff Sgt. Derek Laurent, and Senior Airman Richard Johnson. Triola conducted the final count of the passengers, and Baron’s jacket [is seen in a viral photo of a sleeping child on board the C-17](#).

“They were definitely anxious to get out of the area, and we were happy to accommodate them, and they were definitely excited once we were airborne,” Triola told CNN, adding that “everybody was thrilled to actually leave.”

The flight broke the previous C-17 record, set in November 2012 when 670 residents of Tacloban, Philippines, boarded an evacuation flight to Manila following Super Typhoon Haiyan.

That flight was flown by a C-17 aircrew from the 535th Airlift Squadron at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii.

The C-17 typically flies with a maximum of about 300 people when outfitted for large passenger loads using pallets with seats.

United States Air Force Birthday

— Article from <https://militarybenefits.info/air-force-birthday/>

The official Air Force Birthday is recognized as September 18, 1947, which is the date of the passage of the National Security Act of 1947. That legislation created what would later become known as the United States Department of Defense. This established the United States Air Force as a separate branch of military service.

The 74th Air Force Day will be celebrated on Saturday, September 18, 2021.

Before the creation of the Air Force, the military’s flying operations were handled by the U.S. Army on land and the Navy by sea. The history of this branch of service is an important part of the history of air power in the United States. Naturally, the Air Force birthday owes a great deal to Orville and Wilbur Wright who pioneered mechanized flight with their successful mission in 1903.

But the Air Force also owes a great deal to Army pioneers who, roughly four years after the Wright Brothers’ triumph at Kitty Hawk, began experimenting with using air superiority to gain tactical advantages in combat.

Humble Beginnings

Balloons had long been used for observation of various kinds. When the U.S. Civil War began, ballooning was adopted as a reconnaissance tool. One example took place in 1862, the Union Balloon Corps kept watch over the Battle of Gaines’ Mill and telegraphed information to the ground as the battle unfolded.

The prospect of air power was so compelling even then that President Abraham Lincoln called a meeting with Thaddeus S.C. Lowe, an early pioneer of aeronautics to discuss how the Union Army could further its cause from the air. Lowe was later the head of the U.S. Army Balloon Corps.

The Wright Brothers and Kitty Hawk

In 1903, Orville and Wilbur Wright made the first mechanical, heavier-than-air flight using a gas-powered, propeller aircraft. Their first successful plane flight in history flew for 12 seconds and 120 feet before returning to land. Orville piloted the aircraft on its inaugural flight. The plane would fly 852 feet in 59 seconds later the same day. The Wright Brothers had discovered how to defy gravity. They had previously designed gliders, but this mechanized flight transformed aviation history.

Enter the U.S. Army Signal Corps

When Thaddeus S. C. Lowe was named chief of the Union Army Balloon Corps, the long march to a separate Air Force began. The Army had several units dedicated to military flying over from the year 1907 to 1914. The timeline of Army aviation includes the following pre-Air Force organizations:

- Aeronautical Division, Signal Corps (August 1907 – July 1914)
- Aviation Section, Signal Corps (July 1914 – May 1918)
- Division of Military Aeronautics (May 1918 – May 1918)
- Air Service, U.S. Army (May 1918 – July 1926)
- U.S. Army Air Corps (July 1926 – June 1941)
- U.S. Army Air Forces (June 1941 – September 1947)

World War One and The Court-Martial of General Billy Mitchell

The World War One era saw the creation of the U.S. Army Air Service, which would prove to be a crucial turn for the future [United States Air Force](#). The Deputy Commander of the Air Service was Brigadier General Billy Mitchell who went on record as an extremely vocal supporter of military airpower. Mitchell became embroiled in a power struggle to assign coastal defense over to airpower rather than Navy protection.

In 1925, Mitchell went too far by publicly accusing Navy officials of criminal negligence and incompetent behavior. This resulted with the six week court-martial proceedings against Billy Mitchell as a pulpit to extol the virtues of military airpower.

Mitchell argued that a separate and equal branch of military service responsible for air operations was a crucial for complete national defense.

Billy Mitchell was convicted as a result of his court-martial and resigned from military service. He remained a champion of air power until his death in 1936. Mitchell would never see the creation of a separate and equal Air Force, but his actions were quite important in the history of the American military.

Air Superiority in World War Two

The U.S. Army Air Forces would prove Billy Mitchell was correct about a number of things. American air power was put to the test in World War Two in the following ways: as a method of intelligence gathering, as a way to deliver troops to the battlefield, and ultimately as a way to deliver atomic weaponry that would bring the war to its final end with the surrender of Japan following the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Army Air Forces were said to operate almost independently from the rest of the U.S. Army at this time. This created a separate branch of service that would be more than a symbolic move to more formally address the issue of American military air power. It recognized that combat in the air, from the air, and from surface to air required a whole separate type of planning and organization.

From 1941 to 1947, the Army was setting the stage for the birthday of the Air Force. The Navy would object to the creation of an Air Force, but would not succeed in stopping it.

In 1945, General Dwight Eisenhower was promoted to Chief of Staff and General Carl Spaatz became the new commander of the Army Air Forces. Soon after, plans were made to reorganize the Army so that a separate Air Force might be created without the need for legislation. In 1946, it was agreed that a separate Air Force could be made up of a variety of commands:

- Strategic Air Command
- Air Defense Command
- Tactical Air Command
- Air Transport Command
- Air Technical Service Command
- Air University
- Air Training Command
- Air Force Center

On September 18, 1947, Stuart Symington became the first [Secretary of the Air Force](#). Army Air Bases were re-designated as Air Force Bases. New uniforms and insignia were rolled out and a new command structure was put in place to recognize the specialized training and experience of Air Force pilots and commanders.

Air Force Commander Carl Spaatz created a new policy that kept tactical commanders from being interfered with by military leadership with no flight experience. The tactical commander would not be permitted to be subordinate to a station commander. Later, a “provisional wing plan” would place a wing commander above the base commander.

The United States Air Force Today

Today, the Air Force has over 300,000 active duty troops, with some 20,000 pilots. The total “end strength” of the Air

Force, including Guard and Reserve troops, is just over half a million people.

In the fiscal year 2019, the Air Force hoped to recruit just under thirty thousand new troops. Modernization is a concern for Air Force budgets in recent years, but there is also money earmarked for nuclear deterrence.

That spending would include upgrades to the Air Force’s B-52 fleet and development of “long range standoff missiles” plus replacement of the old Minuteman III intercontinental ballistic missile.

According to the Air Force official site, in fiscal year 2019 one and a half million flying hours were projected to be funded, costing \$8.7 billion. That budget also sought to shore up Air Force munitions inventories, requesting more than fifty thousand “preferred munitions” which would cost \$1.8 billion.

The Air Force Birthday

Celebrating the Air Force birthday isn’t the same as celebrations for [Memorial Day](#), [Veterans’ Day](#), etc. September 18 is not a national holiday, but military members observe the occasion with events and activities in local communities, in individual units and squadrons, and most notably with the Air Force Ball.

The Air Force Ball is not always held to coincide with the Air Force birthday, but has in the past be scheduled with September 18 in mind in notable “milestone years” such as the Air Force’s 70th anniversary. The traditions of the ball honor the same concepts as the Air Force birthday: the creation of air power, the fellowship of airmen across the service, and the future of the force.

Celebrating the Air Force Birthday

If you’re wondering how the military celebrates the Air Force birthday, you may not need to do more than look up at the sky, depending on the time of day and location. Air Force celebrations include air demonstrations by the [Thunderbirds](#) precision combat air demonstration squadron, military “tattoo” airshow events that feature a variety of aircraft in the air and on the ground.

There are also parties with promotion and retirement ceremonies that coincide with the Air Force birthday. In milestone years, there may even be parades and local events celebrating Air Force contributions to the local community.

Celebrating the Air Force birthday on a personal level can be as simple as thanking an Airman for his or her service, flying the U.S. flag outside a residence or local business, or giving to an Air Force-specific charity or Veteran Service Organization (VSO) such as:

- Air Commando Association
- Air Force Association
- Air Force Sergeants Association
- Association of Air Force Missileers
- Society of Air Force Flight Surgeons

You can also volunteer time at Air Force base organizations and charities that operate on military bases such as the Red Cross or Air Force Aid Society. Consider donating time or money to the Air Force Assistance Fund or the nearest base with an Airman Family Readiness Center.



WHERE WERE YOU ON 9-11?

It's hard to believe that 20 years ago we got the news of the Twin Towers, the Pentagon and Pennsylvania. Here are what many of our chapter members remember of that terrible day.

What I Remember about 9/11

9/11: Flights 77, 11 and 175

Flight 77

“8:20: [American Airlines Flight 77](#), a [Boeing 757](#) with 58 passengers and 6 crew members, departs 10 minutes late from [Washington Dulles International Airport](#), for Los Angeles International Airport. Five hijackers are aboard. **9:37:46:** Flight 77 crashes into the western side of [The Pentagon](#) and starts a violent fire.” On 9/10 my wife (Peg) departed from Washington Dulles International Airport to Tampa. I served in the Pentagon from 1981 to 1984.

Flights 11 and 175

“7:59 a.m.: [American Airlines Flight 11](#), a [Boeing 767](#) carrying 81 passengers and 11 crew members, departs 14 minutes later from [Logan International Airport](#) in [Boston](#), bound for [Los Angeles International Airport](#). Five hijackers are on board.”

“8:14: [United Airlines Flight 175](#), a Boeing 767, carrying 56 passengers and 9 crew members, departs 14 minutes late from Logan International Airport in Boston, bound for Los Angeles International Airport. Five hijackers are on board.”

“8:46:40: Flight 11 crashes into the north face of the North Tower (1 WTC) of the [World Trade Center](#), between floors 93 and 99. The aircraft enters the tower intact.”

“9:02:57: Flight 175 crashes into the south face of the South Tower (2 WTC) of the World Trade Center, between floors 77 and 85. Parts of the plane, including the starboard engine, leave the building from its east and north sides, falling to the ground six blocks away.” All quotes from Wikipedia.

Very shortly after Flight 11 crashes into North Tower, I received a phone call from the late LTC Bernie Tauber, US Army, Retired, a friend of mine in Tampa MOAA. He tells me to watch the TV news. I watch what I think is Flight 11 crashing into North Tower. Sadly, it is Flight 175 crashing into South Tower.

FBI & CIA Library: Investigation and Commission Report

FBI investigation is at <https://www.fbi.gov/history/famous-cases/911-investigation>. The 9/11 Commission report is at https://www.cia.gov/library/abbottabad-compound/0B/0B72A302B86EECAD443BBCDCDC76A5B1_911Report.pdf.

Bob Sawallesh, LTC, USA, Ret.

Home ... my neighbor called and told me to turn on the TV ...saw the second aircraft hit the second tower
Neil Cosentino, Maj, USAF (Ret)

I was a civilian community relations officer in the U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM) Public Affairs Office in 2001. I had a morning doctor's appointment at the SOCOM Clinic at the MacDill Air Force Base Hospital; upon arriving I found everyone — doctors, nurses, patients — gathered around a small TV watching a live broadcast from the World Trade Center. Within minutes, the second plane hit the south tower. Everyone in the room gasped. I don't remember all the comments, but they were angry and graphic. Almost instantly there was a hospital-wide announcement that the base was now on high alert. My routine medical appointment was cancelled, as were those of other people in the clinic, and we were told to report to our offices for further instructions. As we were departing the hospital, young military policemen in full combat gear were monitoring the hospital hallways. I remember calling my 83 year old dad in Dunedin and telling him to turn on his TV. This unforgettable day brought back memories of another unforgettable day — Nov. 22, 1963 — when I was an officer trainee at Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio.
Chet Justice, Col USAF (Ret) T

They closed the gate behind us. We were not able to leave until they cleared base for security.
Thomas South, CWO USA (Ret)

I was on a commercial flight from Tampa to New Orleans when the attacks started; we were not alerted while in flight. Upon landing in New Orleans, passengers who were continuing on were asked to remain in their seats, so I was unaware of any problems as I left the aircraft. As I walked to the rental car site, I wondered about a long line, but since I had reservations, I proceeded directly to my car. As I approached my car, a stranger, obviously distressed, said to me, "I have just lost my best friend; he was on the 103rd floor". As soon as I got in the car, I received the news on the radio. Upon arrival at the Texaco building in New Orleans, I found the building secured, and I had to wait until the next morning to conduct the planned class. With the news still fresh and growing, it was difficult to concentrate on the class material, which was related to management of large oil spills.
W. F. Meriin, RADM USCG (Ret)

I was in command in Hawaii. We were building a fire base. My 1SG said "CPT Mack come over", and we watched

through his TV when one of the towers fell. The BDE was ordered back in, and we prepared. I was in Charge of Base security at Wheeler Army Air Field.
Mack Macksom, MAJ USA (Ret)

I was a young Army Captain participating as an observer/controller in a field training exercise in the Wieden, Germany local training area (about 5km from the Czech border). Cell phone coverage in that part of Germany was sporadic, and I was one of the few who actually was carrying a cell phone at the time. I started getting some weird phone calls from wives of friends and fellow officers. For the first couple of hours, we had no idea what had actually happened until the Battalion S2 was able to put together an update brief.

I did not see any TV coverage until 35 dirty, half camouflaged Army Soldiers stopped at a German Autobahn rest stop and saw the TV coverage. We had spent the afternoon and night of 11 SEP into 12 SEP getting 300 military police Soldiers back to their garrisons while we, the battalion staff, were the last to leave after closing the training area and heading home when we conducted a convoy maintenance rest stop. We surely shook the 20 Germans eating breakfast in the rest stop's gasthaus. A very interesting time being in Europe for the attack and for another 6 months following until when left Europe for Missouri. I didn't see the real changes firsthand until I flew home and arrived in the USA in March 2002.

Matt Mularoni, LTC USA (Ret)

I was attending school at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. My seminar was just finishing a lecture on the procurement process, specifically to include aircraft and ships. It was one of those dry, boring but necessary lectures. Then one of my seminar mates heard two ladies in the hallway as they walked by our classroom talking about a plane hitting one of the World Trade Center towers in New York City. The professor turned on the TV, and it was like watching a horror movie as we saw the second Twin Tower crumble after a passenger plane full of people flew into it. Everyone in my classroom was paralyzed in terrified awe. My Dominican and Italian classmates were equally if not more dumb struck than the rest of us. It didn't take long for everyone to head to their assigned study desks to retrieve whatever we needed to take home with us not knowing when we would return to class as the Naval Base in Newport prepared for an unknown future. When I returned home, I was glued to the TV as subsequent events unfolded. Prayer was the order of my day and days since.
Sara Marks, CAPT NC USN (Ret)

In the early morning of 9-11, I boarded a passenger plane at the Reagan Washington Airport in Arlington, Virginia. I had been attending legislation seminars in DC in conjunction with my job as Regional Government Relations Director for the Florida Gulf Coast Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America in Tampa and was now headed home.

As the plane was flying south, the pilot's voice came on over the loudspeakers and announced that because of an incident that had just taken place, for safety reasons we were now headed for the airport at Columbia, South Carolina. He didn't explain what had happened.

After the plane landed, passengers got off the plane and entered the airport terminal. We saw the news up on TV screens in the terminal describing what had happened. As we watched, the second plane hit the World Trade Center.

Everyone ran to the rental car agencies to rent a car that they could drive back down to Tampa. Unfortunately, I could not find a wheelchair-accessible van to rent.

I was transported to a hotel where I stayed two days and nights until I was able to secure a ride back home with my brother and sister. They drove up to Columbia from Tampa in my wheelchair-accessible van and drove me back to Tampa.

I later learned that a friend of mine from New Jersey, Colleen Frazier, a spunky little lady and an incredible disability advocate, was one of the 44 passengers on United Airlines Flight 93 that crashed down that morning in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Passengers had rushed into the cockpit fighting back against the terrorists in an attempt to regain control. No doubt that Colleen was kicking and screaming at the four hijackers. To this day, Colleen is missed by the many who knew her.

Ben Ritter, Honorary Member, MOAA Tampa Chapter

I was in West Palm Beach reviewing research data from subjects enrolled in a clinical trial. The owner of the Research facility notified all personnel that the facility was closing as "we" were under attack. Initially I thought animal rights protesters were outside protesting clinical research practices. What a shock to learn that "we" was the nation. I was notified that my hotel accommodation in Ft. Lauderdale and my return flight were cancelled. With nowhere to shelter, I drove back to the Tampa airport to return the rental car and pick up my car all the time wondering "how did this happen". It seems we still do not understand religious extremism.

Jeanne Richard, LtCol USAF (Ret)

I remember so well that horrible morning. I was retired by then and my husband and I had enjoyed breakfast together. I was cleaning up the kitchen with our TV on. When we started seeing the news coverage it felt like we were in the beginning of a nightmare. Our children were calling us to make sure we knew what was going on. The whole day was spent glued to the unfolding events. Words can't fully explain the terror we felt!!

Barbara Brotherton, Ltcol, USAF (Ret)

I was at Camp Foster Okinawa during a typhoon. Non-essential personnel were restricted to quarters and I was non-essential. Worst of all a typhoon had blown by and I heard a bunch of people talking in the hallway. I assumed it was just a bunch of bored officers shooting the breeze and rolled over and went back to sleep. They were actually talking about the attacks which had just happened. Hours later I woke up and learned the news. I was probably one of the last Americans to learn of the attacks.

Ken Martin, LTC, USMC (Ret)

Where was I on 9/11...The Pentagon South Parking Lot, Aisle 1

During our weekly Tuesday 3-digit Director's Meeting (I was REM-Reserve Medical), Kalesa Christian, Aide to the Deputy Chief of Staff, AF Reserve, burst into our meeting. "You guys! A plane just hit one of the Trade Center Towers"

Mike Dittl USAF Pilot and Chief of Plans (REX) said, "Wow. That's WAY off the glide path" ... I said, "I'll be back." I went across the hall to the General's office (all of our GO's were offsite at Crystal City for a meeting). I watched with horror as the second plane roared toward the second tower. Klesa and I gripped each other... I broke free and ran across the hall and said, "Oh my God, the second tower has been attacked." Mike rose abruptly and said, Let's go... we need to activate the CAT.

As I raced toward my office on the opposite of the building on the 5th Floor, I realized my secretary called in sick and the Captain who reported to and lived in my neighborhood was also sick, but self-medicating and coming in to finish a congressional report for a congressman. I got to the office and my gut said..."no..no one else is coming here." I got him on the speaker phone and told him to turn on the TV and that I was bringing the work to him.

As I got to the South Parking exit from the building, I was startled to see only one Police Defense Officer on duty. Having been assigned there since 96, I knew him and called out, "Gene! Are we on high alert yet?" He seemed to just crumple a bit and looking worried, said, "Ma'am ... we haven't heard a word. Shocking, given the times we had locked down or been evacuated... I said, "be safe!" and He said, "you too, Ma'am."

Just minutes later as I reached the back of my parked car, I heard the roar of airplane engines, looked to my left and saw it banked hard to the left over the Navy Annex adjacent to part of Arlington National cemetery. I froze. As he banked a bit back to the right, I immediately thought he was going to hit the overpass for 395 separating us from the cemetery. (In fact, I later found out, he did clip a light post). As he began to pass in front of me banking more to the right to level out, I felt the roar in my chest and then with no other sound to me, it disappeared into "The Building."

Soon, a civilian woman appeared next to and said, "what happened." I said, "We are under attack. Get in your car and get out of here...they won't let us back in the building." The smoke and fire were incredible, and I couldn't see the entry point. I got in my car and headed south and west toward Pentagon City Mall where an underpass would allow me to leave. When I got to that location, a young, black woman in a business suit was screaming. I put the passenger window and told her to get in my car. She told me she and her co-workers were working in the Naval Antiterrorism Office when her phone rang and her sister who work at the Navy Annex screamed into her phone...Get out...Get out ... you're going to get hit... then it went black. She was in the C Ring... Two rings of building and two rings of dead space from the plane's entry into the building. They were all knocked to the floor... all of wthe equipment fell... The admiral in the office led them out where she finally made it into South Parking and then to the road which circles the Pentagon. Her young son was in school nearby... A friend who had already arrived at my home (an Admiral's wife) ... took her and they found her son. Young Capt. Winter was already there as well as a friend from Indianapolis whose daughter had been in Old Town Alexandria for an "in and out" meeting. Capt. Winter and I began calling the medical subordinate commands at AFRC in Georgia and Colorado to update them on our status. And so much more. But I have exceeded your word count. I must have needed to talk!

Col Mary M Martin (RET) USAFR



VJ Day Sailor

by Gerald O'Donnell, CAPT USN (Ret)
For the Navy War College Museum Website in 2004

A team of award winning scientists from the Mitsubishi Electric Research Lab (MERL) in Cambridge, MA, using leading-edge 3D face scanning technology is helping to solve a 60 year-old mystery. This in combination with expert photographic analysis is providing compelling evidence that points to George Mendonsa, a native of Newport, Rhode Island as the Kissing Sailor in the famous 1945 Life Magazine photograph that captured the elation and relief of the nation after four years of loss and sacrifice in WWII.

In 2004 a team of research scientists from the Mitsubishi Electric Research Laboratories in Cambridge, MA, led by Dr. Baback Moghaddam, undertook a side project to examine the four V.J. Day photos by Alfred Eisenstadt of a sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square on August 14, 1945. The specialized digital scanning technology developed at MERL for computer graphics modeling and 3D face recognition is more typically used in their biometrics research and for security and surveillance applications. However, similar technologies in law enforcement are used for aging images of missing children and fugitives from a single photograph, and by special effects companies for creating digital actors for entertainment purposes. The MERL scientists are leading experts in the fields of computer graphics and computer vision, with prize-winning technology from official face recognition competitions sponsored by the US Defense Advance Research Project Agency (DARPA). George and Rita, his date on the day of the photo (and subsequently his wife), have been digitally imaged at the MERL research lab in Cambridge, MA, for examination in this process. Using 3D analysis and synthesis of the sailor in the Eisenstadt "VJ Day photo", the MERL scientists have de-aged George's 3D shape from today and from 1945 photos of George. A portion of George's de-aged image was then inserted onto the 1945 Eisenstadt photograph resulting in a very good match.



Photo credit: Sara Marks May 2021 in Sarasota, FL

George Mendonsa

Commercial fishing in the waters of Rhode Island has been George Mendonsa's life for over 70 years. His father came to America alone in 1911 from Madiera Island in Portugal leaving a wife and young son (George's oldest brother) to await his return after he had sent enough money home for the family to be financially secure. "One more year" turned into ten years. George's mother would wait no longer. She sold their land and came to America to join her husband in Newport, Rhode Island. George, two brothers and one sister were born in the years that followed. George's father raised his sons on the water fishing.

Although food providers (fisherman and farmers) were exempt from the draft, George voluntarily enlisted in the US Navy at the age of nineteen in 1942. He reported to boot camp at what is now the Naval Station Newport, Rhode Island, only three miles from his house. His experience in fishing boats and a need for navigation experience in the rapidly expanding fleet led to his assignment to quarter-master school and advancement to petty officer third class on graduation.

QM3 Mendonsa reported to the pre-commissioning crew of the USS THE SULLIVANS (DD-537) in July 1943. Originally named "PUTNAM", her name was changed to "THE SULLIVANS" on 6 February 1943 by Executive Order of President Franklin Deleanor Roosevelt to honor the five Sullivan brothers who had perished when the USS JU-NEAU (CL-52) was lost in the Naval Battle of Guadalcanal in November 1942.

George served in the USS THE SULLIVANS from its commissioning in September 1943 through the end of the war, advancing to the rate of QM1. USS THE SULLIVANS served as a unit of Destroyer Squadron 52 assigned to the carrier task group under command of Admiral William Halsey and alternately under command of Admiral Raymond Spruance. She saw action in the Pacific island hopping campaign, the battles around Leyte Gulf, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and attacks on the home islands of Japan.

When the war ended in Europe, Army troops there were transferred directly by ship to the Pacific (and not too happily for most) in preparation for Operation Coronet (the planned invasion of the main islands of Japan). The troop and equipment transfer was going to take months to complete. This operational pause provided the opportunity to send a number of the ships that had been in the western Pacific for years, including USS THE SULLIVANS, back to the United States for much needed maintenance, repairs, and installation of new equipment for the planned invasion.

George went on 39 days of leave on arrival in San Francisco on 9 July 1945. He flew home to Newport, Rhode Island and resumed fishing with his father. During his stay, the parents of his sister's husband came to Newport from New York and brought along their niece, Rita Petry, George's future bride. George and Rita had a date and George was invited to stay with Rita's family in New York City for a few days before his flight back to the west coast in the early morning of August 15th, 1945.

George and Rita went to a movie at Radio City Music Hall on the 14th of August. The show was interrupted by wild pounding on the door and the announcement that Japan had surrendered and the war was over. The streets came alive with wildly happy people pouring out from every building, celebrating the day they had all been waiting for. George and Rita stopped for a few drinks as they were headed for the 42nd Street subway station through the wildly excited and happy crowd. George recalls the bars were packed. The crowds were so dense that the bartenders were lining up shot glasses and emptying the contents of the bottles in the row of glasses. These were the only drinks available at that time.

As they passed through Times Square, a civilian nurse in uniform happened along in the crowd (quite possibly Ms. Greta Friedman.



George at MERL in the 3D imaging dome. Over 4,000 digital images in all lighting possibilities are captured in less than one minute.



USS THE SULLIVANS (DD-537); a Fletcher (DD-445) class destroyer commissioned 30 September 1943, named after the five Sullivan brothers who lost their lives on



On 11 May 1945, the aircraft carrier BUNKER HILL (CV-17) was hit by a Kamikaze aircraft which caused massive fires and explosions that took the lives of 346 sailors. A further 43 were listed as missing and 264 were wounded. THE SULLIVANS (DD-537) assisted in rescuing 166 survivors, many of them wounded.



George 9-10-1945



In a picture taken by Peter Kunhardt, George and the nurse, Greta Freeman, recreate the "kiss" on the 35th anniversary in 1980 in Times Square. Note the sign on the Times Building above and behind George.

George took her in his arms as she passed and proceeded to kiss her. As he did, Alfred Eisenstadt walked up and leveled his camera at them, taking four photographs which would immortalize the moment in American history.

George says that he really can't explain the kiss. He will only say the combination of the joy of the moment, the drinks and the soft spot in his heart for nurses brought on the impulse to kiss the nurse as she passed. The sight of that nurse brought to mind the tender care he had received during a short stay in a hospital ship for minor surgery and the nurses he had seen on the deck of the hospital ship USS BOUNTIFUL (AH-9) as they cared for the burned and injured sailors of the aircraft carrier USS BUNKER HILL (CV- 17).

On the morning of 11 May 1945, while supporting the Okinawa invasion, BUNKER HILL was hit and severely damaged by two suicide planes. Gasoline fires flamed up and several explosions took place. George recalls seeing the ship in a hard turn with a curtain of burning aviation fuel from the damaged and destroyed aircraft pouring off the ship from the flight deck. Men were trapped by the flames and were jumping over the side. The ship suffered the loss of 346 men killed, 43 missing, and 264 wounded. George's ship recovered 166 survivors; many seriously burned or wounded, and transferred them by high line to the hospital ship, USS BOUNTIFUL (AH-9). He recalled the Navy nurses awaiting the wounded on her decks that fateful day three months before the euphoria in Times Square. The photographs on the right were taken by the ships doctor during and shortly after the attack.

George did not know the kissing Sailor pictures were taken until 1980 when Life Magazine asked for the sailor and the nurse to come forward in commemoration of the 35th anniversary of the picture. A friend recognized George as the sailor in the Eisenstadt photo. George was surprised by existence of the photo and contacted Life Magazine, so did a number of other sailors and nurses. George was invited to the Life building in New York and was asked by the staff of Life Magazine who he believed to be the nurse from among the women who had come forward. George indicated that Greta Freeman was the only possible choice based on her height. The other women were all too short in comparison to George's height to be the nurse in the photo. Life Magazine chose to let the sailor's identity remain a mystery.

Later that year George was contacted by Peter Kunhardt, three time Emmy award winning producer of documentaries and the son of Philip Kunhardt, the managing editor of Life Magazine at the time. George was asked by Life Magazine if he would come to New York for an interview by Peter Kunhardt for the 20/20 television program. George was brought to New York, provided accommodations by the program and a limousine was sent for him the next morning. He was told the nurse would be in the same place in Times Square that the original Kissing Sailor photos were taken. The nurse would be pointed out to George and then George and the nurse were on their own with the film crew capturing their reunion. George introduced himself and after some conversation with the nurse they agreed to recreate the kiss. The picture at the right was taken that day by Peter Kunhardt. Note the marquee on the Times building in the first photograph. It says "It had to be you."

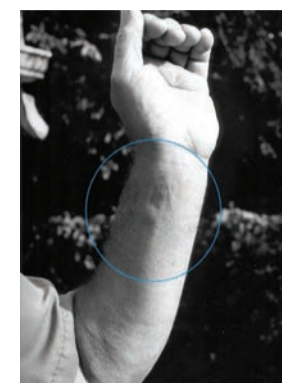
In 1994 the photographs were submitted to a nationally recognized photo analysis expert, Richard Benson, a professor of photographic studies and currently the Dean of the School of Arts at Yale University. Professor Benson's report reviews the ample evidence from the photo and concludes, "It is therefore my opinion, based on a reasonable degree of certainty, George Mendonsa is the sailor in Mr. Eisenstadt's famous photograph." Alfred Eisenstadt actually took four photos of the Kissing Sailor on 14 August 1945. His future wife Rita's face is visible in two of the photos. Perhaps the most remarkable pieces of physical evidence discovered by Professor Benson was a lump on the sailor's left arm. He examined George's left arm and found a lump in exactly the same spot as the sailor in the photograph.

In 1995 the U.S. Postal Service issued stamps commemorating the end of WWII. Among these stamps was one with the image the Kissing Sailor photo from 1945. A friend of George's who worked for the Postal Service provided the Benson report to the Postal Service. As a result the Postmaster General presented George with a framed stamp and first cover (envelope with the stamp that was cancelled on the first day of issue in Honolulu, Hawaii, the scene of the start of the war), as well as a letter thanking him for his service. This is unusual because postal rules preclude the image of living persons from appearing on US postage stamps

Today George and Rita, his wife of 58 years, live in Middletown, RI, where he and his brothers owned a successful fish company for many years until his brothers deaths. George sold the company in 1996 agreeing to stay on for a year to show the new owners how to set and operate the huge nets in the fish trap rigs. The owners of the fish company have invited George back every year since to be the captain of the operation and happily work under his supervision. His knowledge and experience has been invaluable to the success of the company. At the age of 82 George is still working as a commercial trap fisherman. On a good day his operation takes in over 60,000 lbs of fish. George retires every year in the fall at the end of the fishing season when the quota for marketable fish is typically filled for the year. In April at the start of the season he is invited back to be the captain of the operation and he goes. He says fishing is in his blood.



Professor Benson's discovery of a lump on the sailor's arm.



A picture taken in 1994 showing a lump on George's arm in the same location as the lump on the sailor's arm.



George and Machinist Mate First T.E. Sullivan training on liberty in San Francisco in 1943. There were 23 Sullivans in the crew when the ship sailed for the Pacific War in December 1943. This number was so large all were known officially and by their shipmates by their initials.



Rita in 1945.



A second picture by Peter Kunhardt



George Mendonsa with the "Maria Mendonsa, in Little Compton, Rhode Island (2002).



George Mendonsa with the "Maria Mendonsa, in Little Compton, Rhode Island (2002).



The website development team with George at the Mitsubishi Electric Research Laboratory. From left to right Dr Baback Moghaddam PhD, Mike Cardin, Katherine McMahon, George, and Jerry O'Donnell.

Postscript of The Story of the Kissing Sailor and the Lady in the White Dress

—By Gerald O'Donnell

Saturday, August 14, 2021 a rededication of the Kissing Sailor Statue in Sarasota, Florida was held. As part of the festivities, Gerald "Jerry" O'Donnell presented a talk about George Mendonsa and Greta Zimmer Friedman. He wrote an article that was published in the Navy War College Museum website in 2005 and reprinted in this September The Retrospect. Jerry's next door neighbor in Rhode Island was George Mendonsa, and a friendship was formed, but it wasn't until much later that Jerry met Greta. They forged a nine year friendship that lasted until she died September 8, 2016 at the age of 92.

George Mendonsa was the son of Portuguese immigrants who migrated to Newport, Rhode Island. His father was a fisherman who raised his sons to be fishermen. George gave up a draft deferment as a food provider to enlist in the U.S. Navy. He was assigned to the destroyer USS The Sullivans DD 537 that deployed to the Pacific Theater and participated in many battles, including Leyte Gulf, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. When the war in Europe ended in May 1945 the movement of the U.S. Army to Asia for the invasion of Japan started. George's ship was among those who had been deployed for two years and was sent back to the U.S. for needed repairs and installation of new weapons and equipment. George was granted 30 days leave and returned to his home in Rhode Island. He met his future wife of 73 years, Rita, who was visiting relatives in Rhode Island. He made arrangements to see her in New York where he would catch a flight back to his ship in San Francisco. He was on a date with Rita in Radio City Music Hall when the announcement of the Japanese surrender and the end of WWII was made. They joined the flow of revelers going to Times Square.

When the news of the end of the War came, pandemonium and wild celebration broke out across the country. People were dancing, shouting, hugging and kissing everywhere. — Arguably this was the happiest day in our nation's history.

George said the only reason that he kissed the 'Nurse' was a flash back to a Japanese suicide attack on the aircraft carrier USS Bunker Hill. Two Japanese aircraft crashed into a flight deck of the carrier filled with fully fueled and armed aircraft, resulting in a sea of fire on the flight deck from the burning aircraft fuel and exploding bombs. Sailors manning the anti-aircraft guns along the flight deck were jumping into the sea to escape the flames. Many were wounded and badly burned. USS The Sullivans recovered several hundred sailors, from the sea, including many who were burned, badly wounded, or dead. These sailors were transferred to a hospital ship later that day. George said he saw the nurses on the hospital ship jumping in to caring for the injured sailors and that image was imprinted in his mind. This was the reason he kissed the 'Nurse.' He said she was the only woman he kissed that day and that he would not have kissed the woman if she were not wearing a nurses uniform.

George Mendonsa was proven to be the "Kissing Sailor", but who was the lady in the white dress? Her name was Greta Zimmer Friedman. Born in 1924 to a Jewish family in Wiener Newstadt, Austria. Greta immigrated to America from a Nazi-controlled Austria in 1939 at the age of 15. The Nazi government required all female Jews legally take the middle name of Sara to be easily identified, so her name on her passport was listed as Grete Sara Zimmer. She and one of her sisters were sent to live with relatives in New York City. Sadly her parents were unable to leave Austria and perished in the Holocaust.

Greta was actually a dental assistant, not a nurse. On V-J Day, August 14, 1945 left her den-



Photo credit: Wikipedia



Photo credit: Jerry O'Donnell



— About 200 people attended the rededication ceremony of the Unconditional Surrender statue that's now at Bayfront Park in Sarasota. The event coincided with a 76th anniversary of VJ Day, a commemoration of the surrender of the Japanese Empire the end of World War II. THOMAS BENDER/SARASOTA HERALD-TRIBUNE

tal office in her white uniform for Times Square to read the "Ticker" that ran around the Times Building for announcements about the rumored end of the war. In those days news was broadcast by radio in the morning and early evening, so any updates on news outside of the traditional news hour could be found by reading the "Ticker", in this case, in Times Square.

The announcement that the war was over displayed on the "Ticker" and the next thing Greta knew was that a man in a Navy sailor uniform grabbed and kissed her. Photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt captured the moment in four frames, but failed to get any personal information on the subjects. As with the sailor, many women came forward claiming to be the nurse in the picture. When Greta saw the photo in the 1960s she knew that it was her. It wasn't until 1980 that Life magazine contacted her to verify that she was the woman on the photograph.



Jerry O'Donnell with Greta Zimmer Friedman
Photo credit: Jerry O'Donnell

Greta later married Dr. Mischa Friedman, a WWII U.S. Army Air Corps veteran and had two children. She was so proud to be associated with such a joyous event of the war being over.

"It was a wonderful coincidence, a man in a sailor's uniform and a woman in a white dress... and a great photographer at the right time."

-Greta Zimmer Friedman (the "Nurse")

*Jerry O'Donnell is a retired US Navy Captain and is a leading expert on Alfred Eisenstaedt's photo for Life magazine entitled V-J Day, 1945, Times Square, on which Sarasota's Unconditional Surrender sculpture is based. Mr. O'Donnell was instrumental in confirming (through his participation in Mitsubishi Engineering Research Laboratories' analysis of the photo) the identity of the sailor; and in the publication of the definitive history of the photo, The Kissing Sailor: The Mystery Behind the Photo that Ended World War II by Lawrence Verria and George Galdorisi.

**George Mendonsa always loved being associated with the exuberance and elation of the end of WWII and the infamous photo of The Kissing Sailor. He died in Middletown, RI February 17, 2019.

***The famous photo of The Kissing Sailor was taken on Aug 14, 1945, but Japan officially signed the surrender papers on September 2, 1945, so VJ Day is officially celebrated on September 2nd.

IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE - 03 AUGUST 2021

Press Release by Lieutenant Colonel Robert Sawallesh, US Army, Retired; Director, Op HH, 813-654-3900

Retiring Veterans' Hospital Director Made Honorary Member of Op HH



— Photo courtesy of Lieutenant Colonel Robert Sawallesh, US Army, Retired.

On July 28, 2021 at the James A. Haley Veterans' Hospital (JAHVH) in Tampa, members of the Operation Helping Hand (Op HH) Executive Council declared the retiring Director of the JAHVH as an Honorary Member of the Op HH Executive Council.

From left to right: Mr. William Szydowski, Op HH Treasurer, Lutz; Lieutenant Colonel Jim Griffin, Hyde Park, US Army, Retired, Op HH Chairman, Mr. Joe Battle, retiring Director at the James Haley Veterans' Hospital in Tampa; Chief Warrant Officer Thomas South, US Army, Retired, Tampa, Op HH Director and Lieutenant Colonel Robert Sawallesh, Valrico, US Army, Retired, Op HH Director.

Mr. Battle was recognized with a special award by Op HH for his outstanding leadership in the treatment and rehabilitation of the wounded and injured in the combat zones. During Mr. Battle's tenure as hospital director, he was instrumental in the continued success of Op HH which since 2004 has assisted the wounded and injured at the JAHVH and their families.

Op HH was initiated by members of the Tampa Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA).

Op HH contact for additional information: Lieutenant Colonel Jim Griffin, US Army, Retired, Chairman, Op HH, 813-785-0552.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

CHAPLAIN (COL) BERNARD H LIEVING JR USA RET



As we approach the 20th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on our nation, the memories of where we were and what we were doing on that Tuesday morning are still very much alive. We remember our television showing the massive destruction of the Twin Towers in New York and the Pentagon damage in Arlington and the crash site in Pennsylvania.

Our foundation as a secure nation was shaken as we came to the realization of what had taken place. Two days later President George W. Bush issued a proclamation calling for a National Day of Prayer and Remembrance on September 14th, which would include noontime memorial services, the ringing of bells, evening candlelight vigils, and employers giving their workers time off to attend services and for all to “pray for our nation.”

Within a month, the bombing of Taliban and al-Qaeda had begun in Afghanistan; Special Forces were on the ground and within days conventional ground forces were there and the Taliban regime was overthrown. Two decades later, they are back in control of the entire country after our forces have withdrawn, ending our nation's longest “war.”

As we come to the 20th anniversary of 9/11, it is still our task to remember the almost 3,000 people killed that day; the 25,000 injured; their families; those who have died and those who responded who are still ill from the substantial long-term health consequences. We also must honor the 2,448 US service members killed in action in Afghanistan; the 31,000 wounded; the many thousands without visible wounds and the 1,144 coalition and allied forces killed; and, of course, all their families.

As you read this article, I challenge you to commit, especially on 9/11, to pray to Almighty God, our hope and refuge, for our nation and for these men and women and their families. Pray also for the people of Afghanistan as they face the future under Taliban control.

Coast Guard, National Guard Forces Begin Rescues and Aid in Response to Hurricane Ida

— [Patricia Kime](#) for [Military.com](#)

U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City aircrews prepare to respond to Hurricane Henri, August 25, 2021. (U.S. Coast Guard)

With much of New Orleans dark and entire swaths of coastal Louisiana without phone service or power as of midday Monday, U.S. [Coast Guard](#) members and [National Guard](#) units from Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas are busy conducting search-and-rescue operations and assessing damage left by Hurricane Ida.

The Category 4 storm made landfall near Port Fourchon, Louisiana, on Sunday, barreling northward with winds of up to 150 miles per hour. While the hurricane weakened to a tropical storm Monday, it left behind flooded roadways, damaged roofs and downed power lines across low-lying coastal areas, including the city of Houma.

The Coast Guard conducted one of the first rescue operations of the storm early Monday, transporting seven patients from a hospital in Galliano, Louisiana, Gov. John Bel Edwards said during a press conference.

“They were able to fly before any other assets could,” Bel Edwards said during a briefing for President Joe Biden. “You probably saw the hospital that had the roof completely taken off yesterday. Your Coast Guard rescued and relocated those patients, and we’re very appreciative of that.”

Before the storm made landfall, the service had moved in forces from U.S. Coast Guard Aviation Training Center Mobile, Alabama, and Coast Guard Air Station Houston, Texas, to prepare for any search-and-rescue operations, as well as damage assessments.

Aircrews from Coast Guard Air Station Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and elsewhere, including North Carolina, Texas and Louisiana, were deployed to the region ahead of the storm, according to official Coast Guard social media pages.

Read Next: [‘Unjust Actions’: Army Illegally Denied Housing Allowance to Reservists and Wrongly Investigated Them, Board Finds](#)

The service also is monitoring the positions of 22 barges that broke free on the Missis-



sippi River, which reversed course for four hours as the result of Ida’s winds and storm surge, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

Capt. Chris Hulser, commanding officer of the training center in Mobile, [told CBS News on Monday morning that the service planned to begin overflights at daylight.](#)

“We’ll include airplanes and helicopters, all fitted for search and rescue,” Hulser said. “They’ll be surveying New Orleans and the western area for habitability, for anybody in distress and, of course, they’ll be surveying the waterways for any type of pollution, any type of disaster we can take care of.”

Also participating in the federal response are about 5,300 National Guard members, including more than 5,000 from Louisiana, according to National Guard Bureau spokesman Wayne Hall.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sent in a team Monday to help restore power, along with emergency operations center personnel to support flood management and response.

The Coast Guard and National Guard responses to the hurricane come as both forces are busy elsewhere: The Coast Guard currently has hundreds of members [deployed to Haiti for humanitarian relief operations](#) following a 7.2-magnitude earthquake that struck the southern portion of that country Aug. 14.

And the National Guard has more than 13,000 members deployed across the country for COVID-related missions, in addition to at least a thousand members who are in Kuwait and Afghanistan.

Ida made landfall roughly 45 miles west and 16 years to the day after Hurricane Katrina struck Louisiana and Mississippi.

One person is confirmed dead as a result of the storm, killed when a tree fell on his home in Ascension Parish.

-- This is a developing story. It will be updated.

-- [Military.com](#) reporter Steve Beynon contributed to this report.

-- Patricia Kime can be reached at Patricia.Kime@Monster.com. Follow her on Twitter @patriciakime

Related: [US Airlifts Aid to Haiti to Reach Areas Hardest Hit by Quake](#)

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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!

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“NEVER STOP SERVING”