



THE RETROSPECT

JUNE 2018

TAMPA CHAPTER—A CHAPTER OF MOAA NATIONAL—A FIVE STAR CHAPTER 2002, 2004-2014

VOLUME 24, NUMBER 6

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

ARMY BIRTHDAY

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

LEGISLATIVE LOWDOWN

OPERATION HELPING HAND

BULLETIN BOARD

SERVICE NEWS

LUNCHEON MEDITERRANEAN MENU:

ROLLS & BUTTER,
GREEN ORZO
SALAD, GREEK
LEMON CHICKEN,
OREGANO
ROASTED
POTATOES,
CREAMED
SPINACH,
BAKLAVA
AND
ASSORTED
DESSERTS

Upcoming Events

OUR BOARD
WILL MEET AT
1000 on:

- 07 JUNE
- 05 JULY
- 02 AUGUST

LUNCHEON
MEETINGS WILL
BE HELD AT 1130
AT SURF'S EDGE
ON:

- 14 JUNE
- 12 JULY
- 09 AUGUST

THE U.S. ARMY

AMERICA'S FIRST NATIONAL INSTITUTION

Since its official establishment, June 14, 1775 — more than a year before the Declaration of Independence — the U.S. Army has played a vital role in the growth and development of the American nation. Drawing on both long-standing militia traditions and recently introduced professional standards, it won the new republic's independence in an arduous eight-year struggle against Great Britain. At times, the Army provided the lone symbol of nationhood around which patriots rallied.



JUNE 14TH:

THE BIRTHDAY OF THE U.S. ARMY



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Honoring those who served U.S.

JUNE SPEAKER: R. STEVEN MURRAY, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR OF THE FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS IN TALLAHASSEE

The retired Air Force lieutenant colonel provides oversight and direction of the department's comprehensive public affairs program of community outreach, media relations and employee communications impacting Florida's more than 1.6 million veterans, their family members and survivors.

During his Air Force career, he served as Director of Public Affairs at Moody AFB, Georgia; Director of Public Affairs at Misawa Air Base, Japan; Director of Public Affairs with the Air Force Office of Special Investigations, Washington, D.C., Faculty Head of the Public Affairs Department at the Defense Information School, Fort Meade, Maryland; and Director of Public Affairs at Headquarters Air Force Recruiting Service, Randolph AFB, Texas.

Colonel Murray, an Operation Iraqi Freedom veteran, retired from the Air Force as a career public affairs officer in 2006 and returned to his home state of Florida to serve in his current position.

He received a Bachelor of Science degree in broadcast journalism with honors from the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Miss. and has a Master of Science degree in Administration from Central Michigan University.

IMPORTANT DATES IN JUNE 2018

14 JUNE—National Flag Day—On 14 June 1777, the Flag Resolution was signed, making the current stars and stripes the National Flag of the United States of America.

14 JUNE—Ramadan~14 May through 14 June.

17 JUNE—Fathers' Day—celebrated by Americans on the third Sunday in June.

19 JUNE—Juneteenth~commemorates the setting free of slaves and the abolishment of slavery in the state of Texas on June 19, 1965. The day is also called the Emancipation Day. Juneteenth is formed by joining the two words (a portmanteau). This holiday honors the African American heritage and commemorates the African American freedom and it is a day of reflecting the past and a day of renewal in to a new and kinder human race.

21 JUNE—The Summer Solstice June 20th and the 21st will be the longest days of 2017 for anyone living north of the equator

PRESIDENT:

COL Carol Zieres USA RET (727) 793-0568
Cell (727) 366-1045
carolzieres@yahoo.com

IMMEDIATE PAST PRES., PROGRAM CHAIRMAN AND OPERATION HELPING HAND

LTC Jim Griffin USA RET (813) 785-0552
tigerpaw65@verizon.net

ASSIGNMENTS**1ST VICE PRESIDENT/EVENT****RESERVATIONS:**

MAJ SCOTTY CLELAND USAF RET
(813) 988-4552
SNLTPA@MINDSPRING.COM

2ND VICE PRESIDENT/ PUBLIC RELATIONS & EDITOR, THE RETROSPECT:

CAPT Don Dvornik USN RET
(727) 441-2051
DSDVORNIK2@msn.com

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN:

COL William Schneider USA RET
(813) 977-2572 Cell (813) 300-3202
GeoWillyl@aol.com

SECRETARY/DATA BASE MANAGER/**PHOTOGRAPHER:**

CW2 Tom South USA RET
(813) 975-5025
tsouth@uvresident.com

TREASURER:

LTCOL Ken Martin USMCR RET
(813) 831-4426
martinkb@verizon.net

DEPUTY TREASURER:

CPT Wiley Hazel USA RET
(813) 979-1739
wileyandedna@gmail.com

LEGAL ADVISOR:

Former LT William Mitchell USN
(813) 963-5098 Cell: (813) 679-1217
mitchlaw@askmitch.net

SENIOR CHAPLAIN

Chaplain (COL) Bernard H. Lieving USA RET
(813) 254-5044
blievingjr@aol.com

JUNIOR CHAPLAIN/COMMUNICATIONS**OFFICER:**

CDR Richard Helveston CHC USNR RET
(863) 510-5048 Cell (863) 602-3684
rhelveston@tampabay.rr.com

SCHOLARSHIP CHAIRMAN:

Col Milt Steadman USAF RET
(813) 968-2835
msu1955@verizon.net

LEGISLATIVE LIAISON:

LTC Chris Hart USA RET
(813) 839-3505
c3ihart@gmail.com

ID CARD/BASE ENTRY:

Maj John Massey USAF RET
(813) 886-1938
johnmoaa@aol.com

PERSONAL AFFAIRS:

Maj Dick Tinsley USMC RET
(813) 886-2169
rctinsley1@aol.com

SICK CALL CHAIRMAN:

CW3 Bill Farrow USA RET (813) 884-7823
SAF1929@aol.com



COL ZIERES
PRESIDENT

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE FOR JUNE 2018

I sincerely hope that you had the opportunity to attend a Memorial Day event this past month in your hometown. There were no shortages of parades to attend in our community! I was honored to attend a special ceremony at Regency Oaks in Clearwater on Memorial Day weekend. Former Tampa Chapter Past President, BILL LEWIS, invited me to attend the Regency Oaks Veterans Association Memorial Day Service; the topic was "Gone, But Not Forgotten." Our Chapter Chaplain, BERNARD LIEVING, JR. was a featured speaker on the program, delivering a very solemn and uplifting homily.

Another highlight last month was an Armed Forces Day celebratory event in that the James A. Haley Veterans Affairs Hospital partnered with the National Endowment for the Arts' Creative Forces Initiative to feature a public art exhibit, "Power To The People – The Bill of Rights Exhibit of Military Veterans Art." I am proud to say that the Tampa Chapter was well represented in this art exhibit with three artists (BOB SAWALLESH, STUART DWORK, and CAROL ZIERES) each contributed a self-inspired interpretive painting of the 2nd, 4th, and 7th Amendments. The ten Bill of Rights art panels will be on display during the summer months at the STRAZ CENTER overlooking the Hillsborough River walk. I hope that some of you were able to attend the reception on May 19th. If you get a chance, I invite you to take a look at the beautiful art panels the next time you're in downtown Tampa, strolling along the River walk.

And finally, I'd like to spend just a few minutes writing about the Florida Council of Chapters Annual Meeting that took place at the Sanibel Harbour Marriott Resort and Spa in Ft. Myers on 1-3 June. This was one of the best conventions that I've attended. Congratulations to the LEE COAST CHAPTER for hosting a fantastic convention in a very classy venue! From the dinner cruise on Friday night to the military ball on Saturday evening, I thoroughly enjoyed the guest speakers, the food, camaraderie, the accommodations, and the entertainment.

National MOAA President and CEO, Lt. Gen DANA ATKINS, delivered a very succinct state of the union address for the association including MOAA's position and action undertaken during this year's "Storming the Hill 2018" that ensured the voices of our military/veterans/families were heard regarding the important issues that are pending inclusion in the provisions of the 2019 NDAA. I especially appreciated the opportunity given to the Tampa Chapter to set up a table in the hotel foyer so we could hand out brochures and play a video loop that gave folks a "sneak preview"—looking ahead at the FCOC's annual meeting next year in Safety Harbor. I'd like to thank all the volunteers who helped staff the Tampa Chapter information table during the course of the weekend. And, a special "Thanks" to LTC BOB SAWALLESH and LTC JEANNE RICHARD for their tremendous effort in revamping the Tampa Chapter brochure. The timing of the completion for this new brochure was perfect to have as a colorful hand-out at this convention showcasing all that we do in our chapter. Our next luncheon on June 14th, which is by the way, FLAG DAY and the 243rd BIRTHDAY OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY, where we will be awarding monetary scholarships to several very deserving college bound students, so come out and join us - you won't want to miss it! And, remember to look for your June copy of the Retrospect in your e-mail inbox or go online to click on and download the current copy of the RETROSPECT Newsletter on our website: www.MOAA Tampa.org.

AS ALWAYS, WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK – NEVER STOP SERVING—TAKING CARE OF OUR TROOPS IS A LIFETIME COMMITMENT"



Lieutenant Colonel Jim Griffin, left, US Army, Retired, Army Aviator, Immediate Past President of Tampa MOAA and Chairman of Operation Helping Hand, discusses Army Aviation history at the US Army Aviation booth at the 2018 Sun 'n Fun in Lakeland, FL.



CAPT DVORNIK
EDITOR

is published monthly by members of the Tampa Chapter of the Military Officers' Association of America (MOAA), P.O. Box 6383, MacDill Air Force Base, FL 33608-0383. Tampa Chapter MOAA, Inc. is a 501-C-19 tax exempt veterans organization not associated with the Department of Defense. The views expressed in

individually signed articles do not necessarily reflect Chapter policy.

(Volume 21, Number 6—JUNE 2018)

PUBLICATION DEADLINE FOR THE
JULY 2018 ISSUE IS 18 JUNE



LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS
By LTC CHRIS HART USA RET

This article focuses on the Department of Veterans Affairs, its leadership and its future. I believe the future of the VA is worth our serious investigation, open debate and action to influence the decision-making at the U.S. Senate and Presidential levels.

VETERANS DESERVE REFORM, NOT POLITICS

The firing of Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin may seem like just another in recent spate of executive branch departures. For his efforts to reform a vast bureaucracy and to better serve America's 20 million veterans, Dr. Shulkin will be sorely missed. Shulkin supported a plan approved by Congress, but was wary of moving too abruptly or drastically. So the VA focused on cities where its hospitals are overcrowded, and in rural areas where Veterans are hard to reach. His efforts enabled many Veterans to get care more quickly. Unfortunately, his pragmatism conflicted with a blind faith in privatization held by rivals in President Donald Trump's administration and financial supporters. Also, Shulkin carried on with earlier reforms to the VA's disability payments system, which has trapped many Veterans in dependency, discouraging them from rejoining the workforce. He stepped up measures to improve employee accountability, and to prevent deserving Veterans from being denied urgent care. Going further, he reinvigorated the VA's stalled effort to bring its record keeping into the digital age, and make the online system compatible with that of the DoD. And he proceeded carefully with the healthcare of some 40,000 homeless Vets. Dr David Shulkin persevered through a challenging, albeit short term as the VA Secretary. Americans should thank him for his service, and hope that his successor will understand and further his priorities.

VETERANS AFFAIRS LEADERSHIP STALLS AMID LEADERSHIP UNCERTAINTY

After several Veterans reform issues were dropped from the massive \$1.3 trillion omnibus spending package signed into law in March, it appears progress on any Veterans legislation has stalled until a new VA Secretary is confirmed. That could have a major impact on several important issues, most notably including the VA's role in private sector healthcare. The issue of VA privatization came back into focus when Dr. David Shulkin abruptly left his position. The shake-up has stirred new questions about privatization, and what all these changes would mean to Veterans and their families. Without permanent leadership in place, it's difficult to tell what direction the nation's second largest federal department will take. Without steady leadership, Veterans and their families could pay the price.

PRIVATIZED VA WILL HURT VETERANS

"I believe strongly in the mission of the Department of Veterans Affairs, and nothing in my political experience in Washington could ever change that. I also believe that maintaining a strong VA is an essential piece of the puzzle that is the United States' national security system: We can only expect our sons and daughters to risk their lives and fight for our freedom if we can keep our promise to care for them when they return home broken, injured or traumatized. There is no excuse for not holding up our end of the bargain. During my tenure, we passed critical legislation that improved the appeals process for Veterans seeking disability benefits, enacted a new G.I. Bill, and helped ensure that we hire the right people to work at the department. We have expanded access to healthcare by reducing wait times, increasing productivity, and working more closely with the private sector. We have put in place more and better health services for those suffering from the invisible wounds of war. Now, the percent of Veterans who have regained trust in VA services has risen to 70%, from 46% four years ago. It seems that these successes within the VA have intensified the ambitions of people who want to put VA health care in the hands of the private sector. I believe differences in philosophy deserve robust debate, and solutions should be determined based on the merits of the argument. The advocates within the administration for privatizing VA health services; however, reject this approach. They saw me as an obstacle to privatization who had to be removed. That is because I am convinced that privatization is a political issue aimed at rewarding select people and companies with profits, even if it undermines care for Veterans. In recent months, the environment in Washington has turned toxic, chaotic, disrespectful and subversive that it became impossible for me to accomplish the important work that our Veterans need and deserve. As I prepare to leave government, I am struck by a recurring thought: It should not be this hard to serve our country." (By former VA Secretary Dr. David Shulkin, M.D.)

My purpose in republishing this article is to gain your attention on the VA's future. We are at a major crossroads, and like Yogi said, "when you come to a fork in the road, take it!" It's up to us, which direction are we going to take?

Sources: (1) Another voice, A Bloomberg View editorial, 03/31/18; (2) Online, www.moaa.org, Cmdr Rene Campos, USN (Ret.) & Jamie Naughton, 04/16/18; (3) Tampa Bay Times, Opinion, Dr David Shulkin, MD, (c) 2018 NY Times,



U.S. Navy surgical staff assigned to the hospital ship USNS Mercy and a Sri Lankan surgical team from Base Hospital Mutur prepare to use a Da Vinci XI Robot Surgical System to perform the first robot-assisted surgery aboard the hospital ship USNS Mercy during Pacific Partnership 2018



Army pilots and crew chiefs conduct preflight mission brief before a night assault mission at Hohenfels Training Area, Germany
Army photo by Sgt. Gregory T. Summers



Aircraft fly in formation above the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt in the Pacific Ocean, May 2, 2018. The aviators are assigned to Carrier Air Wing 17.
Navy photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Anthony J. Rivera



The Navy dragon boat team, composed of Okinawa-based Navy personnel, competes in the 43rd Naha Harii Festival Dragon Boat Races in Naha, Okinawa, Japan, May 5, 2018.
Navy photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Matthew Dickinson



TAMPA CHAPTER BULLETIN BOARD

REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS

LT COL THOMAS ALLEN USAF RET 3301 Bayshore Blvd UNIT 1104,
Tampa, FL 33629-8844
CARLA HENSEN, wife of FORMER USAF CPT ERIC HENSEN, 4425
Pine Meadow Ct., Tampa, FL 33624-5244
LT COL JOANNE VEVERKA-TAUBER USAF RET, 13714 Chestersall Dr,
Tampa, FL 33624-2501

—submitted by CW3 Bill Farrow, Sick Call Chairman

HONORARY MEMBER, BEN RITTER, EXTOLS WIFE'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Alder Allensworth won a book publishing contest last fall. Her book - Pre-veil: Celebrate the Journey - was published in February and is now out on Amazon. Also on Kindle. See link and description, below. She has been speaking live on local TV and radio programs and featured in an article by Michael Merino in the Tampa Bay Times.

After being diagnosed with a rare, usually fatal cancer, Alder Allensworth made a miraculous recovery and took on a sailing journey most would only dream of. Having lost one eye to cancer, Alder dedicated herself to this 1,200-mile trip to raise money and awareness for sailors with disabilities, and quickly realized that sailing the 12-foot Preveil from Florida to Maine presented a whole new set of challenges that she had never encountered before, even on the water. Preveil: Celebrate the Journey follows Alder's story from her diagnosis through her sailing expedition, and finally to the creation of a nonprofit sailing organization that provides instruction and recreation to people of all ages and abilities, Sailability Greater Tampa Bay. LINK TO DAYTIME TV SHOW:

Living Life to the Fullest Alder Allensworth
<http://www.wfla.com/daytime/living-life-to-the-fullest-alder-allensworth/1128506936>

Her father, Tom Allensworth was buried at Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors on April 9, 2018. He was a retired USN Captain. He was the Whitehouse Dentist under Presidents Johnson and Nixon. He passed away at our home on Easter Sunday, 2017. We missed getting an article to you in time for the May 2018 RETRO. Also - Would you like me to send you a blurb & photo on my receipt of a Veterans Lifetime Appreciation Award that was presented to me on July 28 at an event in Clearwater hosted by the VSO Vet2Vet Reconnect? Carol Zieres suggested I send. FYI, Alder is now working full-time as an RN. She won a book-publishing contest last fall and, in her spare time is doing speaking engagements and book-signings. !

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO MEMBERS BORN IN JUNE

- 1 LT COL LEONARD BERMAN USAF RET
- 1 LT ROBIN ORR USCG RET
- 2 COL HAROLD YOUNG USA RET
- 5 FORMER NAVY ENS MICHAEL SHAPIRO
- 7 COL CLIFFORD ENGLE USAF RET
- 7 VADM DAVID PETERMAN USCG RET
- 7 LT COL WILLIAM POVEY USAF RET
- 8 LTC JIM GRIFFIN USA RET
- 8 MAJ GEN GERALD P MINETTI USA RET
- 9 LT COL WILLIAM C LEWIS USAF RET
- 10 CW4 DAVID DANIELS USCG RET
- 12 LCDR B LESLIE CASH SR USN RET
- 12 MAJ RICHARD TINSLEY USMC RET
- 12 MAJ CHARLES ZIPPERER USA AD
- 13 FORMER 2LT THOMAS MONNA ARNG
- 18 LT LEE CUTHBERTSON USCGR
- 21 LTC DEBORAH WILLIAMS USA RET
- 22 FORMER USAF CAPT ROBERT BREEN
- 22 COL GREGORY RENN USA RET
- 25 MAJOR MARTHA HUFF USA RET
- 27 COL LUTHER LLOYD USA RET
- 29 LTC HOUSTON TUCKER USA AD
- 30 MAJ ALBERT SINICOPE USAF RET

OPHH AT SUN AND FUN IN LAKE LAND



Army Master Sgt. Betheny Jones quizzes Sgt. Bert Everhart Jr. on the Versa Pak water purification system during Combined Resolve X at Hohenfels Training Area, Germany

Canterbury Tower combines open and elegant floorplans with dramatic views of Tampa's spectacular cityscape with an active, vibrant lifestyle and the security and peace of mind that comes with a full continuum of on-site health care.

CANTERBURY TOWER
3501

It's your life—
so bring it with you!

As we age many people are anxious about making a move. They are concerned about the downsizing and apprehensive about leaving a familiar home they've always known. Most of all there is the fear that the life and lifestyle they've so enjoyed will change. To that we say, "Nonsense!"

One visit to Canterbury Tower and you will realize that this is a community of people who see life here as an extension of what their lives have always been—an enhancement actually. Here is a community of vibrant, engaged and interesting friends and neighbors, who have led and continue to lead stimulating lives. Visit us and see for yourself.

Call 813.837.1083 to schedule a tour.



3501 BAYSHORE BOULEVARD
TAMPA, FL
canterburytower.org



LUNCHEON PHOTOS
By CW2 Thomas South USA RET



GUARDSMAN TAKES ARMY VALUES TO HEART

By Air Force Tech. Sgt. Erich B. Smith, National Guard Bureau



Army Sgt. Stephen Caldwell, an infantryman with the South Carolina Army National Guard and a watch analyst for the Department of Homeland Security, poses for a photo in Arlington, VA. As a DHS watch analyst, Caldwell monitors potential national threats that could pose harm to critical infrastructures. "It's amazing how everything is pulled together to provide an [operational] picture," he said. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Erich B. Smith

ARLINGTON, VA—An infantryman with the South Carolina Army National Guard's Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 118th Infantry Regiment, takes the Army values to heart. "We're supporting the mission on the ground and making that difference," said Army Sgt. Stephen Caldwell, adding that he loves being a part of a larger team. "Being a fire team leader, providing fire superiority and taking over the objectives—it's an adrenaline rush say the least," he said.

In his civilian job, Caldwell is a watch analyst with the Department of Homeland Security. In that capacity, he monitors potential

national threats that could pose harm to physical structures, cyber networks the environment. "We have situational awareness on pretty much anything," he said. And, regarding his infantry duties, Caldwell said good radio communications provide a tactical edge for his unit. "It's communication that makes everything run and I love the challenge," he said, adding the radio makes him feel like a double threat on the battlefield. "A single radio has the power to change the outcome of an engagement," Caldwell said.

Before working at DHS, he spent four years working at the South Carolina Emergency Management Division's joint operations center. The experience there laid the groundwork for his current DHS job, Caldwell said. "It gave me an understanding of what affects critical infrastructures," he said. "Just seeing it from a technical standpoint helped me understand what is needed at the national level with DHS, as far as the cause and effect of things."

Caldwell said he has also found crossovers from the military side, as well. "Great communication is key when a situation is developing and when you need to put something out to leadership so they can make a judgment call," he said. "Camaraderie is a big thing on our teams, and it keeps me motivated when taking on a new task."

Whether he is in his civilian or military role, Caldwell said he likes to learn and grow, making it a point to move laterally within DHS and absorb all the new information he can along the way.

"Complacency kills, so I take the time in learning new things outside of my normal skill set," he said. "It makes for more excitement on a daily basis."

That eagerness to learn—along with being highly competent and having a strong commitment to the homeland security mission—makes Caldwell an asset, said Matt Vaughn, a program manager in the section where Caldwell works at DHS. "He's a real go-getter, and you never have to tell him [to execute a task] twice," Vaughn said. "He gets it. He does it, and it's always done well."

While Caldwell said training and teamwork have been the backbone of his success with the South Carolina Army National Guard and the DHS, he is furthering his personal and professional growth by attending school for intelligence studies at the American Military University.

"Education helps me relay my thoughts in a productive way, helping me better connect with soldiers," he said. But education has not been the only source of learning for Caldwell.

He was a self-described "gung-ho kid" when he deployed to Afghanistan in 2007 with the South Carolina Army National Guard's

218th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. He said the experience of working with his fellow soldiers in a deployed environment taught him the importance of thinking in a more critical and tempered way.

"I learned that even though you can't control everything, you still have to remain mission focused," Caldwell said. Following that mindset, he added, requires not making "emotional decisions."

He said he tells new soldiers that taking on new tasks will help them stand out—such as becoming a "double threat" by learning the ins and outs of radio communication.

"Always be willing to learn something new," Caldwell said. "Once you start to do that you fall into a pattern as that soldier with a can-do attitude."

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1514495/face-of-defense-guardsmen-takes-army-values-to-heart/source/GovDelivery/>



JUNE: THE WEDDING MONTH!

By Junier Chaplain CDR Richard Helveston USNR Ret

Did you know that many of the customs observed at weddings today date back to the days of the Roman Empire? For example, the month of June, which is now the favorite month for marriages, was also the most popular month for weddings in ancient Rome. That's because June was the month of Juno, the goddess of marriage. A wedding celebrated in June was believed to please Juno, who would assure prosperity and happiness to the newlyweds.

The wearing of the bridal veil is also a custom that can be traced to ancient Rome. The Roman bride wore a veil to hide her face from evil spirits that might seek to mar her happiness.

Wedding cake was part of a Roman wedding, too, though it was common earlier among the Greeks, who usually served cheesecake at their weddings.

But the Roman bride didn't dress all in white, as is the custom today. She wore a tunic with a wool girdle around her waist, saffron-colored sandals, a saffron robe, and an orange veil. She also wore a wreath on her head and a metal collar around her neck!

The Romans favored June because, if the bride conceived right away, she wouldn't be too pregnant to help with the harvest.

2.3 million couples wed every year in the US. That breaks down to nearly 6,200 weddings a day

- the average age of a bride in the US is 25.3
- average age of a groom is 26.9
- average number of guests invited to a wedding is 178
- one-third of those getting married each year have been married before

<https://superbeefy.com/why-do-people-get-married-in-june/>



USS MILIUS BRINGS ENHANCED MISSILE DEFENSE TO U.S. 7TH FLEET



AT SEA -- The guided missile destroyer USS Milius entered the U.S. 7th Fleet area of operations May 14 to join

the forward-deployed U.S. naval forces in Japan.

Milius joins Destroyer Squadron 15 to support security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region by bringing enhanced missile defense capabilities as a ballistic missile defense platform.

"I am very excited that Milius is coming to DESRON 15," said Navy Capt. Jonathan Duffy, the commander of DESRON 15. "The ship's advanced capabilities will be vital in support of our missions in the Indo-Pacific region."

During the past year, while homeported in San Diego, Milius was fitted with the Aegis Baseline 9 combat system, upgrading its air defense, ballistic missile defense, surface warfare and undersea warfare capabilities. The ship then completed Combat System Ship's Qualification trials and multiple live-fire events to perform operational testing of its new weapons technology.

"I could not be prouder of this crew and their hard work and dedication leading up to this deployment," said Navy Cmdr. Jennifer Pontius, the commander of the USS Milius. "The crew has trained extremely hard to get the ship fully certified and ready for tasking, and we are excited to operate forward and bring new capabilities to the [forward-deployed U.S. naval forces] team."

With its Aegis BMD system, the Milius has the ability to provide regional, as well as homeland, defense support and can intercept short- to intermediate-range, separating and non-separating ballistic missile threats above the atmosphere and shorter-range ballistic missiles within the atmosphere.

A U.S. Navy destroyer is a multimission ship that can operate independently or as part of a larger group of ships at sea. The Milius is equipped with a Vertical Launching System, Tomahawk Cruise Missiles, torpedoes, guns and Phalanx Close-In Weapons Systems.

When the Milius arrives in Yokosuka, Japan, it is scheduled to undergo a regular maintenance period while the crew and their families settle into the area.

Milius follows the guided missile destroyers USS Benfold and USS Barry as the final destroyer to transition from the U.S. 3rd Fleet to the U.S. 7th Fleet. The move is part of the U.S. Navy's plan to rotate newer and more capable units into positions across the Indo-Pacific region to provide security and stability to the forward-deployed Navy.

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/1521539/uss-milius-brings-enhanced-missile-defense-to-us-7th-fleet/>

SOLDIER RECOUNTS HER PATH TO EARNING ARMY RANGER TAB

By Alun Thomas, U.S. Army Recruiting Battalion Phoenix



Army Capt. Natalie Mallue and her husband, Army Capt. Edward Mallue, pose for a photo at Fort Benning, GA., April 28, 2017. At that time, Natalie had just graduated from Ranger school, the sixth woman ever to do so. Mallue is also the first woman to hold both Ranger and Sapper tabs.

Courtesy photo

PHOENIX—The end was in sight. Long days of little food and sleep were taking a toll on Army Capt. Natalie Mallue as she neared the end of the third and final phase of the Army's Ranger school, deep in the swamps of Camp Rudder, Florida. But after three months—including once being sent back to restart the final phase—Mallue knew it would soon be over, the grueling days and nights culminating in one crucial thing: the coveted Ranger tab.

When she graduated Ranger school at Fort Benning in April 2017, Mallue became only the sixth female to graduate the school and the first to wear both the Ranger and Sapper tabs.

Mallue's determination to achieve her goals was instilled in her at a young age, she said. "I was raised in a typical rural, suburban type neighborhood. Nobody was in my family was in the military ... I didn't know anything about it," she said. "I had a neighbor who was retired Air Force and he suggested I take a look at the Air Force Academy. So I started taking a look into it and the other military academies." Mallue considered her options and eventually decided on West Point, seeing it as the most viable academy. "Between all the service academies I liked West Point and the Air Force the most. I ended up choosing West Point because it was more people-focused," she explained. "The Air Force Academy seemed more focused on technology. I also liked the aspect of learning leadership and people skills."

Despite the rigid military structure and discipline required at West Point, Mallue said she never felt restricted or contained by her new Army surroundings. "I never had that feeling. I always felt like I was working for something bigger than simply just going to college," she said. "I didn't know if it was going to be for me, but I felt like everyone was going to college just to go to college, with no real purpose after that. So I thought I'd do something extra besides just going to college."

After careful consideration, Mallue selected the engineer branch upon graduating from West Point in 2009. "I chose the engineer branch because they have a wartime and peacetime mission," she said. "A lot of branches only do their mission when they deploy, so I liked that I could go out and do construction projects and still hone my skills, even when not at war."

Mallue's first duty station was in Schweinfurt, Germany, where she met her husband, Army Capt. Edward Mallue, also a West Point graduate and engineer. "Our paths never crossed at West Point ... I never knew Natalie until we met in Germany," Edward said. "That was our first duty station. We got married in 2014 and moved to Hawaii with the 25th Infantry Division as a dual married couple." Edward graduated from Ranger school in 2014, Mallue said. She would attend the Sapper Leader course in 2013.

"Sapper school was very demanding. It's a much shorter course than Ranger school but it's very intense. It's very taxing knowledge-wise," she said. "There's a lot of tests and everything's point-based, so you don't know a lot of the time what you're getting graded on." "You don't know how the point system works and it's a lot of recalled information. So it's a lot more mental, whereas Ranger school is twice as long and the physical effects are far tougher," she continued. The end result, however, was being able to place the coveted Sapper tab on her left shoulder. "I was very proud when I got the Sapper tab. I went in open-minded and humble, with the attitude that I'm going to give it my best," Mallue said. "I think it also says something for the people that attempt the course itself."

It was at the Sapper course that Mallue first realized that she could succeed at Ranger school. "While I was there I had a few friends who were in the course who had been to Ranger school ... that's what planted the seed for me to go to the school," she said. "They saw my ability and said it's something I should attempt, if it was opened to females."

When Ranger school was opened to women in 2015, Mallue's battalion commander thought she would be an ideal fit. However, the timing wasn't quite right. "When they opened up Ranger school to females, my battalion commander in Hawaii asked me if I wanted to go. I told him I wasn't in a position where I feel like I could put in the effort," she explained. "I was in a unit that was going on a [Joint Readiness Training Center] rotation and I was the primary staff plan-

(Continued on page 8, see *RANGER*)



Sideboys render honors to Chief of Naval Operations Adm. John Richardson upon his arrival aboard the aircraft carrier USS George H.W. Bush in the Atlantic Ocean. The ship is underway in the Atlantic Ocean conducting carrier air wing exercises with the French navy to strengthen partnerships and deepen interoperability between the two nations' naval forces.

Navy photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Zachary P. Wickline



Airmen perform a military free fall jump in Djibouti. The airmen are assigned to the 82nd Expeditionary Rescue Squadron and they are deployed in support of humanitarian aid and contingency operations in the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa area of responsibility.

Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Gustavo Castillo

(RANGER, continued from page 7)

ner. I was putting a lot of hours into that, so it wasn't a good time."

Mallue said she changed her mind in 2016 and decided to apply for Ranger school, realizing time was of the essence. "I actually decided to go in 2016 when I was a company commander in Hawaii," she said. "A lot of times I had to encourage my own soldiers to go to schools. I thought to myself 'Well, Ranger school is open to women now.' So I set some preliminary goals. In six months I wanted to be in the right shape for Ranger school. So I started eating better and training hard."

Mallue said her main motivation to attend was to set the standard for her soldiers. "I was motivated by quite a few different factors to attend. I was setting the standard as a company commander by showing my soldiers I can still do my everyday job and prepare for Ranger school at the same time," she said. "I didn't want any excuses. I was pressed for time, but if I could do it as a company commander, my soldiers could do it as platoon sergeants or squad leaders."

Also encouraging for Mallue was that three women had already passed Ranger school, proving it could be done. "Seeing the females who had passed Ranger school definitely encouraged me. It showed me there was a way. I was slightly hesitant because none had passed in a while since the initial trio in 2015," she said. "By the time I was accepted, 36 women had attempted the course and there had been three that had graduated. So when I looked at those odds, I thought, 'Either the people that are going aren't prepared, or it's something else.'"

Mallue said she never let herself be overcome mentally by the daunting prospect of the school. "I didn't know what it was, but I was going to go and do my best and at least I would've gone and experienced it," she said. "I went in with the same mindset as Sapper school—I'm going to do my best, prepare well and not have any regrets about what I didn't do right."

Edward was able to provide detailed insights into Ranger school after his own experiences there. "That knowledge I had from being Ranger school graduate helped me evaluate Natalie to the correct standards," he said. "Her push-ups, running ... just from having been through it myself, [knowing] what she could expect to go through there helped significantly in her preparation."

(RANGER, continued on Page 9)

SOLDIER MAKES VOLUNTEERING A FAMILY AFFAIR

By Army Capt. John Brimley, DoD News, Defense Media Activity

As a single mother of three children, Army Sgt. 1st Class Heather West finds herself spending most of her personal time away from home serving others.

Some Saturdays, West works at Operation Santa Claus at Fort Bliss, TX. Other days, she's at one of the local convenience stores chatting with a person for whom she bought

a soda and a bag of potato chips. But every first Sunday she can be found at the Opportunity Center of El Paso feeding the homeless. Wherever she is, the 402nd Field Artillery Brigade operations noncommissioned officer manages to find balance between work, family and volunteering. "I really just get an idea about wanting to volunteer, and I just go and do it," she said.

West said she gets calls from people all around El Paso, but Councilman Carl Robinson is the one person who can get her to do almost anything. She said he has helped fuel her efforts. "Heather's very cooperative and responsive," Robinson said. "It's always good to know when you have a civic-minded person on your team."

West admits it's a challenge to juggle single parenthood and a packed work schedule. "Sometimes people sacrifice family to help out," she said, but she doesn't look at it as a sacrifice. In fact, the 13-year veteran just so happens to be the president of the Fort Bliss Sgt. Audie Murphy Club, which is also known for its volunteer efforts. "You make time for what you want to make time for," West said. "You just really have to take advantage."

West isn't out in the community going at it alone. Her daughter, 11-year-old Dasanah West, recently received the Fort Bliss Outstanding Youth Volunteer award. And West's teenage sons, 16-year-old C.J. and 15-year-old Aaron, volunteer just as much as their sister—and they all do it together as a family. "When she first introduced us to feeding the homeless, I was really skeptical and I wasn't really up for it either, because I wanted to stay home," C.J. said. Aaron said he felt the same way, preferring to stay home and sleep the whole day. "I'm glad she got me out the bed that day," said Aaron. C.J. also said he's taken a liking to all the family volunteering.

For the past three years, the Wests have made a life out of community service. While the people receiving help reap the immediate benefit, the West family says they have been strengthened by these acts of kindness.

"Before we started volunteering, everybody was pretty spaced out," West said. Dasanah said that distance has dwindled to almost nothing. "It's brought us pretty close," she said. "The more we get to know one another, it's actually pretty special."

With everything West keeps her hand in, from the 10- and 12-hour workdays to the countless hours she spends helping others, her efforts and impact on her own family are not lost. They value what she does in the community for the less fortunate just as much as what she does at home.

"Never in my life have I met a woman so persistent for the happiness of others to where she will go out of her way for the smallest things to make people happy," Aaron said.



Army Sgt. 1st Class Heather West of the 402nd Field Artillery Brigade poses with her children, C.J., 16, Dasanah, 11, and Aaron, 15, in El Paso, Texas, April 28, 2015. West started volunteering in the El Paso community three years ago and her children joined her shortly thereafter. Dasanah received the Fort Bliss Outstanding Youth Volunteer award last month.

USA photo by Sgt. 1st Class David Parish

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/14d543b36a92c114>

(RANGER, Continued from Page 8)

Mallue said this assistance from Edward and others in her unit was invaluable. "Once people found out I was going, they wanted to tell me about their experiences," she said. "Being in the 25th [Infantry Division], I worked with people every day who'd been to Ranger school. I heard just as many stories at work as I did at home with Ed. So mental preparation was the most important. There's a lot of stuff you can't prepare for, however. I just had to be open-minded and tell myself I wasn't going to quit."

Mallue had to complete a pre-Ranger assessment course with the 25th Infantry Division in order to qualify for the school, something which gave her the basics needed to excel at the course.

"The 25th had a fairly streamlined process for acceptance to the school. I had to do the pre-Ranger assessment course. I had to do [a Ranger Physical Fitness Test], followed by a 10-day course where they teach you almost everything you learn in the first phase of Ranger school," she said. "They gave us the fundamentals of patrol, which is the type of thing you forget if you don't brush up on it ... recon, squad ambush, land navigation ... the things you're expected to know."

"Once I passed the pre-Ranger course I was assured of a spot, so I was asked what class I wanted to attend," Mallue said. "I opted for the second class in 2017, so I still had about a month and half between the pre-course and Ranger school itself."

She said she tried not to overthink things in the period between the pre-course and Ranger school itself, but the time quickly evaporated and before she knew it she was standing at the gates of Fort Benning, ready to begin her Ranger school journey.

"When I got there I did mandatory paperwork and things like that, but [Ranger school] doesn't begin until the RPFT on day one," Mallue said. "Before that everyone was nervous just waiting for it to begin, not really sleeping at night."

Once the course was up and running, there was no looking back, she said, and everything moved rapidly over the three month span.

"Once it started the pace was hectic. We were running everywhere or just standing around on rocks all day. It wears you out, because your mind is being engaged for 20 hours a day," Mallue said.

The Ranger instructors were every bit as tough as expected, she said, making things that would normally seem tolerable, turn into the exact opposite.

"The events themselves weren't that difficult. If you did the Ranger obstacle course, you'd think, 'This isn't bad at all.' But it's the stuff they make you do in between that really adds up and taxes you physically and mentally,"

Mallue said. "You don't get to go from one obstacle to another. You have to do a crabwalk or duck walk. Then you might have to do it two more times, because the person in front of you did it wrong."

"Another example was the 12-mile ruck march," she said. "They made us stand at the start line for over an hour, with our rucks on, before we'd even started. The march itself isn't bad, but it's what they did to us before it that made it hard. I still don't know why we had to wait. It was very miserable."

Mallue said she coped with everything relatively well, the only exception being the extreme lack of sleep, which made it hard to accomplish the simplest of tasks.

"I went in winter and Edward went in summer, but it's difficult either way. You're either dealing with extreme heat or the freezing cold, where the packs weigh more," she said. "The cold and the lack of sleep were the worst for me. I would say those were worse than being hungry. You can function without food, but you can't function without sleep."

The reality of this situation affected Mallue the most during the third phase in Florida, where the lack of sleep altered her sense of reality. "One of my jobs near the end was medic. I had to help the platoon sergeant count every time the patrol went somewhere, to make sure we had everyone," she said. "We set up a checkpoint and I was physically counting everyone that went through. I couldn't count though, because I kept falling asleep. They were going through really slowly as well. When I woke up I couldn't remember what number I was on."

Mallue said they were only given five hours of sleep in ten days. Everyone had their own moments where they were talking to trees or just walked off," she said. "People were sleeping standing up or while they were walking."

Attending Ranger school in winter also added the element of being constantly cold. "Being so cold all the time was one of the toughest things. I feel like it changed me physically. Now I don't ever want to be cold," Mallue said. "The worst part of the day was when the sun went down, because it got so cold and we walked around all night to get to our control base."

She added, "I really got to a point at the end of the course where I knew one thing was certain -- that the sun was going to go down and a number of hours later that sun was going to come back. That's the only thing I could count on. I knew they couldn't fit an extra hour in the day, although if they could they would have."

Mallue was recycled during the third phase, but kept her spirits up and headed back to the "Swamp Phase" with renewed confidence, even being able to laugh at some of the events taking place.

"Looking back now I can take a step back and laugh about everything, because things seemed so ridiculous," she said. "During the days we walked through the swamp in Florida I had to laugh ... you're taking 55 people through a swamp and trying to be quiet, carrying all this stuff on your back. I was tripping over every root and covered in mud. It's crazy, so you have to be able to laugh at yourself."

EXERCISE MAX THUNDER REUNITES PILOT BROTHERS

By Air Force Senior Airman Taylor Curry, 8th Fighter Wing



Marine Corps Capt. Jarrod Allen, an F/A-18 Hornet pilot with Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 225, and Air Force Capt. Jacob Allen, an F-16 Fighting Falcon pilot with the 35th Fighter Squadron, pose for a photo together during exercise Max Thunder 15-1 at Gwangju Air Base, South Korea, April 17, 2015.

U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Taylor Curry

It's not often that siblings serve in the military simultaneously, and it's even more rare when their duty assignments converge. But that's what happened for the Allen brothers, who were recently reunited here for Exercise Max Thunder 15-1. USMC Capt. Jarrod Allen is an F/A-18 Hornet pilot stationed at MCAS Miramar in San Diego and currently deployed to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan. USAF Capt. Jacob Allen is an F-16 Fighting Falcon pilot stationed at Kunsan Air Base.

"Since we are in different services and fly different fighter aircraft, we haven't really had the chance to work with each other in this type of element yet, so we were glad to have this opportunity," Jarrod said.

Jarrod, known as "Bluto," and Jacob, known as "Apollo," have similar missions. The first night of Max Thunder would see the brothers training together in defensive counter-air exercises. In that scenario, Jacob led the first group of four allied jets, whose task was to defend the area from enemy aircraft. As their time on station neared completion, the second group approached the airspace to assume responsibility, and Jarrod was their lead pilot. "The handoff of responsibility is based on timing, so it has to be precise," Jacob said. "When the second four-ship approached, I got to pass responsibility to my brother over the radio, who was then in charge of defending the area."

The brothers grew up as Navy brats, originally from the San Diego area. Their father was a naval flight officer for the E-2 Hawkeye which motivated them to follow in his footsteps. "Our dad was a big inspiration to us," Jacob said. "As far back as I can remember, I always knew I wanted to fly, just like my father. We would always go to see airshows, and that was so exciting for us both."

Both brothers explained that they love their job primarily because in the end, what they do helps people. "The F-16 provides close air support when troops on the ground call in and we employ weapons as needed for them to achieve their mission objectives and most importantly, to survive," Jacob said. The F/A-18 is also focused on supporting ground forces, Jarrod said, with the main goal looking out for Marines on the ground.

Although they haven't been stationed together, the brothers occasionally bump into each other while on the job. "Before this exercise, the last time we saw each other was in Jordan for a couple of hours," Jarrod said. "It wasn't long, but it's still good to see my brother any chance I get."

Max Thunder is the largest flying exercise held on the Korean Peninsula. Held twice yearly, it is aimed at increasing U.S. and South Korean interoperability with dissimilar aircraft, enabling the two allies to be battle-ready.

<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=128736&source=GovDelivery>

(*RANGER*, continued from Page 9)

At no point, however, did Mallue ever consider giving up, even after she was recycled. “I never considered quitting; I worked too hard and had too many people who believed in me to ever quit,” she said. “It still didn’t make it any easier to find out I’d recycled during the last phase, especially when I was so close. I ended up being recycled for about ten days.” “I never let myself think I was getting close. I definitely thought about it -- you’re excited and want to graduate -- but you also have to have that discipline in your mindset to know you can recycle,” she explained.

Mallue said her contact with the other women taking the course was limited. “I didn’t really interact with the other females in the course, except for when we were in the recycle phase,” she said. “But I know their experiences were the same as mine. Talking with the males was exactly like talking with the females.”

After three months of hard work and determination, Mallue found out she had graduated, although it was something she had known for a while. “I had already been told I had a ‘go,’ which is not common. The instructors don’t tell you, because they don’t want you to check out once you know you’re a ‘go,’” she said. “I knew I had a ‘go,’ and I’d done well on my peer evaluations. But I never had that mindset of, ‘I’m good.’”

Mallue said the day the graduates were announced came as a relief to her and everybody else. “It’s a Sunday when they tell you if you’re going to graduate and they send you to church first. I thought that was funny, like you’re praying for your fate,” she said. “The instructors read off a list of names and separated everyone into two groups.”

“I looked around at who I was with. Some of them you knew did a great mission and were a ‘go’ with their patrol. So you definitely wanted to be in that group,” Mallue said. Mallue said she reunited with Edward during the week before the graduation ceremony.

“It was an awesome experience seeing her ... just knowing what she’d been through and achieved,” Edward said. “When I watched her get tabbed I got a little emotional. Our whole family was there, which was really nice.”

Mallue said she’s proud to be seen as a role model for future female Ranger school applicants and does her best to help them out.

“I’ve had a lot of women approach me and ask how I trained, how was my experience, ‘What did you think of the school?’ So, I’ve helped out quite a few women that want to go to the course or are still thinking about it,” she said. “I’ve talked to some women that are recycling to help them out or just need some advice.”

Mallue is now a graduate student at Arizona State University, studying for a master’s degree in sustainability, which is required for her next assignment—as an instructor at West Point in 2019.

“I had to apply to teach at West Point and I’ll be going there in 2019,” she said. “I applied back in 2016 and they said I had to be a grad student, so myself and Ed decided to come to Phoenix, where he got a job as an ROTC instructor as part of the Army Married Couples Program.”

“It’s tough, because we’re trying to figure out when to have kids, which I’m sure isn’t unique to married military couples. But my goal right now is to teach at West Point and I’ll see where I land after that,” she said.

Mallue said her Army experience thus far has been a positive experience for her, while making history in the process. She urges anyone thinking of joining the Army to always challenge and push themselves.

“The Army’s been an awesome adventure for me. I’ve learned a lot, met so many people and really expanded my perspectives on life,” Mallue said. “In that sense: be ready for adventure and challenge yourself. If you aren’t challenging yourself, you’re not doing something right.”

SOLDIER LOOKS AT STRAY DOG FROM IRAQ REUNION

By Ken Scar, U.S. Army Cadet Command



Erby lays a kiss on Army Sgt. Tracy McKithern

Last year, when McKithern found a little female white stray dog sniffing around camp here during her yearlong deployment to Iraq—only one thing was going to happen. “I fell in love with her immediately,” she said.

McKithern, a combat photographer from Tampa, Florida, with the 982nd Combat Camera Company (Airborne), was stationed at the Kurdistan Training Coordination Center, a multinational military organization responsible for the training of peshmerga and Iraqi security forces in and around Irbil.

The little dog and her mother had been wandering around the base for weeks, McKithern found out. Stray dogs are common in Iraq, and the culture is not kind to them. Erby and her mom were kicked and hit with rocks daily and starving.

Despite her rough experiences with humans to that point, Erby ran right up to McKithern the first time she held out her hand to the shaky little pup covered in scratches and dirt. “She loved everyone,” McKithern said of Erby. “She is the sweetest little soul. She came up to me immediately—probably hungry, but gentle. I think she was looking for love more than anything else.” McKithern, together with soldiers from the Italian and German armies her unit was partnered with, started caring for the little dog. They named her Erby Kasima, after nearby Irbil, the largest city in northern Iraq, and “Kasima” being the Arabic name for beauty and elegance.

The coalition soldiers would go on convoys into the surrounding countryside to train Iraqi army units six days a week, with McKithern documenting the missions. Every time they returned to the base, Erby was waiting. “She ran up to our convoy every day,” “She was so tiny she would fall and trip all over herself to get to us.”

It didn’t take long for Erby and her mom to realize that, not only were they safe around McKithern and her Italian and German friends, but these humans would feed them, too. As the weeks went by, the dogs’ wounds began to heal and they started putting on weight. Eventually, the growing pup took to sleeping on the step outside McKithern’s quarters.

As the end of her deployment approached, McKithern started to wonder how she could ever leave Erby behind and lamented about it on her Facebook page. “One night I posted a pic of us on Facebook, with a caption that read something like, ‘I wish I could take her home,’” McKithern recalled. “I went to sleep, woke up and my friends and family had posted links to various rescue groups. I reached out to one of them, the nonprofit Puppy Rescue Mission, and they responded immediately. We sent them \$1,000 and they set up a crowd fund to get the rest. We needed an additional \$3,500.” The immediate outpouring of generosity was astounding, McKithern said. “We raised the rest of the money very quickly—most of it was from complete strangers!”

McKithern had many preparations to make before she left Iraq so Erby could eventually follow her. Vaccinations, documentation, travel arrangements—all had to be done somehow, in a war zone, while she fulfilled her military duties. It seemed like an overwhelming task in an already overwhelming situation. Even though she now had the funding, McKithern began to lose hope that she’d have the time and energy to complete needed details so Erby could join her in the states. That’s when several Kurdish and German officers that McKithern knew stepped in to help. They offered to complete anything she couldn’t get done and get Erby onto the plane. With their help, McKithern returned home and Erby was set to follow her several weeks later.

McKithern had only been home in Florida for about a month when she received orders for a 67-day mission to Fort McCoy, WS. She was to depart March 11, the very day Erby was scheduled to arrive at John F. Kennedy International Airport in NYC. “I couldn’t believe it!” McKithern said. “But I’m a soldier first, and my commander received an email looking for volunteers.” McKithern said the gunnery exercise at Fort McCoy was an important mission and so she deployed to Wisconsin. However, McKithern’s husband, Army Sgt. Wes McKithern, who’s also a combat cameraman for the 982nd, met Erby at the airport in New York and drove her home to Tampa, where she’s waiting patiently to be reunited with her rescuer.

In a few short weeks, McKithern will fly home from Fort McCoy to be with Erby at last. It will be the end of a 16-month journey that’s taken her across the world to find a little dog in a war zone -- and with the help of generous strangers, a nonprofit dog rescue, and soldiers from three different armies -- bring her all the way back to become part of a family. “I can’t believe it,” McKithern said. “It feels like a miracle is happening.”

COAST GUARD RESERVIST IS TOP PERFORMER

By Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Zac Crawford ,U.S. Coast Guard District 13

SEATTLE—Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Ryan M. Olson stood out from the pack during a recent award ceremony where he was recognized for his service to his country and his community. Olson, a maritime enforcement specialist with Port Security Unit 313 based in Everett, Washington, received a special call on a typical day where he was balancing operational and administrative duties. On the other end of the line was Master Chief Petty Officer Eric Johnson, the Coast Guard's chief of reserve forces. Johnson called Olson to inform him of his selection as the Coast Guard's 2014 Enlisted Person of the Year—Reserve Component.

The EPOY program is designed to recognize the accomplishments of the top enlisted performers who best exemplify the Coast Guard's core values of honor, respect and devotion to duty. Both active duty and reserve EPOY recipients are considered to be the best and brightest in the field. They are selected using criteria that consider their professional and personal accomplishments, work ethic, involvement in community service and standards of conduct.

"Each of the candidates distinguished themselves among their peers by being nominated and, ultimately, selected by their districts," Johnson said. "This resulted in nine superstars being presented to a panel of senior enlisted leaders who then, objectively and without collaboration, rated the nominees in various performance categories." Olson received the highest score, but Olson emphasized that all of the candidates were extremely strong and any one of them would have been a worthy choice.

Assigned to the Shoreside Security Division of Port Security Unit 313, Olson is his division's lead petty officer and is in charge of nearly 30 people. When not performing his Coast Guard duties, he works as the head of security for a family in the area, advising them in threat analysis and mitigation, and facility and personnel protection. He is also a volunteer firefighter and emergency medical technician for his local community in Oso, Washington.

Working as a volunteer firefighter, Olson assisted first responders in recovery efforts for 24 straight days during the devastating Oso mudslide in March 2014. As a firefighter and emergency medical technician, he's also volunteered an impressive 600 hours responding to 80 separate fire, accident and medical emergencies.

"I had always had interest in the fire service. Moving to a small town and seeing the level of professionalism and dedication by the other community volunteers at the fire hall was very neat to see," Olson said. "I experienced a similar situation when considering joining the Coast Guard. Like the fire service, I was motivated by the people and I wanted to be part of what they did."

Olson's Coast Guard accomplishments include facilitating more than 240 hours of instruction for PSU members and securing nearly 18,000 acres of training ground with the Department of Defense to be used by his unit. He's also taught *Krav Maga* (a close-quarters self-defense discipline) to 47 members of his unit. Olson also certified 30 members in tactical combat casualty care, a system of techniques designed to teach individuals the ability to render medical aid in a combat environment.

Olson "displayed a can-do, get-it-done attitude," Johnson said. "His focus was that of, 'How can I do more and support those around me— both within the Coast Guard and in my civilian life?'" He "lives by a very good code," Johnson added, "and his positive approach to his military service will serve him well as a chief petty officer."

Individuals in the Coast Guard are all part of a team, Olson said. "Time and time again, I hear stories of Coast Guard members doing extraordinary things within their communities," Olson explained, "and not because they are just members of the Coast Guard necessarily, but simply because it is the right thing to do and they have the capability and desire to help others."

Olson said his award was earned with the help and guidance of many others. "There are no actions that I could have taken over the last year without the support of others," he said. "This award is really a celebration of all the hard work by a lot of excellent people who make a great team."

Olson added, "The culture of service and excellence that radiates from our enlisted ranks is always evident. It is motivating for me to see the great work that other enlisted members do on a daily basis."



U.S. Coast Guard reservist Petty Officer 1st Class Ryan Olson steers an Oso Fire Department vehicle out of the station in Oso, Wash., Aug. 11, 2012. Olson is a maritime enforcement specialist with Port Security Unit 313 in Everett, Wash., and the Coast Guard's 2014 Enlisted Person of the Year—Reserve Component.

Courtesy photo

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/#inbox/14d5439dcd7b4808>

FLORIDA SPECIAL CARE DENTISTRY 1 Davis Blvd. Suite 103, Tampa, FL 33606
813-251-2314
 FLSpecialCareDentistry.com

FAMILY, COSMETIC, SEDATION, & HOSPITAL DENTISTRY

<p>15% off Crown or Set of Dentures for MOAA members</p> <p><small>(ADA D2740, D2750, D5110, D5120) Offer Valid for non-insured patients</small></p>	<p>New Patient Special \$129</p> <p>Exam, Xrays, Cleaning</p> <p><small>(ADA D0150, D0210, D1110) Offer Valid for non-insured patients.</small></p>
---	--

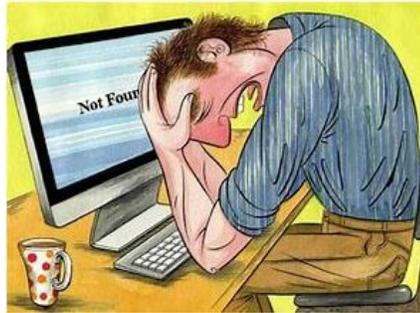
get more
 with **grow financial**
federal credit union

MoreInReturn

	<p>THE TAMPA CHAPTER OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA POST OFFICE BOX 6383 MACDILL AFB FL 33608-0383</p> <p>CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED</p>		<p>PRST STD U S POSTAGE PAID TAMPA FL PERMIT 850</p>
<p>TAMPA CHAPTER (www.moaatampa.org/) OPERATION HELPING HAND (www.operationhelpinghandtampa.com/)</p>		<p>MOAA National (www.moa.org/) FL COUNCIL (www.moafl.org/)</p>	

NOTICE

This is the last printed issue. Future issues will be posted on line at moaatampa.org



America's wounded and injured active duty military have responded to their country's call. Since May 2004, our mission for the past fourteen years has been to respond to them and their families in all of their needs. We will continue with Tampa Chapter's help.



www.operationhelpinghandtampa.com