By Fred Bondurant

I am excited about our upcoming year! Over the last several years a strong base has been built for us to continue our growth.

For two consecutive years we have received the 4-STAR chapter award. Our membership has grown to place us in the next level of membership size.

Our ability to increase our philanthropic endeavors has been strengthened by the success of our annual Bob Janes Golf Outing.

This year we are trying something new – our December meeting will be in the form of a “Military Ball”. This will be a joint effort with our brothers in the Calusa Chapter, but held at our venue of Crown Colony. Please see the attached information sheet and sign up early as it is on a first come first served basis.

Last June, VP Steve Epkins and I attended the Florida Council of Chapters meeting in Tampa. It was a good opportunity to meet other chapter representatives and discuss ideas and activities.

In August, Doug Quelch, Brian Boyd and I attended the Spirit of 45 Celebration.

As you will see from our calendar we have arranged for an eclectic group of speakers. In November we are lucky to have Al Ambrose, the VP for risk management of CHS INC, a leading global agribusiness, owned by farmers, ranchers and cooperatives across the United States diversified in energy, grains and foods.
Led by Ted Tyson, Lee Coast MOAA participated in the annual Sanibel Fourth of July Parade. Members Doug Quelch, Alex MacKenzie and John Boone also participated. See enclosed picture. More information will be included in upcoming newsletter. (The nice looking one is Allyssa, Ted’s granddaughter.)

We would like to make this a tradition and will be requesting a member to organize this for 2015
Zachary Fisher was a prominent figure in the New York real estate community and a major philanthropic benefactor for the men and women in the United States Armed Forces, as well as numerous other not-for-profit organizations. From the earliest days of his construction career, Mr. Fisher was a strong supporter of the U.S. Armed Forces. Prevented from active service in World War II due to a leg injury, Mr. Fisher drew on his building skills to assist the U.S. Coastal Service in the construction of coastal fortifications. His patronage of the Armed Forces became an ongoing concern from that time, evolving to occupy increasing amounts of his energies.

In 1982 he established the Zachary and Elizabeth M. Fisher Armed Services Foundation. The Foundation has made contributions to the families of the victims of the bombing of the Marine barracks in Beirut, other military families who have lost loved ones under tragic circumstances, families of New York City firefighters who lost their lives in the line of duty and provided scholarship funds to active and former service members and their families.

In 1990, they began the Fisher House program, dedicating more than $20 million to the construction of comfort homes for families of hospitalized military personnel. Mr. Fisher held a number of posts in military and other charities throughout the country and was received the top awards a civilian can receive from each branch of the military as well as the Presidential Medal of Freedom to honor his wide-ranging contributions on behalf of the young men and women in the US Armed Forces. Public Law 106-161 conferred upon him the status of an honorary veteran in the U.S Armed Forces.

A Fisher House is “a home away from home” for families of patients receiving medical care at major military and VA medical centers. The homes are normally located within walking distance of the treatment facility or have transportation available. There are 63 Fisher Houses located on 23 military installations and 24 VA medical centers. Many more houses are under construction or in design. They are 5,000 to 16,800 square foot homes donated by the Fisher family and Fisher House Foundation. They are professionally furnished and decorated in the tone and style of the local region and feature a common kitchen, laundry facility, dining room a living room with library and toys for children. It is temporary housing for families of veterans being treated in the local facility. There is no cost to the families and the houses are operated by a professional staff augmented by volunteers. Lee Coast MOAA contributions provide funding for those things that make life easier for the families (Publix and gasoline gift cards and other items to ease the stay of the veteran’s family.)
Sunday, August 10 marked a proud day in Lee Coast MOAA’s history. Our Foundation helped to sponsor this fitting ceremony honoring World War II veterans and their spouses. This occasion, authorized by Congress in 2010 and celebrated by thousands of communities nationwide, honors the sacrifice made by members of the “Greatest Generation” in World War II, who preserved our freedoms and unique way of life. Congress unanimously recognized the second Sunday of August as National Spirit of ’45 Day in 2010. This year, the event, organized by the tireless Eryka Aptaker, was held at our dinner meeting location, Crown Colony Golf and Country Club, and attended by over 175 people.

In attendance were Fred and Mary Bondurant, Brian and Gina Boyd, Doug Quelch and foundation member Rick Morris. Also, WWII veterans and their wives from Shell Point Retirement Center and the local community were escorted there. JROTC cadets from Cypress Lake High School who presented the Colors. The Reverend Andy Hawkins, pastor of Shell Point’s Village Church, led the opening prayer. The Chapter and our Foundation were honored with a Certificate of Appreciation for exceptional sponsorship, participation, and support of the Lee County, Florida Chapter of the Spirit of ’45 nationwide initiative.

Among the highlights of the event were the Aerial Salute by the Lee County Sheriff’s aviation unit and the Poppy Service, where every person got up and laid a poppy in front of a ceremonial wreath. There was a moving ceremony honoring the missing POW/MIAs and later, a 21 gun salute by the Sheriff’s Department, followed by Echo Taps. Bagpipe music was played by the Guns n’ Hoses Pipes n’ Drums. Lee County Commissioner Cecil Pendergrass and Fort Myers Mayor Randall Henderson read proclamations. Two veterans gave Inspired talks of their WWII service, while a third WWII veteran read a poem that was appropriate to the occasion. In her speech on the Spirit of ’45, Ms. Aptaker said about WWII veterans that “They gave more than any other generation has. It is my honor to do this.” Lee Coast Chapter and our Foundation are also honored to give back to WWII veterans in this way.
JROTC RAIDER CHALLENGE,
1 November, 500 Cadets compete at Mariner High School to be the top Raider team thanks to the support of Lee Coast MOAA.

ANNOUNCEMENT of VETERANS in the CLASSROOM in November before and after Veterans Day - Contact Jean Van House - H -239-542-3965; C - 239-292-3593; Email - rjvanhouse@hotmail.com (Jean organizes the program, and calls Chapter Members who want to participate; I always do 4-5 schools, it is GREAT!!!
This December our monthly meeting will take the form of a Military Ball at our normal venue, the Crown Colony Country Club. It is sponsored jointly with our MOAA Brothers of the Calusa Chapter. Please see the information sheet on our website for details - you may click on this link http://www.leecoastmoaa.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/MOAA-invite.pdf.

Please note that there are 80 reservations (total) between both chapters – first come first served. To secure a reservation, send a check (payable to Lee Coast MOAA) to: Joe Surico, 13851 Eagle Ridge Lakes Drive, #102, Fort Myers, FL 33912.

The cost is $50 per person, $100 per couple. You must also indicate your meal choice: filet mignon, salmon, or vegetarian. Live music will contribute to making this a fun evening. This year the JROTC will provide a Saber Arch for the attendees.

8 December
Crown Colony Country Club
6PM
$50 per person
MOAS holds annual South West Florida Joint Luncheon.

Each September, the Sarasota Chapter invites chapter members from the FCOC SW Area to their monthly luncheon. Several of us have attended over the years and they always have a speaker of interest and it is always enjoyable to meet brothers from other chapters. This year, they hosted MG Joe Lynch, the MOAA General Counsel, who provided an update on National MOAA Legislative priorities and membership initiatives. Notwithstanding nearly a decade of legislative victories, especially with Tricare and Tricare for Life, congress is again looking at military benefits as a way to reduce budget deficits. Proposals include capping pay increases at 1%, cutting the basic allowance for housing by 5%, increasing Tricare fees and cutting COLA by 1% for new retirees until age 62. MOAA certainly supports fiscal responsibility, but feels the burden should be shared equally and not on the backs of the military. A significant statistic is that in the 80’s, 50% of congress members had military experience; currently, it is only 20%!

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Veterans Benefits Improvements

**Issue:** Service members must be assured that their transition from active service to civilian life will be as seamless as possible and that their veterans’ benefits will enable them to successfully achieve their post-service goals with the highest quality of life possible.

**Background:** In January 2014, MOAA joined the ranks of service organizations recognized by the Dept. of Veterans Affairs (VA) to represent veterans’ disability, pension and survivor claims before the Department.

For more information please visit MOAA.ORG or click here

**Key Bills/Status:** Congressman Chris Gibson (R-NY) has introduced two bills, H.R. 1494, a bill that would the Joint Services Records Research Center (JSRRC) to do a comprehensive search to determine whether Navy veterans of the Vietnam War are eligible under current law for presumptive coverage for exposure to Agent Orange (AO). H.R. 543 would authorize a presumptive service connection to “Blue Water” Navy Vietnam veterans on their disability claims for health conditions associated with exposure to AO.
UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH 2015
9 MAR - Chapter Dinner, Speaker, Thea Rosenbaum, escaped the Soviets in Berlin, became Germany’s first woman stockbroker and later was a war correspondent in Vietnam.
Annual Membership Meeting with Election of Officers

APRIL 2015
13 APR - Chapter Dinner, Speaker Jonathan Helmreich, PhD, Professor of Russian and European History, Allegheny College
14 APR - 2nd Annual Golf Outing

OCTOBER 2014
20 OCT - Sign up STARTS today for November 10th Dinner at the Crown Colony, 6 PM: Speaker
PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO SIGN UP EARLY AND BY THURSDAY, NOVEMBER, 6TH!!!
27-29 OCT - National MOAA Meeting, Washington, DC - Our Chapter will be awarded the 4 STAR Level of Excellence

NOVEMBER 2014
10 NOV - Chapter Dinner, speaker Al Ambrose, Agricultural Economist - The challenge facing production agriculture today to meet the burgeoning demand for food, fuel and fiber.
11 NOV – Sanibel Veterans Day Celebration, Speaker Capt Wayne Smith, Air Force (ret),

DECEMBER 2014
8 DEC - Chapter Dinner – MILITARY BALL Limited seated, sign up early

JANUARY 2015
12 JAN - Chapter Dinner Meeting, Speaker Mike Calbot, “Golf Doctor”

FEBRUARY 2015
9 FEB - Chapter Dinner Meeting, Speaker John Schilling, Medicare Fraud Whistleblower

NEW MEMBERS

“WELCOME ABOARD!!!”

* Peter Delisser, 1LT USA
* David Jones, MAJ USA, Ret
* Jeffrey, Nichols, LTC, USAR Ret
* Charles Robertson, Gen, USAF, Ret
**USEFUL INTERNET LINKS***


Florida Department of Veteran Affairs: [http://floridavets.org/](http://floridavets.org/)

milConnect: [https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/](https://www.dmdc.osd.mil/milconnect/)

Veterans Administration: [http://www.va.gov/](http://www.va.gov/)


- move your cursor over the title, then left click with your mouse

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**TIPS**

**MOAA Disability Benefits Questionnaire Worksheet (PDF)**

The VA developed Disability Benefits Questionnaires (DBQs) to give veterans the option of having their private physician complete the forms filled out during a compensation and pension medical exam. This saves time during the claim process since the veteran no longer has to wait for a VA exam. The MOAA DBQ Worksheet will help you decide which DBQ you will need for your disability and the location of the regulations the VA uses to determine the disability rating.

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**MEMBERSHIP**

Keep recruiting new members

EVERY MEMBER IS A MEMBER OF THE MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE!!!

Report all new prospects to the Membership Chair

Brian Boyd 314-359-0625 OR magicofbrianboyd@yahoo.com
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