

THE OFFICER REVIEW

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JULY–AUGUST 2025

2025 MOWW DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

SGTMAJ CARLOS A. RUIZ

20TH SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS



Operation Gratitude

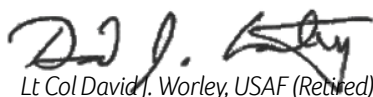


On May 15th, MOWW signed a Resolution of Cooperation with Operation Gratitude (OG), one of the largest care package organizations in the United States (www.operationgratitude.com). Many of our Chapters are already involved, and this is a logical opportunity for the Order to "Honor Our Veterans Past and Present" through this timely partnership: both MOWW and OG "stimulate love of our Country and the Flag, honor our military service men and women, honor law enforcement operations, and defend the honor and integrity of the United States." Here is OG's amazing story:

"I'm going back over there. I know I won't make it back this time, but it really doesn't matter because no one would even care.' Those were the heartbreaking words an Iraq war soldier told our founder Carolyn Blashek (at a local USO) back in 2003. He had lost everything and had lost sight of the amount of love and appreciation all around him. Carolyn was stunned, and she immediately wanted him and everyone who serves our country to know that the American people care. But what kind of gesture would reach deployed troops and impact them in a meaningful way? The idea came to her when she was reminded of the Care Packages she sent to her children when they were away. She wanted her kids to know that she was always thinking about them and was excited for their return home. That was the moment Operation Gratitude was born. Carolyn realized that Care Packages are also a perfect way to show our troops that their sacrifices are appreciated here at home. The first 650 Operation Gratitude Care Packages were created in her living room, and since that time, with the help of tens of thousands of volunteers nationwide, the organization has sent almost 4 Million care packages." (Taken with permission from the Operation Gratitude website).

Both MOWW and OG have shared values and a mutual desire to provide opportunities for a grateful America to volunteer in activities that will support the cause of honoring those who serve and their dedication as well as expressing the appreciation for the sacrifices that they make while performing that service. There are multiple avenues for our Chapters to become involved: Conduct letter writing campaigns (letters are included in every package) both within the Chapter and through community service opportunities within our schools; holding a local care package assembly day (items would be shipped to the Chapter by OG); assisting in the making of scarfs and paracords; and sponsoring our local youth in the conduct of a Patriotic Service Project centered around OG. Additional outreach opportunities can be found on the OG website.

I'm excited about this partnership, and I know you will be as well...


Lt Col David J. Worley, USAF (Retired)

Commander in Chief and CEO, MOWW, Inc.

Pictured (L-R): MOWW CINC David J. Worley and Operation Gratitude's Executive Director, Margaret Barron display the Resolution of Cooperation.

MOWW OFFICERS

Commander-in-Chief & CEO, MOWW, Inc.

Lt Col David J. Worley, USAF (Ret)
worleymoww@earthlink.net

Senior Vice Commander-in-Chief

Lt Col Marlon Ruiz, USAF (Ret)
ruizmarlon08@gmail.com

Vice Commanders-in-Chief

COL Michael P. Peck, USA (Ret)
colpeck@yahoo.com

CAPT Edward W. Gantt, USN (Ret)
edgantt.moww@gmail.com

Col Adalberto Rivera, USAF (Ret)
adal_rivera@yahoo.com

COL Joseph P. Kirilin III, USA (Ret)
eaglejpk@aol.com

Immediate Past CINC

BG Victor S. Pérez, USA (Ret)
perezv56@gmail.com

Chief of Staff, & COO, MOWW, Inc.

Col Michael Farrell, USMC (Ret)
chiefofstaff@moww.org

Treasurer General & CFO, MOWW, Inc.

CW4 Gary L. Smith, Sr. USA (Ret)
treasurergeneral@moww.org

Judge Advocate General

CPT Harold Greenberg, JD, USA (Fmr)
harold@hglaw.pro

Surgeon General

CPT Dan L. Cameron, Jr., USA (Fmr)
dancameron789@yahoo.com

Chaplain General

LTC Victor W. Burnette, USA (Ret)
vicburnette@aol.com

Historian General

HPM Mr. Charles W. Bennett, Jr.
lpdchief@aol.com

HQ MOWW

435 North Lee Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

703-683-4911

www.moww.org



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SgtMaj Carlos A. Ruiz was chosen by CINC Lt Col David J. Worley, USAF (Ret), as the Order's 2025 Distinguished Service Award Recipient.





SgtMaj Carlos A. Ruiz

20TH SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE MARINE CORPS



(L-R): The Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen Eric M. Smith passes the noncommissioned officer sword to the incoming Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Sgt Maj Carlos A. Ruiz during the Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps Relief and Appointment ceremony at Marine Barracks Washington DC, August 10, 2023. US Marine Corps photo by SSgt Kelsey Dornfeld.

SERGEANT MAJOR RUIZ assumed his current post as the 20th Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps on August 10, 2023. A native of Sonora, Mexico, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps on November 2, 1993, out of Buckeye, AZ. He graduated from recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot (MCRD) San Diego, CA, in January 1994 and reported to Marine Combat Training at Camp Pendleton, CA, shortly after. He was assigned as a Supply Warehouse Clerk as his military occupational specialty.

In May 1994, Sergeant Major Ruiz reported to Supply Company, 3d Supply Battalion, 3d Force Service Support Group, Okinawa, Japan. In May 1996 he received orders to Marine Corps Logistics Base, Barstow, CA, and served as a supply warehouse clerk until October 1998 when he reported to Recruiting School at MCRD San Diego. Upon graduation he was assigned to Recruiting Station Los Angeles, 12th Marine Corps District. In October 2001, Sergeant Major Ruiz reported to Supply Company, 1st Supply Battalion, 1st Force Service Support Group. In January 2003

he deployed to Al Anbar Province, Iraq, with Equipment Reception Platoon and later with Combat Service Support Group-12 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In April 2004, Sergeant Major Ruiz reported to Drill Instructor School at MCRD San Diego, orders he requested, and graduated in September 2004 with Class 4-04 as the class Honor Graduate and recipient of the Leadership Award. He was assigned to Company L, 3rd Recruit Training Battalion. In October 2006, Sergeant Major Ruiz was transferred to the Instructor Staff, Drill Instructor School, MCRD San Diego. During this period he held the billets of Drill Master, Physical Training Instructor, and later the School's Chief Instructor.

In April 2008, he reported to Supply Company, Combat Service Support Group-15. He served as Company Gunnery Sergeant until February 2009 when he reported to Company L, 3d Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, to serve as the Company First Sergeant. He subsequently deployed to Helmand

Province, Afghanistan, in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Following the end of his first tour, Sergeant Major Ruiz was re-assigned to Headquarters and Service Company and completed a second tour to Afghanistan.

In June 2012, Sergeant Major Ruiz received orders to Inspector-Instructor Staff, Sacramento, CA, to serve as the Inspector-Instructor First Sergeant. In September 2013, upon his selection to Sergeant Major, he received orders to 3d Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment. He served as the Battalion Landing Team Sergeant Major, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, and as the Battalion Sergeant Major for Unit Deployment Program 16.1.

In May 2016, Sergeant Major Ruiz received orders to 1st Combat Engineer Battalion and in December 2016 was re-assigned to Combat Logistics Regiment 17, 1st Marine Logistics Group. On December 7, 2018, Sergeant Major Ruiz was assigned as the 4th Marine Logistics Group Sergeant Major out of New Orleans, LA.

In February 2021, Sergeant Major Ruiz assumed the duties US Marine Corps Forces Reserve Sergeant Major. In May 2021, the Commander of Marine Forces Reserve assumed all authorities and responsibility of US Marine Corps Forces South. As the result of the transfer of authority, Sergeant Major Ruiz served as both the Marine Corps Forces Reserve (MARFORRES) and Marine Corps Forces, South (MARFORSOUTH) Command Senior Enlisted Leader.

Sergeant Major Ruiz's personal awards include the Legion of Merit with gold star, Bronze Star Medal with combat distinguishing device, Meritorious Service Medal with gold star, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with two gold stars, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with one gold star, and the Combat Action Ribbon with one gold star. He has earned a Bachelor's Degree in Organizational Management from the University of Arizona Global Campus. ★



US Marine Corps SgtMaj Carlos A. Ruiz, Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, addresses Marines and Sailors of the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) (MEU(SOC)), during an all-hands formation aboard the Wasp-class amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD 5), Souda Bay, Greece, March 2024. US Marine Corps photo by Sgt Nayelly Nieves-Nieves.





THE HISTORY OF THE ARMY NCO CORPS

NCO Corps Lead the Way

CSM SEGUNDO J. FERRO, USA (RET)
PUERTO RICO CHAPTER

The Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Corps has been the backbone of the US Army since its founding. NCOs serve as leaders, trainers, and mentors, bridging the gap between enlisted soldiers and commissioned officers. Their roles have evolved, adapting to new military strategies, technologies, and societal changes. The significant history of the Army NCO Corps is worth exploring, focusing on its development from the Revolutionary War to the present day.

ORIGINS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENT (1775-1865)

The origins of the US Army NCO Corps trace back to the Continental Army, formed in 1775 under General George Washington. European military traditions heavily influenced the early NCO structure, particularly the British and Prussian armies. The Blue Book, written by Baron Friedrich von Steuben in 1779, established the first set of NCO duties, emphasizing discipline, training and leadership.

During the War of 1812 and the Mexican-American War, NCOs played crucial roles in battlefield tactics and logistics. Their responsibilities included maintaining discipline, training soldiers, and carrying battle orders. The Civil War (1861-1865) further highlighted the importance of NCOs as

they led small unit engagements, relayed orders, and even assumed command when officers fell in battle.

THE NCO CORPS IN THE INDUSTRIAL AGE (1865-1918)

Following the Civil War, the US Army underwent significant restructuring. The late 19th century saw improvements in weaponry, communication, and transportation, which necessitated that NCOs adapt their leadership and technical skills. The establishment of the NCO chevron system helped standardize ranks and responsibilities.

During the Spanish-American War (1898) and World War I (1914-1918), NCOs took on greater leadership roles as the Army expanded. Trench warfare and modern weaponry demanded more decentralized leadership, with NCOs assuming greater responsibilities in combat and logistics. The creation of the Army's first NCO education programs during this period marked the beginning of formal professional development for enlisted leaders.

WORLD WAR II AND THE COLD WAR ERA (1939-1991)

World War II (1939-1945) solidified the NCO Corps as essential to military operations. With the rapid expansion of the Army, experienced NCOs



The origins of the US Army NCO Corps trace back to the Continental Army, which was formed in 1775 under General George Washington. Most continental soldiers were of British descent, although descended from other European nations. Also, Native Americans fought on both sides, as did African-Americans. Most Continentals were farmers.



American troops climbing over a sandbag barrier in France during WWI. The US Army's Non-Commissioned Officer (NCO) Corps played a crucial role in training, leading, and sustaining the large number of soldiers mobilized for the war effort.





were responsible for training thousands of new recruits. They led small units in battle, maintained discipline, and ensured mission success. The introduction of the Technician ranks in 1942 recognized the growing need for specialized skills within the NCO Corps.

During the Cold War (1947–1991), the US Army saw significant technological changes, global strategy, and military organization. The Korean War (1950–1953) and the Vietnam War (1955–1975) further underscored the need for adaptable and skilled NCOs. In response, the Army established the Non-Commissioned Officer Education System (NCOES) in the 1970s, providing structured leadership training and career progression. The introduction of the Sergeant Major of the Army (SMA) position in 1966 gave enlisted personnel a direct voice at the highest levels of Army leadership.

MODERNIZATION: 21ST CENTURY NCO CORPS (1991–PRESENT)

The post-Cold War era brought new challenges, including peacekeeping missions, counterinsurgency operations, and the rise of digital warfare. NCOs played critical roles in conflicts such as the Gulf War (1990–1991), the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan (2001–2021), and global humanitarian missions.

With advancements in military technology, NCOs are now responsible for operating and maintaining sophisticated weapons systems, cybersecurity networks, and intelligence operations. The Army's

shift toward decentralized command structures has increased the authority and responsibility of NCOs, making them integral to modern warfare. Programs like the NCO Leadership Center of Excellence continue to refine NCO education, ensuring that enlisted leaders are prepared for future conflicts.

CONCLUSION

The US Army NCO Corps has evolved from a small group of disciplined leaders in the Revolutionary War to a highly trained and professional force in the 21st century. Throughout history, NCOs have adapted to technological advances, changes in warfare, and the growing complexity of military operations.

Leaders mitigate risks by comprehensively understanding NCOs' and Soldiers' talents, skills, and lethality during warfighting. The movement of sustainment forces demands deliberate planning, coordination, and execution to prevent exposure to threats of logistics movements. The NCO vision standards foster leadership and promote professionalism, which is required to strengthen the profession of sustainment operations. Their leadership, dedication, and expertise continue to shape the Army, ensuring its readiness for future challenges.

As warfare and global threats evolve, the NCO Corps will remain the backbone of the Army, upholding its legacy of excellence and leadership. *Hooah!* ★



Top US NCO in Iraq offer advice on mission and troop welfare. Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph R. Allen, US Forces-Iraq Command Sergeant Major, talks to the first sergeants of 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery during a visit to JSS Loyalty. Allen accompanied GEN Lloyd J. Austin III, USF-I command.



In a ceremony replete with tradition and symbolism, 19 warfighters make the transition from enlisted Soldier to non-commissioned officer by passing under crossed sabers.



All Veterans

LTC DAVID T. PITTS, JR. (TERRY), USA (RET)
COMMANDER, AUGUSTA CHAPTER, GA

Where is MOWW going? Are we pragmatic? Inclusive? Elitist? Good questions, aren't they? Challenging too?

Are you a USAA member? USAA is eight years younger than MOWW, yet in 1996 opened their doors to all military members. (I believe they added senior NCOs shortly before that.) USAA has 13.5 million members; how many do we have?

Don't we tell people that enlisting out of high school is a way to break the cycle of poverty, unemployment, and so on? Gain marketable skills. Get an education. Grow. Become someone special.

Someone who enlisted at 18 and got out at 22 to pursue education and a career is no longer a Specialist or a Third Class Petty Officer and should not be treated as such. Or addressed as such. We happily proclaim the Presidents who were Companions, but we won't allow the Vice President to join because he was an E4. Sad.

Service is not about what you wore but what's in your heart. Let's allow all those with a servant's heart to serve. Otherwise, we need to consider...

When I first attended Chapter meetings in the late '80s, I enjoyed talking to the WWII Veterans. At the end of 1945, roughly 12% were veterans of that war. Not to mention the many living veterans of WWI. We don't see those veterans anymore—I have no idea when I last spoke to a Korean War Veteran. The Cold War ended 35 years ago.

According to the Census Bureau, 6.1% of the adult American population, or 15.8 million people,



identified as veterans in 2023. This number has been steadily declining for decades. Between 2010 and 2023, the total number of veterans fell by more than 5.9 million, or more than 25%.^[1]

In 2023, over half of living American veterans, over 8.4 million, had served during one of two Gulf Wars—first between August 1990 and August 2001 (3.9 million), then between September 2001 and later (4.4 million). One-third of living veterans, more than 5.2 million, served in Vietnam.^[2]

Companions, math is relentless and functions without a heart. Approximately ten percent of veterans are officers. Ten

percent of a number that has been declining for decades, despite a growing national population, cannot sustain a vibrant organization. The math says we need to open the doors to those who want to serve. Or, like the Macon, Georgia Chapter, we simply close the doors. Permanently.

And purely pragmatic—the Veterans some Companions seem to have doubts about are not likely to be joining MOWW. But if he/she wants to serve, who are we to say 'no'? Duds don't join patriotic service organizations. However, patriotic service organizations should not exclude interested people just because of their choice of service long ago. (Did you know some years ago, the Adjutant General of Alabama's only military service ended when he was an E4? Yet the Alabama National Guard did just fine under his leadership.) ★

DISCLAIMER: Opinions or points of view expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official position or policies of the Military Order of the World Wars.

[1] USAFacts.org. "Who are the nation's veterans?" April 25, 2025. <https://usafacts.org/articles/who-are-the-nations-veterans/>

[2]. Ibid.





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What Did We Learn from 9/11?

MAJ ISABEL VAZQUEZ, USAF, (RET)
PUERTO RICO CHAPTER



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

During the merger of the legacy agencies, specifically the US Customs Service and the Immigration and Naturalization Service, which ultimately led to the formation of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), I was assigned as a Program Manager at ICE Headquarters. My role supported the National Security and Threat Protection (NSTP) Unit in response to the post-9/11 crisis. At the NSTP, I earned enough confidence to become an Operations Manager assigned to Operations East, where I managed the SAC San Juan desk, serving as the link between the Special Agent in Charge and Headquarters and other federal agencies, including the Department of Defense.

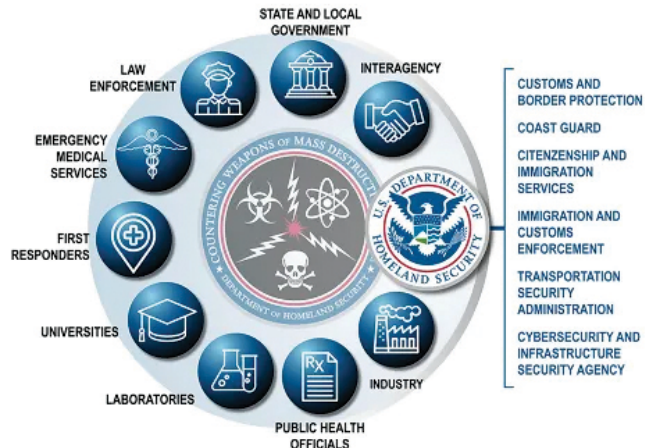
I am currently a co-author of "The History and Evolution of Homeland Security in the United States," published by Taylor and Francis, one of the world's leading academic publishers. The book is now in the printing stage.

Given this background, I have a well-informed opinion about the warning signs that were overlooked regarding the response of the agencies responsible for national security prior to 9/11.

The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) was formed in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, to protect the United States against terrorism. DHS became the third-largest federal department, bringing together 22 different federal agencies, each with a role in this effort. Since its creation, the goal has been "one DHS, one enterprise and one vision, with integrated results-based operations."¹ However, the federal government must also take into consideration

[1] (State homeland security and emergency services, s/f) State homeland security and emergency services. (s/f). US Department of Homeland Security.

that public safety and emergency management agencies within the states, territories and the District of Columbia jurisdictions have been designed or redesigned to work in tandem with DHS. For each event that requires coordination between state and federal agencies, some unique adjustments will be needed to make collaboration work.



Coordinating federal departments and agencies with state and local entities produces redundancy, although sometimes inefficiencies and gaps exist. However, key advantages can be highlighted. For example, teamwork can help overcome coordination challenges. Collaborating encourages all parties to leverage the expertise and competencies of specialized agencies. For instance, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) does not have immigration authority. It would reach out to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or Homeland Security Investigations for inquiries regarding the immigration status of a target in an investigation. In this case, the FBI agent could also ask a state law enforcement officer to conduct a traffic stop to gather personally identifiable information on the target, which would help clarify their immigration status. This collaboration allows agencies to "do more with less." However, this potential can be squandered if agencies work against each other or fail to utilize one another's unique strengths and perspectives.



DHS shares and keeps current the State Homeland Security and Emergency Services, homeland security and public safety guidance from the states, territories, and the District of Columbia on their main Homeland Security Enterprise web page: <https://www.dhs.gov/state-homeland-security-and-emergency-services>. Having all the information needed in this single repository is a vast improvement from how the directories were shared and kept in the past. For the most part, there was no information readily available.

What went wrong?

The 9/11 Commission returned with a report full of recommendations that would change the foundation of the agencies in charge of homeland security. The report was based on what all of us had missed.

Following 9/11, legacy services continued their day-to-day operations—although moving forward, their structure would change, and some missions would be re-assigned. The United States emphasized that major changes were essential to protect the nation from terrorism. Since then, work has continued. The flow of information and coordination between agencies has become very dynamic, but the speed of sharing sometimes sacrifices accuracy. Terrorist threats remain and continuously evolve—which forces coordination and collaboration among agencies that in the past held very specific functions.

In the aftermath, the federal government moved quickly to develop a security framework to protect our country from large-scale attacks directed from abroad while enhancing federal, state, and local capabilities to prepare for, respond to, and recover from threats and disasters at home. A key element of this framework included the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in March 2003, bringing together 22 separate agencies and offices into a single, Cabinet-level department.²

The nation's intelligence agencies failed to heed serious warnings dating back to the mid-1990s when the Al Qaeda terrorist network was increasingly focused on striking targets in the United States and using aircraft as weapons, according to a report issued by congressional investigators.

The report, considered to be the first comprehensive look at intelligence failures surrounding September 11, 2001, lists now-known terrorist plots and other clues that suggest that the US should have been aware of said threats.

Among the after-action investigation is an intelligence report of a 1998 plot in which Arab suspects possibly linked to Al Qaeda were to pilot an explosive-packed plane into the World Trade Center. Also, in 1998, intelligence officials learned that Al Qaeda was trying to establish an active cell in the United States. And, one month before the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, US intelligence agencies obtained information suggesting that Al Qaeda operatives were possibly planning to crash an airplane into the US Embassy in Nairobi. These disclosures were made public during Congress' hearings on intelligence failures related to 9/11.

So, why were the nature and magnitude of the attacks inconceivable until they happened? Because it is unheard of to arrest and convict a terrorist suspect before an attack is perpetrated. Should human rights prevail over the safety of the homeland? Democracy guarantees that all defendants are innocent until proven guilty, and that innocence presumption makes us all unsafe.

What value did the memo of 1998 written by CIA Director George J. Tenet have? In that memo, Director Tenet stated: “We are at war. I want no resources or people spared in this effort, either inside CIA or the Community.”

However, no resources were assigned to identify the threats. Though money and manpower aimed at terrorist targets grew after that memo, the report says “There was no massive shift in budget or reassignment of personnel to counterterrorism until after Sept. 11, 2001.” The report further states “Relatively few of the FBI agents interviewed seem to have been aware of Tenet's declaration.”

Many lawmakers said the report points to systemic intelligence breakdowns. For example, Senator Richard C. Shelby of Alabama, the ranking Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, stated: “We now know that our inability to detect and prevent the 9/11 attacks was an intelligence failure of unprecedented magnitude.”

[2] <https://www.dhs.gov/implementing-911-commission-recommendations>



Some of the most significant findings highlight a memo in which an Arizona FBI agent made a futile effort to urge FBI headquarters to investigate Arabs in flight schools; the failure to expand on the August 2001 arrest of Zacarias Moussaoui, now believed to have been the intended 20th hijacker, and, the failure of the CIA to include two of the 9/11 hijackers on a terrorists watch list until they had already entered the homeland. Many findings focus on a series of warnings that led to the belief that either Al Qaeda or other terrorist groups might use airplanes as weapons.

According to the after-action report, in January 1996, the intelligence community obtained information indicating that a planned suicide attack by individuals associated with a “key Al Qaeda operative” would fly a plane from Afghanistan and attack the White House. The same report found that in 1998, intelligence officials obtained information stating that “a group of unidentified Arabs planned to fly an explosive-laden plane from a foreign country into the World Trade Center.” It was said that there were possible links between that group and Al Qaeda. Also in 1998, intelligence officials received information indicating that Osama bin Laden’s following

operation could involve flying an aircraft loaded with explosives into a US airport.

In 2000, an informant prospect went to the FBI’s office in Newark, NJ, to report that they had attended a training camp in Pakistan and that they were supposed to meet others in the United States to take part in a hijacking plot. The informant warned agents that “there would be pilots among the hijacking team.” However, the FBI couldn’t verify any aspect of the story. Hence, the report concluded that intelligence officials never seriously studied the possibility that airplanes could be used as weapons. Furthermore, less than a year before 9/11, the FBI and the FAA had assessed the prospects of a terrorist incident targeting domestic civil aviation in the US as relatively low.

It should be hard to believe that the nature of the attacks couldn’t be foreseen. However, in May 2002, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice said at a White House news conference, “I don’t think anybody could have predicted that these people would take an airplane and slam it into the World Trade Center (...) that they would try to use an airplane as a missile.” Perhaps intelligence and law enforcement agencies underestimated the

“We have some planes. Just stay quiet and you will be okay. We are returning to the airport. Nobody move, everything will be okay. If you try to make any moves you’ll endanger yourself and the airplane.”

— Mohamed Atta, American Airlines Flight 11 hijacker pilot, heard on a radio transmission while meaning to send a message to the passengers.

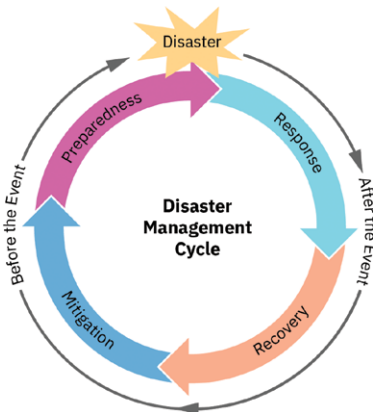
The terrorists chose large planes with long flights because they would be heavily fueled and liable to cause more damage. After fifteen to forty-six minutes in the air, two ‘muscle’ hijackers rose from their seats and mazed or stabbed any flight attendants and passengers that tried to stop them, using multi-function hand tools and Leatherman-type utility knives with locking blades, which were not forbidden in flights at the time. The other muscle showed a fake bomb and claimed he’d detonate it if passengers didn’t remain on their seats. Meanwhile, the hijacker pilot went to the cockpit, killed or incapacitated both pilots, and took over the controls. He altered or turned off the transponder signal and told passengers that they had hijacked other planes, had a bomb onboard, and were returning to the airport to have their demands met. Passengers were told to not make moves in order to not endanger the plane. In flights 11 and 93, Atta and Jarrah mistakenly delivered this message to ground control. The pilots then made a descent and flew low to both escape radar tracking and guide themselves visually, using their very objectives as reference points before ramming the planes in them. Except in Flight 93, whose passage had been alerted of what had happened to the other planes due to being delayed, the planes crews and passages offered no resistance following what protocols of the time advised in case of hijacking. All terrorists wore red bandanas during the hijacking, and shouted Allahu Akbar (“God is the Greatest”) before impact.



likelihood that Al Qaeda would launch an attack on US soil. This highlights a gap between the various aspects that should work in sync to protect the homeland. I only state this after the fact because intelligence showed Al Qaeda was seeking to establish a cell in the United States in 1998, and later, before 2000, Bin Laden was considering targets, including skyscrapers, ports, airports, nuclear plants and the Statue of Liberty.

In fact, there were discussions of a spike in intelligence traffic in the summer of 2001 warning that an Al Qaeda attack of devastating proportions was imminent.

Between May and July, the National Security Agency—which eavesdropped on electronic signals around the globe—intercepted at least 33 instances indicating possible imminent attacks. Bin Laden followers were allegedly planning to enter the US via Canada and other routes and were plotting operations using high explosives. But instead of bracing for a domestic strike, agencies were focusing on vulnerabilities overseas. One senior FBI official interviewed as part of the 9/11 after action, told investigators that he thought there was a high probability—of about 98%—that the attack would occur overseas.



The Emergency Management Cycle

The lessons learned may help us to prepare for the 2028 Games of the XXXIV Olympiad, scheduled to be celebrated in Los Angeles. Do we know how to deal with those threats, which are inherent to the activity? Can we prevent future attacks and deal with the threats effectively? How do we implement security measures without violating rights? How do we study the location and propose an innovative method for identifying threats among athletes and attendees?

Let's start by proposing that we all get acquainted with the Emergency Management Cycle, which comprises Preparedness, Response, Recovery, and Mitigation. We also need to establish that it is unrealistic to think prevention is 100% effective.

Why should we specialize in assessing the sports event attendees and calculating the risk? Because we can't forget that almost twelve years after 9/11, on April 15, 2013, at 2:49 p.m., there was a Boston Marathon attack, which that year held 27,000 registered runners.

Brothers Tamerlan and Dzhokhar Tsarnaev planted two homemade pressure cooker bombs that detonated near the finish line during one of the city's favorite celebrations right on Patriot's Day. The bombs were planted 14 seconds and 210 yards (190 m) apart from each other. Three people were killed and 264 injured, including a dozen who lost limbs.

The perpetrators were part of the Tsarnaev family, which immigrated from Chechnya to the United States in 2002. The family sought political asylum and settled in Cambridge, MA.

Tamerlan Tsarnaev attended Bunker Hill Community College but dropped out to become a boxer and worked to gain a place on the US Olympic boxing team to compete for the United States rather than for Russia. He married US citizen Katherine Russell on July 15, 2010, in the Masjid Al Quran Mosque. He had a history of violence, including an arrest in July 2009 for assaulting his girlfriend.

At the time of the bombing, Dzhokhar Tsarnaev was a student at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth with a major in marine biology. He became a naturalized US citizen on September 11, 2012. Tamerlan's boxing coach reported to NBC that the young brother was greatly influenced by Tamerlan and admired him.

For the 2028 Olympic Games in Los Angeles (LA28), it will be the third time that the Summer Olympics have been held in this city. In 1932, right through the Great Depression, the LA proposal was the only bidder. In 1984, the games are remembered for their significant financial and cultural success, notably when young Michael Jordan led the basketball team to a gold medal. For 2028, the hosting became the consolation prize before Paris (2024).





The US Secret Service leads the safety and security plan for LA28. Over 30 LA city and county law enforcement went to Paris to collaborate on a cross-feed approach and benchmark what had happened. Photo: LAPD Reserve Police Officers at the Olympics in Paris; part of an historic collaboration of law enforcement from around the world. Source: LAPD Reserve Foundation.

LA 2028 goes to Los Angeles as a “no build” games initiative meaning the city will primarily utilize existing venues and infrastructure rather than constructing new facilities specifically for the Games. The planning and strategy development should have been over! The current timeline should be at the countdown stage. Every year, the same safety and security crew, which is the size of an army, takes care of the United Nations General Assembly and the Superbowl. The Olympics should entail the same drill in a different location, requiring the leads to publish a threat assessment. The assessment helps, although it never guarantees a smooth operation.

Case in point: The year prior to the 21st edition of the Central American and Caribbean Games, in 2010, my team was instructed to write and publish the threat assessment, as the games were taking place from July 18 to August 1 in

Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, which was part of our area of responsibility. However, in the middle of the information collection and analysis stages, the Caribbean Petroleum Corporation (CAPECO) oil refinery exploded. The explosion was caused by a malfunctioning fuel tank gauge. The fire took days to extinguish. But before the cause of the explosion was known, and while the firefighters battled to kill the flames, an all threats/all hazards investigation was assigned to the same team that was developing the threat assessment to handle the games on schedule. The investigation was launched to determine if the explosion was a terrorist attack.

With that unforeseen explosion, the threat assessment moved to the back burner to tackle the emergent priority. The assessment was eventually published on time. That was only possible because we had planned and adhered to the timeline.

When dealing with public safety, prevention is key; although all that’s done is manage the risk. There is no way one can completely prevent unforeseen events as there are too many variables. The best authorities can do is implement security measures that vary depending on the location and on the infrastructure.

Going back to the preparation stages to host the summer Olympics in LA for 2028, the organizers are looking for a traditional stadium-based approach. The infrastructure is already there. The SoFI Stadium in Inglewood has a capacity of 70,240 attendees. Thus far, it’s proven to be safe. It is home to the National Football League’s LA Rams and LA Chargers teams. It’s also held several Taylor Swift concerts without major incidents.

The Long Beach waterfront should be able to provide cleaner waters for Olympic swimmers than the Seine in Paris 2024 offered.

One area to assess is the city traffic due to the density of the Los Angeles area. For that, the LA subway is being extended to connect downtown LA with UCLA, where the Olympic Village and dorms will be located. Although that Metro addition is an exception to the no-build approach, it required a \$900 million infrastructure spending package and a \$139 million grants package approved during the Biden administration. The grants should help to keep the host’s goal of

offering a car-free Olympics. That minimizes risks, as we all admit that each car may be turned into a potential weapon.

The US Secret Service leads the safety and security plan. LA city and county law enforcement went to Paris to collaborate on a cross-feed approach and benchmark what had happened. Not unique to LA, the homeless crisis encampment will require a social cleansing of the city. An alliance for cultural cooperation, artistic collaboration, and creative connection between Paris and LA has proven helpful. However, the crossings of jurisdictions are complex oceans to navigate.

One last thing to remember is that the Tenth Amendment prohibits the federal government from forcing states to pass or not pass specific legislation or enforce federal law. However, the federal government must assist state and local

governments in protecting the citizens in the jurisdiction and provide solutions when asked to intervene. Hence, much coordination occurs informally during day-to-day interactions among colleagues. Casual conversations, meetings, and working groups solve many tactical conflicts. Systematic efforts to institutionalize coordination, rather than relying on on-demand deliverables, strengthen the foundation of collaboration.

I trust that our public servants do their best to keep us safe and secure in our homeland daily. I've been there and know they work around the clock to guarantee our integrity as a nation. It is not them we should be worried about. We should be worried about those we open our doors to without first checking.

Remember: In God we trust; all others we must check. ★



★ MOWW ★
MILITARY ORDER
OF THE WORLD WARS

2026 ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

CELEBRATING AMERICA 250 WITH MOWW STORIES

In Celebration of America's 250th Anniversary, MOWW's upcoming campaign will create a unique Oral History archive, uniting MOWW Companions across generations, professions, geography and life experiences.

MOWW is working with our trusted partner, Publishing Concepts, Inc. (PCI) to help collect stories from as many Companions as possible and produce the 2026 Military Order of the World Wars Oral History Project.

HOW IT WORKS

- PCI will soon contact you by mail, phone, and email
- You'll be asked to verify your information and invited to share your story
- Participation is voluntary, and every story helps build MOWW's living legacy

WHY PARTICIPATE?

- ✓ Honor the values that define MOWW
- ✓ Preserve your legacy for future generations
- ✓ Strengthen the connection between Companions- past, present and future

THANK YOU FOR HELPING TO PRESERVE MOWW'S LEGACY!

**MOWW
National
Convention 2025**

**5-10 August 2025
Tucson, AZ**

REGISTRATION:
<https://moww.org/convention/>



The MOWW Executive Committee Endorses the Following Proposed Constitution & Bylaws Amendments

During the 8 May 2025 meeting, the EXCOM voted to endorse and recommend adoption at the 2025 National Convention the following proposed amendments.

RECOMMENDED MOWW BYLAWS AMENDMENTS.

1. Proposed Bylaws Amendment to Article 4, Section C, The Chief of Staff (CS).

This amendment aligns the duties of the Chief of Staff with current practices.

2. Proposed Bylaws Amendment to Article 4, Section D, The Treasurer General (TG).

This amendment aligns the duties of the Treasurer General with current practices.

3. Proposed Bylaws Amendment to Article 6, Section 1, Standing National Committees.

This amendment adds “National Youth Civics Summit” to the list of Standing Committees and modifies the name of the “National Convention and Seminars Committee” to just “National Convention.”

4. Proposed Bylaws Amendment to Article 6, Section 1, Standing National Committees.

This amendment eliminates the Homeland Security Committee and combines its functions with the National Security Committee.

RECOMMENDED MOWW CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS.

1. Proposed Constitutional Amendment to Article V, Section 2, Paragraph C.

This amendment adds the Treasurer to the Board of Trustees as a non-voting member.

2. Proposed Constitutional Amendment to Article V, Section 2, Paragraph A.

This amendment allows two Companions from a single Region to be elected as Vice Commander-in-Chief.

3. Proposed Constitutional Amendments to Article II, Section 1, Paragraph A.

Regular Membership. This amendment and its supporting amendments propose making all US veterans eligible for MOWW regular membership and their descendants eligible for hereditary membership.

Note: This proposed amendment was not recommended for approval by the Constitution & Bylaws Committee. The EXCOM endorsement of the amendment applies if brought to the floor at Convention for consideration.

The complete text of all proposed amendments is available online at the link below:

https://moww.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/MOWW_Proposed_Constitution_and_Bylaws_Amendments-4-April-2025.pdf

Come on out to Tucson and let your voice be heard! ★





2025 MOWW NATIONAL CONVENTION

AMERICA 250

CELEBRATING PATRIOTISM, UNITY, AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT



Tuesday, 5 August 2025 Dress: Casual			
TIME	EVENT	LOCATION	ATTENDEES
0800-1600	GOLF OUTING: <i>Canoa Ranch Golf Club</i>		
1500-1600	MOWW Historic Marker Dedication Ceremony, Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery Marana (15950 N Lockett Rd., Marana, AZ 85653)		All Available
Wednesday, 6 August 2025 Dress: Casual			
0800-1000	Pre-Convention EXCOM Meeting	Boardroom	EXCOM Members
0815-1530	TOUR 1: <i>Historic Tombstone, AZ</i>		
1000-1600	TOUR 2: <i>Pima Air & Space Museum</i>		
1200-1330	LUNCH AS DESIRED		
1600-1700	Hann-Buswell Chapter Meeting	Hotel 4	H-B Chap Members
1700-1730	National Candidate Orientation	Hotel 1,2,3	National Candidates
1800-2100	CINC Welcome Buffet	Conf B & C	All Attendees
Thursday, 7 August 2025 Dress: Casual (Hann-Buswell Memorial Chapter Dinner: Mess Dress)			
0630-0800	Breakfast Buffet	Conf B & C	All Attendees
0800-0900	CINC Opening Remarks	Conf A	All Attendees
0915-1015	Chapter Outreach Program Seminar	Conf A	All Attendees
1030-1200	America 250 Presentation	Conf A	All Attendees
1200-1330	Council of Past CINCs Luncheon	Boardroom	CPC/CINC/SVCINC/CS
1200-1330	LUNCH AS DESIRED		
1330-1500	Keynote Speaker: LTC Scott Mann, USA (Ret) –“Creating Greater Human Connections through Storytelling”	Conf A	All Attendees
1515-1600	Promoting the Order	Conf A	All Attendees
1615-1730	Commander’s Call	Conf A	All Attendees
1800-2100	Hann-Buswell Chapter Dinner	Hotel 1-3	H-B Chap Members
	DINNER AS DESIRED		
Friday, 8 August 2025 Business Casual			
0630-0800	Breakfast Buffet	Conf B & C	All Attendees
0800-1030	National Candidate Presentations	Conf A	All Attendees
0900-1030	Nominating Committee Voting	Conf A	Committee Members
0930-1030	Teller Meeting	Boardroom	Tellers
1100-1330	MOWW Awards Luncheon	Conf B & C	All Attendees
1400-1700	Convention Business Session I	Conf A	All Attendees
1730-2100	Dinner Show – <i>Gaslight Theater</i>		
	DINNER AS DESIRED		
Saturday, 9 August 2025 Business Casual (CINC Banquet: Mess Dress/Tuxedo)			
0630-0730	Breakfast Buffet	Conf B & C	All Attendees
0800-0900	MOWW Memorial Service	Conf B & C	All Attendees
0900-1600	TOUR 3: <i>Downtown Tucson Self-Guided Tour</i>		
0930-1200	Convention Business Session II	Conf A	All Attendees
1200-1330	YEF Board Meeting	Boardroom	YEF Board Members
1200-1330	LUNCH AS DESIRED		
1330-1445	Council of Area Commanders (CAC)	Hotel 4	CAC Members
1500-1545	Website Seminar	Conf A	All Attendees
1600-1645	Planned Giving Seminar	Conf A	All Attendees
1730-1800	National Officer Photos	Foyer	CPC/CINC/VCINCS/CS
1800-1850	CINC Reception	Foyer	All Attendees
1900-2100	CINC Banquet	Conf B & C	All Attendees
Sunday, 10 August 2025 Dress Casual			
0800-1000	Post–Convention EXCOM Breakfast	Hotel 1-3	EXCOM Members
0800-1000	EXCOM Spouse/Partner Breakfast	Hotel 4	Spouses/Partners



2025-26 Candidates for Elected Office

PCINC LTC MICHAEL A. OKIN, MD, USA (Ret)
CHAIR, NOMINATING COMMITTEE



COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF:

Lt Col David J. Worley, USAF (Ret)

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF:

Lt Col Marlon Ruiz, USAF (Ret)

VICE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: (4):

**One VCINC position
Open for Candidates**

COL Joseph P. Kirlin III, USA (Ret)
Region III

COL Michael Paul Peck, USA (Ret)
Region II

Col Adalberto Rivera, USAF (Ret)
Region VI

Note: the MOWW Constitution [Article V, Section 2, Paragraph A.2]], states, "Four each, with no two of whom coming from any one region."

TREASURER GENERAL:

CW4 Gary L. Smith, Sr. USA (Ret)

JUDGE ADVOCATE GENERAL:

CPT Harold Greenberg, JD, USA (Fmr)

SURGEON GENERAL:

CPT Dan L. Cameron, Jr., USA (Fmr)

CHAPLAIN GENERAL:

LTC Victor W. Burnette, USA (Ret)

HISTORIAN GENERAL:

HPM Charles W. Bennett, Jr.

"IT IS NOBLER TO SERVE"

VOLUNTEER AS A CANDIDATE FOR NATIONAL OFFICE

The MOWW National Convention will be held 5-10 August 2025 in Tucson, AZ. Every Companion can fulfill the promise of MOWW's motto, "It is nobler to serve than to be served," by running for an elected leadership role or by volunteering for an appointed position.

Please consider serving as MOWW's Vice Commander-in-Chief, Assistant Historian General, or Assistant Surgeon General. Your leadership and expertise would significantly enhance our mission and impact.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Companions: please email the following Companions with your candidacy preference.

Remember: if you're running for elected office, you need a nominating official!

• Chair, Nominating Committee

PCINC LTC Michael A. Okin, MD, USA (Ret)

Email: maokin1953@gmail.com

• Vice Chair, Nominating Committee

IPCINC BG Victor S. Perez, USA (Ret)

Email: perezv56@gmail.com



Magazine Committee Voting Procedures

PCINC LTC RUTH L. HAMILTON, USA (RET)
LTC SHEHAB CHAPTER NJ

Each year at the MOWW National Convention, writing award prizes are awarded to authors of selected **Officer Review**® magazine articles. This article explains the processes that take place within the Magazine Committee prior to the awarding of the prizes.

The CINC appoints the Magazine Committee Chair at the Convention. The Chair, Immediate Past Commander-in-Chief, and the Chief of Staff (as ex officio without vote) are statutory members of the Committee. The Chief of Staff is dual-hatted as both the Chief of Staff and the Editor-in-Chief of the magazine. The Chair appoints a Vice Chair and two to four additional Companions as Committee members, with one serving as Recorder.

How are the prizes funded? The Vice Admiral George C. Dyer Memorial Magazine Trust Fund was established to fund the VADM Dyer Writing Award Prizes. Each year, a First Place Prize, a Second Place Prize, and three Honorable Mention awards are presented. Currently, the amounts for each award are: First Place Prize (one at \$2,000), Second Place Prize (one at \$1,000) and Honorable Mention Prizes (three at \$500).

What articles are eligible for writing award prizes? The Committee reviews articles published in the **Officer Review**® magazine issues from the January-February issue to the November-December issue during the past calendar year. MOWW Companions must originally write articles for publication in **The Officer Review**® magazine. Prohibited are reprints of articles, articles submitted by individuals who are not Companions of the Order, op-ed articles, and National Staff officer articles (e.g., "CINC's Perspective, Surgeon's Tent, and Chaplain's Pulpit"). Articles written by Companions but published first in other publications will not be considered. Articles authored by members of the Magazine Committee, including the Chief of Staff or Editor-in-Chief, will not be eligible. An author may only receive one writing award prize per year.



Vice Admiral George C. Dyer

How are articles selected for writing award prizes? In December, the Committee members are informed of the annual Magazine Committee Meeting date, which is scheduled for January (10-31 January). Committee members are requested to review all eligible articles and provide their top five selections, citing the article title, author, volume, month of publication, and page numbers. The committee's selections must be submitted by the specified deadline and are compiled in a list. Prior to the Committee meeting date, each

Committee member receives the full list of articles to be considered, which allows them time to rank-order the articles in the list.

What are the voting procedures? When the Magazine Committee meets to vote on the articles, the meeting begins with the Chief of Staff/Editor-in-Chief giving an assessment of experiences related to magazine preparation and publication throughout the year. Committee members then read their rank-ordered articles with #1 being the best article. (Basically, the voting is like the voting process of promotion boards for military officers and NCOs—identify eligibles, review merit, vote all eligible files and determine voting cutoffs.) If any of the total scores result in a tie, the Committee will have a run-off vote, as ties are not permitted. The governing document for the Committee is MOWW Form 30-Magazine Committee Procedures.

How can you help? Companions are encouraged to submit articles on topics such as personal military service experiences, military history, outreach programs, Companion spotlights, public events (e.g., Massings of the Colors, Youth Leadership Conferences), and promoting the benefits to the Order.

If you have additional questions about the Magazine Committee or article submission, please contact the Committee Chair or the Chief of Staff/Editor-in-Chief of the magazine. ★



INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION: The 2025 National Youth Civics Summit

From July 13–19, 2025, the Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW), in partnership with the MOWW Foundation, will host the second annual National Youth Civics Summit (NYCS) in Washington, DC. Twenty outstanding high school students from across the country have been selected to take part in this immersive, week-long exploration of American government and civic leadership.

The 2025 NYCS will kick off Sunday, July 13, with a welcome dinner featuring speaker Michael “Rod” Rodriguez, President and CEO of the Global War on Terrorism Memorial Foundation and a nationally recognized advocate for veterans and their families.



Throughout the week, students will visit the US Capitol, meet with Members of Congress and their staff, tour the US Supreme Court and the Pentagon, visit agencies such as the US Treasury and the Foreign Service Institute, and more. Additional highlights include visits to the Smithsonian, a US Marine Corps Sunset Parade at 8th & I, and excursions to the National Mall and Arlington National Cemetery.

A highlight of the week will take place on Thursday, July 17, when MOWW hosts a reception at the Reserve Officers Association on Capitol Hill. Senators, Members of Congress, and other special guests have been invited to meet the NYCS participants and hear directly from them about their experiences. This event will provide a unique opportunity for civic dialogue and reflection, emphasizing the important role of youth leadership in shaping the future of America.

By week's end, these future leaders will leave with a deeper understanding of how our government works—and how they can contribute to its future through public service, civic advocacy, or military leadership.

Support the Summit

The NYCS is made possible through the generosity of donors to the MOWW Foundation (EIN 93-3140766).

To contribute, please visit www.moww.org/nycs or text NYCS to 44321 ★





(Below Right, L-R): VCINC CAPT Edward W. Gantt, USN (Ret), and MOWW CINC Lt Col David J. Worley, USAF (Ret), place the MOWW Wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown.



Photography courtesy of VACO Media Services



The 2025 MOWW Lufbery Award

LTC MICHAEL BERENDT, USA (RET)
COLORADO SPRINGS CHAPTER, CO

The Colorado Springs Chapter, CO, Chapter Commander Col Kermit Neal, USAF (Ret), had the honor of presenting the MOWW Lufbery Award to United States Air Force Academy (USAFA) Cadet Peter J. Rickard. The MOWW Lufbery Award is a national-level award that recognizes the Outstanding USAFA Cadet in a Western Language Minor.

Cadet Rickard won the award for his excellence in German language studies. He graduated from the Air Force Academy on 29 May 2024 and will be assigned to Vance AFB in Oklahoma for Undergraduate Pilot Training.

The Lufbery Award is presented annually in memory of Major Gervais Raoul Victor Lufbery (14 March 1885 -19 May 1918), a French and American fighter pilot and flying ace in World War I. Due to his service in the French Air Force and later the United States Army Air Service during World War I, he is alternatively listed as a French or American ace.

Officially, all but one of his 17 combat victories came while flying in French units. The USAFA Department of Foreign Languages faculty determines the recipient on behalf of the Order.



(L-R): COS Chapter Commander Col Kermit Neal, USAF (Ret), presented the Lufbery Award to Cadet Peter J. Rickard at the United States Air Force Academy.

Understanding Summer Colds and Staying Safe in the Heat

CPT DAN L. CAMERON, JR., USA (FMR)
SURGEON GENERAL, MOWW

Summer colds may seem unusual, but they are quite common and can be just as bothersome as winter colds. Additionally, summer brings unique health challenges, including dehydration, sunburn, and heat-related illnesses. Here's a comprehensive guide on both topics to help you stay healthy and safe.

Summer Colds:

Causes, Symptoms, and Prevention

A summer cold is caused by viruses, primarily enteroviruses, which spread through respiratory droplets and contaminated surfaces. Unlike winter colds, summer colds can linger longer and sometimes cause digestive issues.

Symptoms

- Runny or stuffy nose, sore throat, and cough
- Fever, body aches, and fatigue
- Headache and occasional nausea

Key difference from allergies: Colds cause fever and body aches, whereas allergies do not.

Prevention Strategies

- Wash your hands frequently to reduce virus transmission.
- Avoid touching your face to prevent germs from entering your body.
- Stay hydrated and maintain a nutrient-rich diet to support immunity.
- Disinfect surfaces in high-contact areas.
- Rest and stay active—moderate exercise can strengthen your immune system.

Summer Safety:

Protecting Yourself from Seasonal Risks

Warm weather brings outdoor fun but also some health hazards. Keeping these safety tips in mind.

Hydration and Heat Safety

- Drink at least eight glasses of water daily to prevent dehydration.

- Limit alcohol and caffeine, which can increase fluid loss.
- Wear lightweight clothing and stay in shaded areas.
- Recognize heat exhaustion signs—dizziness, nausea, and excessive sweating.

Sun Protection

- Apply sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher) before heading outside. Reapply sunscreen every two hours, especially after swimming.
- Wear sunglasses and a wide-brimmed hat to shield your eyes and face.

Food and Water Safety

- Store perishable foods properly to avoid foodborne illnesses.
- Ensure drinking water is clean to prevent contamination.

Insect and Allergy Protection

- Use insect repellent to avoid mosquito and tick bites.
- Check for ticks after spending time outdoors.
- Monitor pollen levels if you have seasonal allergies.

By following these precautions, you can minimize risks and enjoy the best of summer while staying healthy and protected! Let me know if you'd like further details.

Enjoy the season, look forward to seeing you in the fall. Stay healthy my fellow Companions.



Ecclesiastes 4:12—Strength in Unity

LTC VICTOR W. BURNETTE, USA (RET)
CHAPLAIN GENERAL, MOWW

Companions, the wheels are in motion for the 2025 National MOWW Convention in Arizona, where we will gather for a critical, future-defining convention. This year, it is vital that we achieve our goals and objectives with unwavering commitment.

As we prepare for this important event, I am praying for a positive outcome for our MOWW body. I invite you to join me in prayer, keeping in mind Ecclesiastes 4:12:

“And if one prevails against him, two shall withstand him, and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

This verse suggests that unity and collaboration make us stronger, enabling us to surmount challenges and achieve significant outcomes.

Avoiding the Pitfalls of Disagreement

For our convention to be successful, we must recognize the dangers of division. Throughout Scripture, we see instances where disagreements among God’s people led to failure or delays in accomplishing a task:

- **The Israelites and the Promised Land (Numbers 13-14):** When Moses sent twelve spies to scout the land of Canaan, ten returned in fear, spreading doubt among the people. Their lack of faith led to rebellion against God and a 40-year delay before entering the Promised Land.

- **The Corinthian Church Divisions (1 Corinthians 1:10-13):** The early church struggled with internal conflicts over leadership, weakening their unity and effectiveness in spreading the gospel. Let us learn from these examples and ensure that disagreement does not hinder our mission at this convention.

A Biblical Path to Leadership and Unity

Every organization faces challenges, but with strong leadership, clear communication, and

a commitment to a shared mission, we can overcome divisions and remain effective. As Companions of MOWW, we must ground ourselves in the principles of service and biblical wisdom.

Key Biblical Principles to Guide Our Convention

- **Unity in Purpose (1 Corinthians 1:10):** Let us strive for harmony as we work together toward a shared vision.

Resolving Disagreements in a Biblical Manner

- **(Matthew 18:15-17):** Handling conflict with grace and understanding leads to reconciliation rather than division.

Prayer and Spiritual Guidance

- **(Proverbs 3:5-6):** Seeking God’s wisdom will strengthen our decisions and actions.

- **Servant Leadership (Matthew 20:25-28):** True leadership is characterized by humility and service rather than personal gain. As always, we must follow our motto, “It is nobler to serve than to be served.”

By implementing these principles before, during, and after our convention, we will remain strong, unified, and effective in fulfilling our mission. Let us lead with faith and purpose!

Lord, I pray that You reveal Yourself to us as we read Your Word from both the Old and New Testament. May You strengthen our faith so that we may live to Your glory and serve with wisdom and humility. Amen. ★



North Central Florida Chapter FL

Garrett Vowinkel Graduates Summa Cum Laude from West Point

BY PCINC CAPT RUSSELL C. VOWINKEL, USN (RET)

Newly commissioned 2nd Lieutenant Garrett B. Vowinkel, USMA (USA), proudly a Life Member of the MOWW, graduated Summa Cum Laude from West Point on 24 May. In the photo, he stands proudly with his father, a Perpetual Member of the MOWW and a distinguished former Army Captain. 2LT Vowinkel is a grandson of Mrs. Beverly A. Vowinkel and PCINC CAPT Russell C. Vowinkel, USN (Ret).



Northern Virginia Chapter, VA

Army ROTC Cadet Chosen to Place a Wreath at Arlington National

BY COL VINCENTE C. OGILVIE, USA (RET)

Pictured at Arlington National Cemetery on Memorial Day 2025 are MOWW Vice Commander-in-Chief CAPT Ed Gantt, USN (Ret), and COL Vince Ogilvie, USA (Ret), Commander of the NOVA Chapter, with West Potomac High School Army JROTC Cadet Reagan Goodale. Cadet Goodale participated in the ceremony by placing a wreath on behalf of MOAA. On 30 April, she was honored by the NOVA Chapter for her outstanding leadership in JROTC, her school, and the community.





Puerto Rico Chapter, PR

Memorial Day Commemoration

BY COL ADALBERTO RIVERA, USAF (RET)

Companions from the Puerto Rico Chapter present at the Morovis National Cemetery Memorial Day Commemoration. MOWW PR Chapter sponsored one of the wreaths placed during the ceremony. Morovis National Cemetery is one of two national cemeteries on the island, as Bayamon National Cemetery has reached its maximum capacity.

PR Chapter Companions present at the ceremony. (L-R): CPT Ramón Martínez, USA (Ret); Chapter Commander COL Ariel Jusino, USA (Ret); MAJ Segundo Melendez (Ret), and PR Department Commander LTC Jorge Mas, USA (Ret).



Dallas Chapter, TX

Vietnam Tribute: A Salute to Vietnam Veterans

BY CPT MARK W. SMITS, USA (FMR)

On 30 April, the Dallas Chapter co-sponsored an event to honor all participants in the Vietnam War, marking the 50th anniversary of the end of the armed conflict. The Dallas Chapter made significant contributions, including the conceptual development spearheaded by Dallas Chapter Commander 2LT Natan Ton-that, USA (Fmr), who is a first-generation Vietnamese American. LT Gen John Campbell USAF (Ret) chaired the event which took place at the newly opened National Medal of Honor Museum. The Dallas Chapter's Past Commander, CPT Allen Clark USA (Fmr), delivered a passionate message as one of the keynote speakers. Approximately 400 people attended.



Most historical accounts of the Vietnam War discuss its disruptive impact on the US and the damage inflicted on the Vietnamese populace. Although history books often focus on the adverse effects, this event emphasized the positive relationships that have formed since then. Vietnamese immigrants have successfully integrated into American society and demonstrate a profound appreciation for the country's values and freedoms. Soldiers from both sides of the conflict exchanged greetings, shared stories, and recollected memories. A group of Vietnamese women wore traditional dresses featuring American imagery. The national anthems of Vietnam and the United States were played and sung. Before the formal program, attendees had the opportunity to socialize and build new connections.

Puget Sound Chapter, WA

Addressing Veteran Homelessness

BY PCINC COL DAVID B. GIBSON, USAF (RET)

The Puget Sound Chapter renewed its support to Homeless Veterans at the 4 May meeting, with guest speaker Melissa Weitzel from the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs.

Her informative remarks about the current situation keep Companions involved.



Col Elmer Chapter AR

Arkansas National Guard Museum

BY LTC SHAUN B. McGARRY, USA (RET)

The Chapter made a \$1,000 donation to the Arkansas National Guard Museum. Chapter Commander Colonel Robert Jackson and Vice Commander Colonel Damon Cluck presented the donation. Dr. Raymond Screws, representing the museum, is overseeing a Heritage Exhibit that showcases artifacts and weapons from the history of the Arkansas Militia and National Guard. This donation recognizes the museum's support in hosting chapter meetings and Youth Leadership Seminars.

(L-R): Vice Commander COL Damon Cluck, USA (Ret), National Guard Museum representative Dr. Raymond Screws and Chapter Commander COL Robert Jackson, ARARNG (Ret).



Memphis Chapter, TN

CINC Visits the Memphis Chapter

BY LT COL ROBERT C. KUHLO, USAF (RET)

On 24 April, the Memphis Chapter hosted CINC Lt Col David J. Worley, USAF (Ret), for dinner as he traveled to the Region VII spring meeting. During the gathering, we discussed several topics, including the Massing of the Colors, JROTC awards, Scouting awards, and participation in Youth Leadership Conferences. We also covered important subjects such as recruiting and retaining members, chapter funding, and the new MOWW Foundation 501(c)(3). The next morning, we sent CINC Worley on his way after he enjoyed some delicious Memphis BBQ.

(L-R): LTC Fred Persechini, USA (Ret); Col Mike Bronstein, USAF (Ret); CINC Lt Col David J. Worley, USAF (Ret), and Lt Col Robert C. Kuhlo, USAF (Ret).





A BETTER WAY TO FIND SUPPORT



PATRIOTlink has launched a new pilot program designed to make resource navigation easier for veterans and military families searching for assistance. The program now introduces a referral feature, built specifically for partner case managers, but with major benefits for veterans:

- Secure file storage: All of your information stays safe in one place.
- Chat with a case manager: A built-in chat tool makes it easier to stay in touch with your case manager or the PATRIOTlink team, ensuring that you feel supported at all times.
- Progress tracking: You and your case manager can keep tabs on applications, updates and follow-ups all in one place, keeping you organized and informed.

Integration with VA

Additionally, PATRIOTlink now connects directly with VA through a secure application programming interface (API), which allows eligible users to upload their information to their platform account. If you're a Title 38 Veteran, you can securely reference your VA profile when applying for support services on the platform, making verification more efficient.

Built with Community in Mind

So far, 21 nonprofit organizations have joined the pilot program. These include groups that specialize in mental health, employment, education support, recreational programs, service animals, caregiver support and more. All of these programs are ready to support veterans.

Why this matters

There are over 45,000 Veteran support organizations across the U.S., but navigating the entire system of resources can be incredibly difficult. PATRIOTlink is working to bring them all together into one easy-to-use, accessible platform for you and your family.

<https://www.patriotlink.org/>

Open-access resource database:

<https://www.codeofsupport.org/>

SOLDIERS TO SIDELINE:



Soldiers To Sidelines (STS) is a nonprofit that trains veterans to become sport coaches. They offer free virtual and in-person clinics,

mentorship and networking opportunities.

Through football, basketball, soccer and beyond, veterans find a new way to serve youth—this time, on the field. Programs are open to all veterans, service members and military spouses. No coaching experience is necessary. Just bring your commitment to lead and a desire to make an impact.

Registration is now open for our Annual Coaching Summit! This free event brings together veteran coaches, pro-level mentors and leadership experts from across the country. It's a chance to connect, grow and get inspired alongside fellow service-driven leaders. Whether you're new to coaching or already on the sidelines, the Summit is your next step forward.

<https://www.soldierstosidelines.org/>

NATIONAL POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY



This year, on Friday, 19 September 2025, many Americans across the United States pause to remember the sacrifices and service of those who were prisoners of war (POW), as well as those who are missing in action (MIA), and their families. All military installations fly the National League of Families'

POW/MIA flag, which symbolizes the nation's remembrance of those who were imprisoned while serving in conflicts and those who remain missing.

There are 1,741 American personnel listed by the Defense Department's POW/MIA Office as missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War, as of April 2009. The number of United States personnel accounted for since the end of the Vietnam War in 1975 is 841.

For more information visit <https://www.dpaa.mil/>





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chiefstaff@moww.org

ASSISTANT EDITOR

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