



# TIP OF THE SPEAR

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BEST SFA MONTHLY NEWSLETTER 05-13 and GOLDEN QUILL 97, 98 & 2012





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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER



### September 2017

September has proven to be an emotional month; 16th Anniversary of 9/11, Hurricane Irma, the training accident at Training Group, not to mention the personal tragedies we each face silently! But the human triumph over chaos and challenge is resoundingly resilient! We have received no reports of injury or serious damage from the storm among our membership, and for this we are thankful! The September monthly meeting was unique. We had a special presentation in remembrance of POW/MIA and 9/11 and a special guest, SFC Mike Morales, a profile in courage, and his mother, Rebecca! The spirit of enthusiasm is strong among the men and our momentum for the Team House is picking up! We will have three design options to look at in the coming weeks so stay tuned for information in the near future. Thank you for your words of encouragement and I ask you to continue to encourage each other! Big Things are about to Happen!!!

DOL,

Brian Wilson

President



## SFA Chapter LX Minutes for 15 September 2017

The meeting was brought to order at 1735 hours by Chapter President Brian Wilson.

Officers present were: President Brian Wilson; Vice President of Operations Pat Rizzi; Vice President of Support Kevin McCaffrey; and Secretary Amy Sitze.

Members present were: Terry O'Connor, Todd Reed, Ray Millaway, Gary Weber, Jim Peters, Michael Monroe, Rod Nishimura, Mick Cole, Shaun Darragh, Bruce Warner, Wil Colon, Dave Driver, Bill Oliva, Ed Dottery, Jack Braham, Brenna Rutland, Jim McGarrah, David Haddock, and Keith Hanley.

We were honored with some very special guests, SFC Mike Morales from 7<sup>th</sup> SFG(A) and his mother Rebecca. He is currently receiving treatment at James A. Haley Veteran's Polytrauma Center until he is moved to Walter Reed. We also had Brian and Amy Anderson from Veteran's Alternative visiting. In addition, we had the pleasure of being visited by Kevin McCaffrey's daughter Caitlin. And from the American Legion Post 139 Patty Delgado attended our meeting.

Prior to the start of the meeting, members attended the POW/MIA Ceremony hosted by the American Legion. Here, we cited the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a short ceremony. The Legionnaires set the POW/MIA Table respectfully explaining what each item represents. Led by Chapter member Ray Millaway, stories of POWs were shared in recognition of their endurance and sacrifice. Richard J. Meadows and the impact of the Son Tay Raid was a highlight of the presentation.

### **PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS.**

President Wilson welcomed all—members and guests. Then he ensured

Chapter LX members did take a few minutes to remember 9/11, the 18Cs in a training accident at Ft Bragg on 14 September, and the all those that have paid the ultimate sacrifice. A moment of silence for our missing and fallen comrades followed.

September's meeting was pushed back a week due to Hurricane Irma which directly impacted our area. We are happy to say that all members are safe and suffered minimum damage. However, we know that there may be folks that need help. Secretary Sitze has a list of Chapter members that have volunteered to help if/when needed. So, if anyone knows of a Chapter member or others that need assistance as we recover from Hurricane Irma, please let a board member know so that we can get help to them. A generator and a portable A/C unit is available if anyone requires them. Also, anyone living in Pinellas County that had roof damage, you can go to Operation Blue Roof; <http://www.usace.army.mil/Missions/Emergency-Operations/National-Response-Framework/Temporary-Roofing>.

The hot item on the agenda is the Sporting Clays Shoot scheduled for 18 November in Fishhawk. Dave Haddock is the lead for the event and is asking for members to get with local businesses to donate goods and services that we can raffle/auction off. In addition, now is the time to advertise and to find those that want to participate. Posters are available with details of the event for advertising in windows. If you have ideas of where best to advertise, see Dave. Now is the time to get your team together! Any Chapter members that are shooters, now is your time to show your skill. Come out, bring your friends, and let's support this event to the fullest. Dave also has a roster started for those that want to volunteer during the shoot. He requires at least 20. Please help Dave in any way you can with this event.





It is always a great day for fun, comradery, food, and of course shooting. And this is our last fundraiser for the year, not to mention our big one!

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT.**

Secretary Sitze started by requesting all, to include visitors, to sign the attendance roster. Yes, OC, I see you signed it this month and have accounted for your presence. Also, anyone needing to update their information can do so on the sign in roster. Please be sure that any time an email address, phone number or mailing address changes to notify Secretary Sitze. She does work with National to ensure the membership database is current. This ensures, not only that you stay connected with Chapter LX events and news, but also means you continue to receive your edition of the Drop quarterly.

Secretary Sitze did have some sad news to share. SGM Jeff Shera recently passed away from colon cancer. His funeral is to be in Indiana, but there is also to be a memorial in Tampa. DTG still TBD.

1 October marks the opening of our Annual Membership Drive. If you are an annual member, 1 October 2017 to 30 January 2018 will be the time to renew. You may see Secretary Sitze directly with payment or mail it in. If you are interested in upgrading to a Lifetime membership, this is also the best window of opportunity to accomplish that transfer. We will also use this year's drive as a recruiting drive. Many are learning more about our Team House dream and are interested in becoming a part of that dream. Use the Team House as a means to generate interest and as a recruiting tool. Please invite anyone you know eligible for membership that is not yet a member to any of our meetings or Chapter Events.

Additionally, Secretary Sitze went over the upcoming calendar which includes all Chapter LX meetings and events. She also announced a number of activities and events centered around veterans throughout the Tampa Bay area.

Please see "Upcoming Events" below for a full listing of all Chapter LX and area events.

A motion was made by Shaun Darragh and seconded by Ray Millaway to accept the Secretary's report. The motion passed unanimously.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT.**

Treasurer Corson was unable to attend the meeting. Yet, it was confirmed that all bills are paid to date. If you have any questions concerning the approved 2017 Budget, please contact Rich Corson.

No motion was made since no report provided.

### **QUARTERMASTER REPORT.**

Quartermaster Mr. Jim Fagan has all the specifics should you be interested in any Chapter gear. The new shirts look fantastic! We still have legacy apparel for sale until it is depleted. Once sold that will be it. So, if you see something you like, best to get it now. If you are one who has been requesting Chapter shirts to include Wives shirts, Jim is the one to contact! He currently has Large and Xtra Large Shirts available. If you need a different size, then get with Jim to order the needed size(s). Nike Golf shirts are \$45 each and Cotton/Poly shirts are \$25. For any additional personalizing you would like to have on your shirt, Name Tape on Dale Mabry provides those services and is a friend of the Chapter.

### **OLD BUSINESS.**

Three of the five officers currently sitting on the board will be required to step down in January of next year—President, Vice President of Operations, and Vice President of Support. We have received nominations for all positions, but are still looking for any interested nominees. If have any questions about being President, please talk to Brian Wilson or to the VPs if you are interested in the two VP positions. And if you are interested, please be sure to let a board member or Finders Committee member know. Elections will be held in November with the transition to follow in



January 2018. We are taking those nominations now. The Finders Committee made up of Darrell Katz and Dave Zilka will be overseeing the nominations and the vote in November.

Festivities for Veteran's Day are being planned. Chapter LX has been asked to participate in a very special Veteran's Day celebration, sponsored by Veteran's Alternative. Brian and Amy Anderson from Veteran's Alternative were present to give more details of the event. Brian mentioned that most see Veterans Day is just another three day weekend we enjoy, with most Americans never fully understanding why Veterans Day exists. With that said, he is using this Veterans Day to remind the community of what the day really means and to teach how to honor Veterans in an appropriate and acceptable manner. So, a two day festival is planned celebrating Veterans everywhere. It is going to be 10-11 November and will include a dinner honoring Veterans, a fly over, a parade, and Boxing in the Park. Please, those of you that are able to, come support this event. We will look at carpooling to the event from Tampa, since it is a bit of a drive for many.

Good news for the Chapter. A contract has been signed hiring an architect to design our Team House. Our needs and wishes of what to include in the Team House have been expressed and we can expect our first rendition for approval in the next month or so. Once we have an approved rendering of the building plans, we will use them as a means to solicit additional corporate sponsorship.

### **NEW BUSINESS.**

President Wilson had an opportunity to speak with CSM Pat McCauley who relayed his enjoyment for being Chapter LX's guest at the 2017 Richard J. Meadows Scholarship Banquet. He also has expressed interest in attending our meetings and becoming more involved in our events. We look forward to having him as our guest once more in the near future.

Gasparilla 2018! The application is in, thanks to Ray Millaway. And we are awaiting response from the committee as to whether or not Chapter LX will have a spot in the parade, scheduled on 27 January 2018. There has been a delay in response due to Hurricane Irma. However, we expect to hear back soon. And we feel firmly that we will have a spot. Be thinking of how you might want to participate in this event. We will need help building our float, we will need sponsors to buy beads, and we will, of course, need participation the day of the event. Once we confirm that we have a spot, a plan and design will be solidified and then it will be time to get to work. But what a fun event it will be! And we know that the crowd likes when we are in the parade, as was proven last year. So, if you missed it this year, you will have another chance.

December is almost here and that means our Annual Christmas Party. Bill Oliva has found and reserved a location – La Teressita. Next the board members will decide all the specifics to include menu and times. All can start thinking of what gift you will bring for the gift exchange. If you have any suggestions, thoughts, or would like to help plan, please let a board member know. It is always a great event to come together as we close out our year.

### **GOOD OF THE ORDER.**

SFC Mike Morales SFOD 7212, 7th SFG (A) was our special guest in September. He is currently in the Polytrama Unit at James A. Haley (2<sup>nd</sup> floor), till he is transported to Walter Reed for additional care. He seemed to enjoy his time spent with Chapter LX and appreciates the visits by members he has had thus far. So, should you find yourselves in the area of the VA, maybe you can take a few minutes to stop by and say a quick hello. We hope Mike will visit us again.

Bill Oliva mentioned that Carlos Carrasco – pitcher for the Cleveland Indians – a huge supporter of Chapter LX will be recognized at the ViVa Tampa festival. Carlos honored the SOF Fallen at the SOF Memorial recently. Postings of that



moment were shared on the FB page of the Cleveland Indians which has thousands of followers. This year the event will take place on 1 Oct 2017, in Ybor City Tampa. The ViVa Tampa Festival is a FREE community event and non-profit. ViVa Tampa Festival has already become an iconic Ybor event to honor the sacrifices of our Veterans. We are also recognizing the USSOCOM Paracommandos. This year we will also be recognizing Gold Star mother Yolanda Mercado.

Harry Bowers is a Life member of Chapter LX and our only WWII veteran. We haven't heard from him in awhile. And wondering if any of you have heard from, seen him, or know how he is doing. If anyone knows, please let Secretary Sitze know, so that we can reconnect with him.

Robert Barnes is an associate member of Chapter 92 in Alabama. He is currently in need of a kidney transplant and in the process of being qualified for that transplant at Tampa General Hospital. If you or someone you know is interested in being a possible donor, please let Secretary Sitze know and I will forward to Clifford Gissell who notified us of Robert's need.

### **Team House Benefactor Challenge.**

At the April 2017 meeting Chapter LX member and past President Rob Cavin donated \$1,000 to the Team House Fund and issued a challenge to all members:

*"Donate \$1,000 to the Team House Fund and become a Chapter LX Benefactor."* In May and June this challenge was answered by members Don Cox and Dave Zilka. In July, Billy Waugh presented the Chapter with 10 \$100 Bills. Then in the 5<sup>th</sup> month of the challenge, the challenge was met with fervor. Rich Corson and Gil Himes each gave a \$1000 to the Team House, then Terry O'Connor upped the ante with \$1050 to the Team House. And in the 6<sup>th</sup> month, Mick Cole

stepped up to the challenge. THANK YOU to all of you!!! Will you be the one to keep this challenge going with your donation next month? Let's keep this challenge going and make this dream a reality. Send your check to Chapter LX, SFA, PO Box 6515, MacDill AFB, FL 33608. De Oppresso Liber!

### **50 / 50 Drawing.**

There was \$120.00 in the pot and the drawing won by SFC Mike Morales who donated it back to Chapter LX for allowing him to be the Chapter's guest for the evening. Many thanks, Mike! We do hope you will join us again.

### **Adjournment.**

The meeting adjourned at 1821 following a motion by Dave Haddock, seconded by Mick Cole, and passed unanimously. The meeting lasted 46 minutes.

### **The Next Membership Meeting.**

Our next Chapter meeting will be held on Friday, 13 October 2017, at 1730hrs, at American Legion Post 139, 3818 West Bay Vista Avenue, Tampa, FL 33611. Telephone (813) 839-6740.



### **From National and around the Chapters.**

National is looking for any information on MSG Tim Burke, USA (Ret). A request has been made and they are looking for anyone who may know this guy. We believe he lives in the Tampa area. If you know him or know of him, please contact Cliff Newman at SFA National HQs, 910-485-5433.



Task Force Dagger Foundation is having a fundraiser. Nordic is doing a special rifle with an SF Crest Only for SF qualified personnel. The rifle normally sells for \$1750 but they are selling it for \$1000 to those who qualify and TFD receives \$100 per rifle. They have already sold 1,000. Please see the link: <https://nordiccomp.com/categories/sf-rifle/> if you are interesting in purchasing or learning more.

The National Special Forces Green Beret Memorial. This is a memorial to honor the elite Special Forces "Green Beret" of every era and the legacy of the Special Forces Regiment with a historic memorial park. It is planned to be a place premier park with public access and viewed as a tourist destination near Ft Bragg, NC. Money is being raised for the project and all donations are tax deductible. For more information, please go to [www.specialforcesgreenberetmemorial.org](http://www.specialforcesgreenberetmemorial.org). Or speak with Chapter member Geoff Barker as he is on the committee.

The National Museum of the United States Army is opening in 2019 at Ft. Belvoir, VA. They are asking for all those that have served over the years in the Army to register in their database. If you are interested in registering, donating, or learning more about the museum, go to [WWW.armyhistory.org](http://WWW.armyhistory.org) to find out more.



### **Getting in Touch.**

Chapter LX Web-Site:  
<https://specialforces.org>. Many thanks to Don Cox for your efforts in keeping us on line.

Chapter Facebook Page: Here is the link to our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SFACHAP60>. Please go to that link and "like" us. Thanks to Jon Mueller for running this outstanding site.

### **Upcoming Events.**

1 October 2017: VIVA Tampa Festival, Ybor City, Tampa

7 October 2017: Afghanistan War Memorial Dedication Ceremony, 1100, Veterans Memorial Park, 3602 U.S. Hwy 301N, Tampa, FL 33619

7 October 2017: To Honor Those Who Served Golf Tournament, 1230, Countryway Golf Course, 11111 West Waters Ave, Tampa, FL 33635, for more info contact Bonnie at 813-810-1727

14 October 2017: Field of Honor Ceremony, 1100, Veterans Memorial Park, 3602 U.S. Hwy 301N, Tampa, FL 33619

26-29 October 2017: The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall, Opening ceremony 26 Oct 1100, 0900 – 2100 Daily, Veterans Memorial Park, 3602 U.S. Hwy 301N, Tampa, FL 33619

9 November 2017: USSOCOM Veterans Day Ceremony, TBD

10-11 November 2017: Veterans Day, Spent with Veteran's Alternative, Several events to include a Fly Over, Boxing in the Park, and a Parade on Sat 11 Nov 1500, Port Richey, FL

11 November 2017: Veterans Day at Veterans Memorial Park, 1100, 3602 U.S. Hwy 301N, Tampa, FL 33619



### **Hand Salute**

Chapter LX has members deployed overseas in support of the War on Terror. Some of these men are still on active duty; others are on the retired rolls. When the call to arms sounded, each stepped forward. We members of the Chapter LX salute them for their service.

Dreher Kinney, Colombia

Ken Nifong, Afghanistan

Request members inform Gary Weber, [glwb310@yahoo.com](mailto:glwb310@yahoo.com) of those deployed.





# **SPECIAL FORCES ASSOCIATION, CHAPTER LX**

## **SPORTING CLAYS SHOOT**

**SATURDAY, 18 NOVEMBER 2017**

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**For a Registration Form, Sponsorships or Questions, contact David Haddock (813)335-4523  
or Jerry Hines (813)513-3331 or by email at [shotguns@tampagreenberets.com](mailto:shotguns@tampagreenberets.com)**





## POW/MIA Recognition Day September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2017

On September 15, 2017, Americans across our country paused to remember the U.S. service members who were prisoners of war or are still listed as missing in action. We are compelled to never forget that while we enjoy our daily pleasures, there are others who have endured and may still be enduring the agonies of pain, deprivation and imprisonment.

The POW/MIA ceremony hosted by the American Legion and led by Chapter member Ray Millaway reflected on the stories of POWs and what they endured during captivity. The Legionnaires set the POW/MIA Table respectfully explaining what each item represents.

*The table is small, symbolizing the frailty of one prisoner, alone against his or her suppressors.*

*The tablecloth is white, symbolic of the purity of their intentions to respond to their Country's call to arms.*

*The single rose in the vase signifies the blood they may have shed in sacrifice to ensure the freedom of our beloved United States of America. This rose also reminds us of the family and friends of our missing comrades who keep faith, while awaiting their return.*

*The red ribbon on the vase represents an unyielding determination for a proper accounting of our comrades who are not among us.*

*A slice of lemon on the plate reminds us of their bitter fate.*

*The salt sprinkled on the plate reminds us of the countless fallen tears of families as they wait.*

*The glass is inverted, they cannot toast with us at this time.*

*The chair is empty. They are not here. The candle is reminiscent of the light of hope, which lives in our hearts to illuminate their way home, away from their captors, to the open arms of a grateful nation.*

*The American flag reminds us that many of them may never return - and have paid the supreme sacrifice to insure our freedom.*





*They Shall Mount Up With  
Wings as Eagles ...  
Isaiah 40:31*

## *Wings of Eagles*

**Bill Bennett**

[wcbenn47@verizon.net](mailto:wcbenn47@verizon.net)

### **"Opportunity's Door"**

*"Be an opener of doors."*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

In my childhood home we had a secretary desk with a drop down cover cum writing top. The desk's finish was marred by a large "Z." In my zeal to leave the mark of Zorro around the house, I had not realized the insect repellent would melt the finish on the desk. I think the desk went to the final estate sale with that "Z" still in place.

In my early years I remember seeing my father poring over scraps of paper at that desk. In answer to my query, he told me he was trying to determine if he could afford to return to university for his Doctorate degree. Dad was a high school and junior college science teacher. With a family of six and a mortgage, his salary reached, but not by much. He eventually decided that he could not afford to go after his doctorate. Too much life had intervened since he had completed his Master of Science Degree. That door was closed.

Twenty years later I was an action officer in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ranger Battalion. One afternoon I received a telephone call from the English Department at West Point. The major asked, "We want to know if you are still interested in returning to School to teach English." My response was, "Sir, I believe my career goals have changed since graduation." I closed that door.

Another ten years passed. I was a major, promotable to lieutenant colonel, still hoping to be selected for battalion command. I approached a Colonel whose opinion I valued to seek his advice on my quest. In answer he tapped the gold oak leaves of a major on my right collar and said,

*"That is the last merit promotion you will ever receive. From now on too many other factors come into play. You might not be released from one assignment in order to attend a school or accept a promising assignment. Family considerations might come into play. There is always something."*

As it turned out, my chances of being selected for battalion command had been deep sixed well before that conversation. Too much life had already intervened and precluded my selection. That door was closed.

Life is like that. Life opens some doors and closes others. Before you realize it many doors have closed, often as a direct result our decisions or non-decisions.

Many doors will be closed during our journey. But, there is one door that is easily opened regardless of how many other doors have been closed. Christ taught us, *"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened."* (Matthew 7:7, 8) If we repent of our sins and accept Christ as our Lord and Savior, the door to eternal salvation will opened.

De Oppresso Liber

**Bill**





## French military using winged warriors to hunt down rogue drones.

Following incidents of drones flying over the presidential palace and restricted military sites – along with the deadly 2015 Paris terror attacks the French Air Force has trained four golden eagles to intercept and destroy rogue drones.

Aptly named d'Artaguan, Athos, Porthos and Aramis the four birds of prey have been honing their attack skills at the Mont-de-Marsan in southwest France since mid 2016. A French army falconer works with the golden eagles as part of a military training for combat against drones.

A drone means food for the birds. Now they automatically go after them. The use of hunting birds, normally falcons and goshawks, by militaries around the globe is common practice in the fight to scare other critters away from the runways and so cut the risk of accidents during take-off or landing.

But it wasn't until 2015 when the Dutch started using bald eagles to intercept drones that other militaries started to see the benefit of these winged warriors.

The French bred the four golden eagles, three males and one female, using artificial insemination since eagles are a protected species and harvesting wild eggs is strictly forbidden.

They chose the golden eagle because of the bird's hooked beak and sharp eyesight. Also weighing in around 11 pounds, the birds are in a similar weight class as the drones they are sent to destroy and clocking in at a top speed of 50 miles per hour, with the capability of spotting its target from over a mile away, the eagles are deft hunters.

To protect the eagles from drone blades and any explosive device that might be attached, the French military designed mittens of leather and Kevlar, an anti-blast material, to protect the bird's talons. The birds are taught to attack in a straight line before graduating to diving from heights.



A golden eagle carries a flying drone away during a military exercise on February 10, 2017.

Soon they will be patrolling the skies and could be deployed at airports and special events, such as political summits and soccer tournaments.

While an initial progress report on the eagle's capabilities is due in June, French officials say the results are promising and the French Air Force already expects four more eagles to join the fleet by summer.

February 18, 2017. Reuters/Regis Duvignau. RTX30HM1





## 46th Special Forces Thailand

The following is provided by SFA Chapter 3 member James "Pete" Peters, CW4 (ret), who is a regular attendee to our monthly meetings and functions.

Pete writes:

The coaster must have been an error in printing these up. Below were our deployment areas:

Co D 1<sup>st</sup> SFG (A) later re-designated the 46<sup>th</sup> SFC (A) had its HQ and C Team (C-401//4601 at Camp Pawai, Lopburi Thailand (Later moved to Fort Narai, Lopburi Thailand). The B-teams were widely dispersed throughout Thailand

B-team, B-410//B-4610, with A Teams was located at Nam Pung Dam near Sakon Nakhon

B-Team 420//B-4620 with A-teams would build Camp Nong Taku near Pak Chong in central Thailand (B-Team HQ remained in Pak Chong-A Teams at Nong Taku.

After US Special Forces Thailand left the country in 1974 the Joint Casualty Resolution Center (JCRC) used Nong Taku as a training/launch site.

B-Team 430//B-4630 would build Camp Carroll near Trang along the Thai border with Malaysia.

We had an additional B team and associated/attached units at Kanchanburi which was also the location of the Thai Infantry Center. We trained the Thai Regiment and then a Thai Division for Vietnam there. Later the Lao and Thai volunteers for Project 404 were trained there as well.

We also had a reinforced Task Force at NKP who operated Mobile Launch Team 4 in support of the 5<sup>th</sup> SFGA (SOG), inserting/recovering 5th SFG(A) teams working the Trail.

But, bottom line B 420 re-designated 4620 was never assigned to Sakon Nakhon.







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DAY	CRUISE	PORTS	ARRIVE	DEPART
SAT	AT SEA	MIAMI, FLORIDA (EMBARK)		4:00 PM
SUN	AT SEA			
MON	AT SEA			
TUE		ST. THOMAS, US VIRGIN ISLANDS	8:00 AM	6:00 PM
WED		TORTOLA, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS	7:00 AM	3:00 PM
THU	AT SEA			
FRI		NASSAU, BAHAMAS	12:00 PM	7:00 PM
SAT		MIAMI, FLORIDA (DISEMBARK)	8:00 AM	



**PRICING:**  
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**PAYMENT SCHEDULE:**  
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FINAL BALANCE DUE BY: 07-31-17

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EMAIL: CSCHUTT@TLTRAVELAGENTS.COM  
WEBSITE: WWW.TRAVELLEADERS.COM/FORTWORTHTX**



## Veterans Affairs

**Statement from DAV Washington Executive Director Garry Augustine on passage of the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 posted on August 23, 2017 <https://www.dav.org>**

For far too long, veterans have faced unnecessary and unacceptable delays within the current VA disability appeals system, on average taking between three to five years—sometimes longer—to complete. Passage of the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 into law today marks an important step forward in creating a more timely and accurate system for processing veterans' appeals. We believe the law enacted today will help minimize the frustration and undue burdens that veterans and their families experience when caught in a lengthy appeals process. This critical legislation will ensure that the new appeals system provides veterans with multiple options to challenge unfavorable decisions, ultimately leading to quicker and more favorable outcomes while also protecting veterans' due process rights.

As veterans disability claims and appeals advocacy is the hallmark service provided by DAV, we have long called for meaningful reform of the appeals system as the backlog continued to grow. Since March of 2016, we have worked alongside Congress, VA, the Board of Veterans Appeals and many other stakeholders to develop and refine the legislation signed today. The Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 is a testament to how vital such collaborative partnerships are in crafting reform measures that meet the needs of all parties involved—most especially the needs of disabled veterans.

DAV applauds the members of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, leaders in the VA and our partners in the veteran community whose cooperation has allowed this law to come to fruition. We appreciate VA Secretary David Shulkin's commitment to ensuring veterans were given a voice in the reform process, and we thank Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson and Ranking Member Jon Tester, along with House Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Phil Roe and Ranking.



**Forever G.I. Bill The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2017, H.R. 3218, passed by the House and Senate was signed by the President on August 16, 2017. Also known as the Forever G.I. Bill, the legislation improves provisions in the existing G.I. Bill and provides more flexibility for using educational benefits. The measure contains a number of provisions that specifically impact disabled veterans and their families, including:**

- ☐ Increases monthly Dependents Educational Assistance (DEA) payments by about 40 percent effective October 1, 2018 (note: effective August 1, 2018, DEA decreases from 45 to 36 months to be consistent with other VA educational programs);
- ☐ Eliminates the 15-year limit for using the G.I. Bill, allowing for the use of the educational benefits for life, for those





who were discharged after January 1, 2013;

□ Grants full G.I. Bill benefits to Purple Heart Recipients, regardless of total time in service effective August 1, 2018;

□ Provides G.I. Bill eligibility for reservists undergoing medical care for active duty injuries effective August 1, 2018;

□ Restores used G.I. bill benefits to enrolled students whose school permanently closes after January 1, 2015, effective November 14, 2017; and

□ Allows veterans who are National Guard members and Reservists who are receiving Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (VR&E) benefits, to "pause" their eligibility so their time under the VR&E program is not negatively affected while called up for active duty orders. This provision takes effect immediately.



### **Wounded Warrior Project: For your information**

Sen. Grassley releases report on Wounded Warrior Project spending. The charity had said it spent 80 cents of each donor dollar on programs for veterans, but Grassley says that included donated media, advertisements and "educational" fundraising solicitations to reach that number.

Senator Grassley found the charity:

- lacked "sufficient policies and procedures to manage the organization..."
- misled donors about more than \$65 million placed in a long-term trust that had not yet been spent on veterans.
- spent "excessive amounts" of money on travel, as well as fundraising and staff events.

And Grassley's nearly 500-page report to the Senate Judiciary and Finance Committees found Wounded Warrior Project was spending only about 68 not 80 percent of donor dollars on programs for veterans. CEO Steven Nardizzi was fired last year, along with nearly the entire executive suite of the charity. "I think it's going to help in the long run to deliver exactly what the program ought to do for veterans," Grassley said.



All Veterans articles come from: Department of Florida Disabled American Veterans, Sun City Chapter 110.

Links to changes to TRICARE.

<http://www.military.com/military-report/changes-coming-to-tricare.html#.Wamzmkk-bu28.facebook>



## CHAPTER LX TEAMHOUSE



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*Heads Up!*

*"Listen  
up, you  
knuckleheads.*



*Be there. Be Square!"*

**13 October 2017—Chapter LX  
meeting, 1730, ALP 139, Tampa,  
FL.**

**9 November 2017—USSOCOM  
Veterans Day Ceremony, TBD.**

**10 November 2017— Chapter LX  
meeting, 1730, ALP 139, Tampa,  
FL.**

**11 November 2017—Veterans Day  
Parade, Port Richey, 1500.**

**18 November 2017— Chapter LX  
Sporting Clays Tournament,  
FishHawk Sporting Clays, 0800.**

**2 December 2017—Chapter LX  
Christmas Party, La Teresita,  
details to follow.**

**8 December 2017—Chapter LX  
meeting, 1730, ALP 139, Tampa  
FL.**