

A BRIEF HISTORY

OF THE

HALIFAX AREA CHAPTER — MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (MOAA) [Formerly TROA]

By Donald C. Gaby

In 1983, the Volusia County chapter of the The Retired Officers of America (TROA) applied to the National organization to form a second TROA chapter in the Halifax area. Some 265 TROA members lived east of I-95 and filed to form the new chapter, and the old chapter could be located in DeLand. Approval was received some three months later.

Halifax Area Chapter of The Retired Officers Association (TROA)

At the organizational meeting the following slate of officers was selected to serve the new chapter for its first year.

President	LTC Charles Whalen, USA
1 st V.P.	MAJ William Attick, USA
2 nd V.P.	MAJ Arthur Hagemeier, USAF
Secretary	LTC H. Wade Fowler, USA
Treasurer	CWO William Etheridge, USN
Chaplain	LTC Arthur H. Reede, USA

The Charter banquet was held at the Elks Lodge in Ormond Beach on 15 September 1984, the slate of officers being installed by a National officer from Washington. It has been the policy of this chapter to have only nine meetings each year with no meetings during the months of June, July, and August. Officers are elected in December and installed in January, normally serving one year terms. Three elected directors serve staggered terms of three years.

During the ensuing years the Chapter has varied from the original number to the current membership of 160 as of 31 March 2005. The Challenger Award, our premier presentation, is made each year to the outstanding Army, Navy, and Air Force cadets at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University. Succeeding years have seen continuing increase in support of all three ROTC detachments at ERAU, including scholarships and medals presented to selected cadets. Medals are also presented to selected cadets in JROTC units at three area high schools.

THE ABOVE INTRODUCTION IS REPRINTED JUST AS IT APPEARED
IN THE MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY FOR 2007 AND EARLIER YEARS.

Over the years the Chapter has tried a variety of fund raising projects to provide funds for Chapter activities. We have been active in the Florida Council of Chapters, and several of our members have served as Area Vice Presidents and other State Offices.

The earliest Officers Call is from 1987. May 1987 of that year was notable in two ways. The Armed Forces Day Annual Banquet and Ball were sponsored by the Navy League, Air Force Association, The Retired Officers Association, Reserve Officers Association, and Military Order of World Wars; and it honored Maj. Gen. Donald O. Aldridge, USAF, commander of the 1st Strategic Aerospace Division, Vandenberg AFB, California. It was held at the "Top of the Surf" Holiday Inn Surfside, Daytona Beach, with Joe Mose providing "Big Band Sounds".

On 28 May a Special Luncheon was held at Aunt Catfish's restaurant for the Induction of Officers for 1987-88, Major Bill Attick, USA(Ret) as president. On this occasion the first Challenger Sabre Awards were made to the outstanding Air Force and Army ROTC cadets graduating from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in memory of the Crew of the Shuttle Challenger lost 28 January 1986. Stainless steel sabers en scabbard with accompanying citations were presented to newly commissioned 2nd Lt. Peter Bristol, USAF and 2nd Lt. Alan Williams, USA. Monthly meetings were then suspended until September.

The Officers Call for September 1990 shows Lt.Col. Daniel B. Redner, USA as president. He reported attending the 13th Annual Convention of the Florida Council of Chapters in Naples in June. Among six officers welcomed to membership were Vice Admiral John J. Shanahan and Brig. General James R. McCarthy. Admiral Shanahan was the guest speaker for that month's meeting. The local Air Force Association (AFA) chapter is named after Gen. McCarthy. TROA could boast over 12,000 members in Florida.

The first Gulf War was progressing well in Iraq in 1991. At the start of 1991 the local TROA chapter had 261 members of whom 74 attended the February luncheon. In May the Armed Forces Day dinner/dance was planned at the Hilton. The year brought a series of outstanding speakers to meetings. Once again the local chapter presented Annual Sabre Awards to recognize two outstanding graduating cadets from the Army and Air Force R.O.T.C. units at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University (ERAU), whose president was formerly superintendent of the Air Force Academy. These Challenger Sabre Awards began in 1986 after the STS Challenger disaster as a fitting recognition of the brave astronauts who gave their lives. The cost of a saber was initially \$165. A saber mounted in a glass case is on permanent display at ERAU. Junior TROA ROTC awards were also presented to the outstanding cadets from both Mainland and Spruce Creek High Schools. The year ended with the TROA Christmas Formal at the Palmetto Club where one of the Sabre Awards was presented to a female cadet, just commissioned, for the first time.

May 1992 was the 50th anniversary of the WACs of whom some 40,000 trained in Daytona Beach during World War II.

Money for the Sabre scholarship awards was earned by selling beer from tents set up for Skyfest at the Daytona municipal airport. In 1992 TROA had the responsibility for these and planned five tents, three to be manned by TROA and two by the Air Force Association (AFA). This year windy weather prevailed but not as bad as the year previous when blowing rain brought flooding and watered down beer. These events lasted two days and TROA's share of the proceeds came to about \$880. With the threat that Skyfest might be discontinued, the Sabre Awards Program was dropped for 1992-93. However, these were resumed in cooperation with the Air Force Association (AFA). Manning the beer tents was both fun and a money maker for TROA. There were benefits for the volunteers as well, such as reserved free parking and free passes.

In 1993 it was noted that the new Congress was more diverse and made up of fewer men or women who had served in uniform. An immediate issue of concern was whether gay men should serve in the military. TROA's policy was to preserve the status quo (banning homosexuals from the armed forces) and members were encouraged to contact their Congressional representatives about it because Pres. Clinton proposed lifting that ban for acknowledged homosexuals. Other political issues of concern were the line item veto, changes to the health policies for military beneficiaries, and the COLA. The previous year's decision to discontinue the Sabre Awards was reversed, and the president of ERAU made the awards to the two top USA and USAF ROTC cadets. The year featured a number of outstanding speakers in various fields at monthly meetings. It ended with the TROA Christmas Formal at the Palmetto Club in December.

TROA board meetings over the years have been held at the City Island Library with appreciation occasionally expressed by a gift to the Friends of the Library. Meetings have also been held at Daytona's City Hall, Pelican Bay Country Club, and at banks and other venues.

During the 1990s the TROA continued active in many ways. Efforts were made to influence legislation favorable to military active duty and retired personnel, and to oppose legislation that might be damaging. Such efforts included preservation of a fair COLA, medical care, pharmacy service, and others. TROA representatives were continually meeting with Congressional staffers and committees. Florida and National TROA conventions were attended by one or more local representative(s). Board meetings attended to business while monthly luncheon meetings usually featured an outstanding speaker. Annual Challenger Awards were made to the top graduating Army and Air Force ROTC cadets at ERAU with TROA Medals also to those units, as well as Medals to the JROTC units at Mainland and Spruce Creek High Schools. There were also social gatherings, and special social events included the Armed Forces Day and Christmas Balls. The Palmetto Club was a favorite venue. Good times were enjoyed by all. During the months of June through August meetings generally were not held.

In May 1995 an article by Tom Tucker of the News-Journal called attention to the deteriorating condition of the beautiful War Memorial that once stood proudly in Riverside Park but was moved to the south end of Tusawilla Park. An effort was mounted to restore the monument and have it moved back to Riverside Park. Members

were encouraged to write the mayor, councilmen, etc. By May 1996 it was decided that to try to move the Memorial from its present position would cause severe damage due to its state of ill repair. It was recommended that the Memorial remain in place with extensive repairs to be performed. That has been done.

In 1996 the TROA was the fourth largest veterans organization in the country with 400,000 members, 50 state councils, 460 autonomous chapters, an annual budget of \$11.1 million, and 83 paid employees at its headquarters in Alexandria, VA.

In May 1997 initial planning for a TROA Wives Club began under the leadership of Pat Daley. Nine ladies attended the first organizational meeting.

In 1998 the Chapter contributed to the State's Florida Korean War Memorial Fund, the Memorial to be erected in Tallahassee (it was dedicated in December 1999). A concern that year was that the nation's combined force structure (Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines) had fallen below the levels before the attack on Pearl Harbor. With no Sky Fest scheduled at the airport, the Chapter arranged to set up a food booth at the Speedway for the Pepsi 400 race in order to earn money for the Scholarship Fund.

In October 1998 the Board of Directors authorized the development of a history of the Halifax Area Chapter of TROA and members were asked to check their files for copies of the Officers Call from 1984, pictures, letters, obituaries, honors, awards, etc. Carl Epting was the key person. In December 2000, Irv Morrill took over as Chapter historian.

Over the closing years of the 20th century, TROA monthly luncheon meetings featured many outstanding speakers from many parts of the community and visitors; such as: Bob Vogel, Florida Highway Patrol; State Attorney John Tanner; News-Journal columnist John E. Evans; and distinguished officers from all branches of the Armed forces. Meetings were held at Country Clubs, the Indigo Conference Center, the Halifax River Yacht Club, and fine restaurants

Presentation of the chapter's ROTC awards was always an important and pleasant part of chapter activities. These presentations took place at chapter meetings, and at functions of the ERAU ROTA Units such as Pass-In-Review and Awards Ceremonies. They were presented by the Professors of Military Science or by invited distinguished persons. These awards included:

Halifax Area Chapter TROA Medal to one outstanding cadet from the Army and Air Force ROTC detachments at ERAU who exhibited excellent potential, awarded in the fall semester.

Halifax Area Chapter TROA Scholarship (with certificate) to one cadet from the Army and Air Force with a 3.0 grade point average and outstanding leadership qualities, awarded in the spring and fall semesters.

National TROA Medal to one cadet from the Army and Air Force ROTC detachments at ERAU who exhibits excellence in academic and military matters and exceptional leadership potential, awarded in the spring semester.

Halifax Area Challenger Award to the most outstanding cadet from the Army and Air Force ROTC detachments at ERAU who represents high potential for military leadership, awarded during the spring semester.

Besides these awards to ROTC cadets at ERAU, the Chapter also provided TROA Medals to five local high school JROTC units.

Tricare For Life (TFL) was passed by the Congress in 2001 to the great pleasure of many members. This was one of the pieces of legislation that TROA supported by many individual letters to our Congressional representatives, National working with Congressional staff, and other means. It demonstrated the power of numbers of active members.

During 2002 the National organization received a majority vote from the membership approving a name change to MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA —effective 1 January 2003. As a result of this action the name of our chapter was changed to the HALIFAX AREA CHAPTER – MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA. A formal Charter of Affiliation for Halifax Area Chapter was received dated 1 May 2003 and signed by the President, Vice Admiral Norbert R. Ryan, Jr. USN (Ret).

The May 2004 Officers Call noted that the Challenger Award display in the library at ERAU was being redone to include the Navy ROTC unit. In addition, the plaque with the winner's names on it has been enlarged to include the Navy and also provide space for additional Army and Air Force names for the next 11 years.

In the Officers Call for October 2005 the president noted with concern the difficulty in getting members to fill positions such as chapter president, 1st and 2nd vice-presidents, and others. The vice-presidents especially are expected to move up the ladder to become president in time. Scholarship award ceremonies at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University were announced. These awards were then \$500 to each cadet selected from the three ROTC units. The annual Christmas party at the Palmetto Club was scheduled.

The year 2006 brought a new location for the Chapter's monthly meetings at the original Halifax River Yacht Club — built on pilings over the river and over a century old. A new and much larger facility would soon be built over the former parking lot and would serve even better. In April the Armed Forces Day celebration was sponsored by the Air Force Association and held at the Spruce Creek Fly-In. The guest speaker was much decorated Col. Victoria A. Leignadier, USA, daughter of our own Secretary-Treasurer Rita Leignadier, USMS.

January 2007 brought our luncheon speaker from MOAA National Headquarters in Alexandria, VA. Col. Robert F. Norton, USA(Ret) was Deputy Director for Government Relations and gave a timely report on MOAA's goals with a general briefing on the importance of local chapters and councils. In the spring a new program began — serving coffee and donuts at the VA clinic. "Donut Dollies" started it off with 150 cups of coffee and 12 dozen donuts. This program continues early each 4th Thursday morning of the month. It is led by Col. Ron Giampietro, USAF(Ret) and Emo Murphy, widow of Lt.Col. Chuck Murphy, USA. On 29 March the MOAA presented awards to Army ROTC cadets. Cadet William J. Walker was the scholarship winner. Cadet William L. Jagnow received the Challenger Award, and Cadet Kristin R. Yanpaglia received the MO ROTC medal. The summer hiatus with no luncheon meetings in June, July, and August was continued.

The fall brought another outstanding speaker, known to many who served in Vietnam or saw the movie "Good Morning, Vietnam". Adrian Cronauer was the irreverent young Air Force DJ who began his daily program on the Armed Forces Network radio broadcast with that salutation. He had become Special Assistant to the Director of the Defense POW/Missing Personnel Office in the Department of Defense. His talk was both highly entertaining and informative. This was a joint meeting with the Flagler Chapter of MOAA held at the Halifax Plantation Golf Club. The year ended with the annual Christmas Gala at the Palmetto Club.

As 2009 began, MOAA chapter board meetings continued to be held the first Tuesday of every month at the City Island Library, with everyone invited. Monthly luncheon meetings continued at the Halifax River Yacht Club. These usually featured an outstanding speaker from the community or visiting. The summer hiatus during June through August also continued. The Christmas Gala was again at the Palmetto Club, but consideration began for a less expensive function at a different venue..

A continuing monthly function, led by Col. Ron Giampietro, USAF and Emo Murphy, was serving coffee and donuts the 4th Wednesday of every month at the VA clinic where several officers and ladies participate. It is much appreciated and enjoyable. In July was held the annual picnic and ball game at the Jackie Robinson Stadium. This year it was held jointly with the Flagler Chapter.

Speaker for the January meeting was Pete Jacobs, Commander of the Florida Wing of the Commemorative Air Force who flies his L-39 in air shows throughout North America. Speaker for February was Daytona Beach Chief of Police Michael Chitwood. He came to Daytona in 2006 after a long career in Pennsylvania and Oklahoma. For March the speaker was CPT Robert O. Brewster, a highly decorated former Army helicopter pilot. For April it was Senior Chief Boatswain's Mate Newman Cantrell, commander of the USCG station at Ponce Inlet. Equally interesting speakers continued throughout the year, with the usual hiatus during the warmer summer months.

A highlight toward the end of the year 2009 was receiving the "Twenty-fifth Anniversary Affiliate Award to Halifax Area Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America".

To be continued

Appendix A — Past presidents

1984-86	LTC Charles F. Whalen, USA
1986-87	MAJ Wm. E. Attick, USA
1988-89	CWO Wm. P. Etheridge, USN
1989-90	CPT Martin J. Grennan, USA
1990-91	LTC Daniel B. Redner, USA
1991-92	" "
1992-93	LCDR Jesse L. McKee, USN
1993-94	LTC John F. Cascio, USA
1994-95	COL Ray H. Coley, USAF
1995-96	COL Robert M. Piper, USA
1996-97	CPT Claude Daley, Jr., USA
1997-98	LTC Charles K. Murphy, USA
1998-99	CDR Irving E. Morrill, USN
2000-01	LTC C. Earl Friesel, USAF
2001-02	LTC John W. King, USA
2002-03	COL David Cummock, USAF
2003-04	LTC Charles K. Murphy, USA
2004-05	" "
2005-06	" "
2006-07	LTC H. Wade Fowler, USA
2007-08	MAJ John A. Ernst, USAF
2008-09	LTC C. Earl Friesel, USAF
2009-10	CDR Janet K. Marnane, USN

Col. Ron Gianpetero 2 yr. USAF

Col Vicki L. 1 yr. Army

Capt Mark Leary. 2 yr. USN.

CWO2 Pierre Lewis 3 yr. USMC

Col Kim Remers. USAF

Appendix B — Membership & Dues

<u>Year</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Dues</u>	<u>AUX Members</u>	<u>Dues</u>
1988	272			
1991	261	\$10		
1992	260	\$10		
1993	209	\$10		
1994		\$12		
1995	194			
1997			9+	\$6
1998		\$12		
2000	185	\$12		\$6
2001	221*	\$12		\$6

*includes AUX & Honorary members(2)

DCG note = Feb08 Officer's Call says the BOD discussed publication of a book of history and the people who have been members.

DCG7Feb08+18Jun09