



FALCONS LANDING CHAPTER



THE FALCON FLYER

DECEMBER 2023



THE FALCON FLYER is published quarterly by the Falcons Chapter of MOAA and distributed to all members, as well as placed on the Falcons Landing MOAA website, www.falconsmoaa.org . POC for the newsletter is the Editor, COL (Ret) Bob Manning, Rmanning@aol.com.

SUPPORT OF MOAA NATIONAL

MOAA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit veterans’ association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors. MOAA’s greatest mission is "to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through the tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our nation's capital." Support MOAA's advocacy efforts by going to www.moaa.org/takeaction.

The Falcons Landing Chapter is one of more than 400-plus local organizations affiliated with National MOAA and is a nonpartisan, nonprofit veterans' association. Our chapter provides programs to support those who are serving; those who have served; and those who have survived, while placing special focus on community support.

We support the national organization through support of legislative priorities and “Advocacy in Action” and are active in our community supporting three JROTC programs, helping recovering and needy veterans, supporting surviving spouses in our continuing care facilities and providing speakers to community service organizations.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUPPORT OF MOAA NATIONAL	PAGE 2	SUPPORT CHAPTER PROGRAMS	PAGE 13
CHAPTER PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE	PAGE 3	MOAA BICENTENNIAL MEETING	PAGE 14-15
MISSION STATEMENT	PAGE 4	GATHERING 2023	PAGE 16
FACT SHEET 2024	PAGE 5	GATHERING: FRANCIS GARY POWERS	PAGE 17-19
MOAA MEMBERSHIP	PAGE 6	GATHERING: MARSHALL/CHURCHILL	PAGE 20-22
NEW MEMBERS/IN MEMORIUM	PAGE 7	GATHERING: USS HOUSTON	PAGE 23-25
AUXILIARY OF MOAA CHAPTER	PAGE 8-9	CHAPTER EVENTS AND SCHEDULE	PAGE 26
VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS	PAGE 10	OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS	PAGE 27
LEGISLATIVE REPORTS AND PRIORITIES	PAGE 11	FALCONS LANDING CHAPTER WEBSITE	PAGE 28
MOAA’s ADVOCACY’S PRIORITIES	PAGE 12		



CHAPTER PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

So the Holidays are now over and we begin the new year in the cold. Yes, it's still a few months before we return to the links. Ah, the wait for warm weather, spring, and baseball – and of course golf! And with the new year 2024 comes a few new officers/directors on our Chapter Board – Richard Searles, Chapter Treasurer, Buck Coates, Membership Chairman, and Don Saari, Public Affairs. Welcome, gentlemen. Tom Owens and Max Johnson have stepped down and we thank them for their long service to our Chapter. We're still looking for a replacement for Genny Pustay as Chapter Secretary and, of course, a new Chapter President to replace yours truly whose two-year term as President ended in December. I will continue to serve as President until someone is identified to become the new Leader of our Chapter.

As we head into 2024, we will look for new opportunities to serve our Falcons Landing community and the veteran population and their families in Loudoun County. Our signature program, the Loudoun Veterans and Family Support (LVFS) program that we conduct in partnership with the Community Lutheran Church (CLC) has been very successful over eight years now and indeed has expanded to include participation from additional Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) in the County. We will continue to work with the Loudoun County Veterans Coordinator and the Loudoun County Community Veterans Engagement Board (LCCVEB) this year to identify new ways to make our veterans support efforts more expansive and effective.

Additionally, we hope to identify a new program or event by which we can reach out to the community to share the wealth of knowledge and experience, military or otherwise, of our membership. Perhaps we will target the youth of our community expanding the relationships we already have with the officers-in-training (the cadets) of the three JROTC programs we are connected with in the County. There will be more to come about this later.

We recently lost two of our exemplary Chapter members who have served us for many years – Don McCarthy who was our Public Affairs Chairman and Don Hughes whom we honored last year as one of our esteemed Chapter centenarians on Veterans Day. We fondly remember each of these patriots who were lifelong MOAA members in the true sense of the word.

So let us begin 2024 with a renewed sense of purpose and dedication to our noble mission. I wish you all Happy New Year and may our Chapter continue to prosper – and continue to serve.



*Never Stop Serving
Phil Walsh, President*



*THE FALCONS LANDING CHAPTER
OF MOAA WILL ACTIVELY
SUPPORT*

**THOSE WHO
ARE SERVING**

**THOSE WHO
HAVE SERVED**

**THOSE WHO
HAVE
SURVIVED**

**MISSION
STATEMENT**



FALCONS LANDING CHAPTER
MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
20540 FALCONS LANDING CIRCLE, #P1
POTOMAC FALLS, VIRGINIA 20165



FACT SHEET 2024

[The Military Officers Association of America \(MOAA\)](#) is the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. It is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization.

[The Falcons Landing Chapter \(FLC\)](#) is one of more than 400-plus local organizations affiliated with National MOAA and is a member of the Virginia Council of Chapters. The Chapter is located at Falcons Landing, a Life Plan Community which is operated by the Air Force Retired Officers Community (AFROC). It is the only MOAA Chapter in Loudoun County. The Chapter is also a member of the [Virginia Council of Chapters, MOAA](#)

The mission of the Chapter is to provide programs to support: *those who are serving; those who have served; and those who have survived*, while placing special focus on community support.

Chapter membership is open to those who hold, or have ever held, a warrant or commission in any component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force, Public Health Service, NOAA, and their surviving spouses.

As of December 31, 2023, there were 139 Premium Members and 83 Auxiliary Chapter Members for a total of 222 Chapter Members.

The most significant, ongoing program for the Chapter is the multifaceted local support to veterans and their families. The Chapter established the *Loudoun Veterans and Family Support (LVFS)* program in partnership with Community Lutheran Church of Sterling, providing financial and general support to Loudoun County Veterans needing assistance.

The Chapter strongly supports the [Loudoun County Community Veterans Engagement Board \(LCCVEB\)](#), whose purpose is promoting a healthy and enriched lifestyle for Loudoun County veterans and their family members through community outreach and advocacy on Loudoun County veterans' issues.

The Chapter sponsors the *Gathering*, a program of distinguished guest speakers for monthly presentations on current and past world and government affairs.

The Chapter has established a *Speakers' Bureau*. This initiative is in keeping with the chapter's goal of continuing to inform the American public about their military establishment. There are currently 16 topics and speakers available for presentation to the local community.

Four times a year the Chapter supports the *AdoptaPlatoon Soldier Support Effort®* dedicated to serving deployed United States Service Men and Women by providing ongoing care packages to improve quality of life and raising morale for those serving overseas in the Army, Air Force, Navy, Marine Corp, Coast Guard and Special Forces.

The Chapter supports three *Junior ROTC* units in our area of responsibility: the Air Force JROTC unit at Chantilly High School in Fairfax, the Navy JROTC unit at Loudoun County High School in Leesburg, and the Army JROTC unit at South Lakes High School in Reston. The Chapter President and Director of JROTC Programs present scholarships to selected cadets at each school. In addition, the Lieutenant General John Pustay Scholarship is awarded to a selected cadet at Chantilly High School.

Memorial and Veterans Day Programs are presented each year at Falcons Landing.

NEVER STOP SERVING

MOAA MEMBERSHIP

BUCK COATES



REGULAR CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY

Per the chapter's bylaws -- the membership of the chapter shall be composed of men and women who are serving or have served on active duty or in one of the reserve components as a commissioned or warrant officer in one of the seven US Uniformed Services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Public Health Service) or in one of the National Guard or Reserve Components thereof.

REGULAR CHAPTER MEMBERS (ON/OFF CAMPUS) – 139

CHAPTER AUXILIARY MEMBERS -- 83

Surviving Spouses – 62

Spouses of current chapter members – 9

Others -- 12

TOTAL MOAA COMMUNITY AT FALCONS LANDING -- 222!

We invite and encourage you to join the Falcons Landing Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), the preeminent organization protecting the rights and benefits of service members past, current, and future. The local chapters perform similar services at the community and county level, and they educate and inform members on important issues facing veterans and their families. We are proud that our Chapter has been awarded MOAA's highest-level 5-Star Chapter rating – and we ask you to join us in perpetuating that honor. As a member you will receive our newsletter electronically via email. If you don't have email access, we will send a print copy to your mailing address.

When you join our Chapter, the only one in Loudoun County, you'll add your voice to those of the members of the Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC), a statewide network of Virginia chapters.

If you have interest in or questions about joining MOAA's select group of professionals at the national and/or chapter levels, please contact LTC (Ret) Buck Coates, (703) 624-4613, buck.coates@comcast.net, or fill out the Contact Form in the Contact Tab of the Falcons Landing Chapter website at falconsmoaa.org. You can also find the membership application for MOAA National/Chapter at www.falconsmoaa.org/membership

NEW MEMBERS

CAPT DAVID TUMA, USN

MAJGEN RAYMUND O'MARA, USAF

LT HARVEY SNYDER, USN

CDR BUDDY EVERAGE, USN

LTG BILL CAMPBELL, USA

LTGEN JAN HULY, USMC

CPT RICHARD VAN WAGONER,

LTC DON LABRIE, USA

IN MEMORIUM

DONALD MCCARTHY
SEPTEMBER 26, 1934 – NOVEMBER 10, 2023

CHRIS MAGINNISS
NOVEMBER 29, 1936 – NOVEMBER 18, 2023



FALCONS LANDING MOAA CHAPTER AUXILIARY



The Chapter Auxiliary is established to assist the Chapter in executing its purpose. As stated in the Chapter Bylaws, the purpose of the MOAA Chapter is to promote the purposes and objectives of MOAA and, specifically, to actively support:

- Those who are Serving
- Those who have Served
- Those who have Survived

Further, while the Auxiliary is a separate, self-governed organization that shares the same purposes and objectives of the Chapter, it is established specifically to directly support the Chapter's programs and initiatives.

The MOAA Chapter Auxiliary is the Go-To Volunteer Organization at Falcons Landing

FALCONS LANDING MOAA CHAPTER AUXILIARY (CONTINUED)

MEMBERSHIP IN THE AUXILIARY

THREE CATEGORIES OF MEMBERSHIP ARE SPECIFIED IN THE BYLAWS:

- SURVIVING SPOUSES OF REGULAR CHAPTER MEMBERS – AUTOMATIC MEMBERSHIP ON THE PASSING OF A REGULAR CHAPTER MEMBER
- SPOUSES OF REGULAR CHAPTER MEMBERS – UPON REQUEST/APPLICATION FROM A SPOUSE OF A LIVING REGULAR CHAPTER MEMBER
- OTHER INTERESTED RESIDENTS OF FALCONS LANDING – UPON REQUEST/APPLICATION FROM A NON-MOAA AFFILIATED RESIDENT OF FALCONS LANDING WHO IS INTERESTED IN ASSISTING WITH THE AUXILIARY'S PROGRAM OF VOLUNTEER WORK.

MORE ABOUT THE AUXILIARY

- AUXILIARY MEMBERS PAY NO CHAPTER DUES
- AUXILIARY RECRUITMENT LETTERS SENT OUT TWICE YEARLY
- VOLUNTEER OUTREACH AVAILABLE IN INDEPENDENT LIVING, THE JOHNSON CENTER, AND WEST FALLS CENTER TO INCLUDE: VISITATION, COFFEE/MEAL VISITS, EXERCISE, BINGO, MAIL DELIVERY, NEWSPAPER DELIVERY, ASSISTANCE IN 2L INTERACTIVE PROGRAMS, HAPPY HOURS, MUSIC, WEEKEND COVERAGE OF RECEPTION DESK IN TJC
- TYPICAL ON-SITE VOLUNTEER EFFORT – APPROXIMATELY 200 HOURS/MONTH



VCOC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

IMPROVE LEGISLATIVE EFFECTIVENESS,
NATIONAL AND STATE ^[L]_[SEP]

IMPROVE RECRUITING - MEMBERS AND
LEADERS. WHAT IS IN IT FOR THE MEMBER?

ACTIVE PUBLIC AFFAIRS - SEEKING TO HOW
WE COMMUNICATE INTERNALLY AND
EXTERNALLY WITH ALL MEMBERS,
IRRESPECTIVE OF GENERATION. ^[L]_[SEP]

IMPROVE VITALITY AND EXCELLENCE OF
CHAPTERS

THE VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS (VCOC) OF THE
MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA (MOAA)
CONSISTS OF 16 MOAA CHAPTERS.

THE VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS MEETS QUARTERLY
IN 2024: JANUARY, APRIL, JULY AND OCTOBER.

CHECK OUT THE *CRIER NEWSLETTER* AT
MOAAVCOC.ORG

LEGISLATIVE REPORT INFORMATION AND PRIORITIES

Periodically, MOAA will lobby Congress to take legislative action to preserve our retiree benefits. The probability of favorable legislative action is in direct proportion to the number of voters who register support. MOAA sometimes includes postcards and letters in its magazine (Military Officer) for us to sign and mail to our representatives (identified for us). The MOAA Newsletter may also include an online access to act. It is imperative that we do so. To access the MOAA Newsletter go to the MOAA website at www.moaa.org and select the News and Info tab, followed by selecting Newsletters.

The MOAA Newsletter “is an award-winning member-only e-newsletter subscription to provide information on topics most important to you. Whether you’re looking for updates on current legislative issues, want to know more about your military benefits, or just interested in the latest MOAA events, you can tailor your newsletter to align with your specific needs and interests.” It is included with your MOAA membership. If you are not registered with MOAA National for this, call (800) 234-6622, and you'll be guided on how to receive the newsletter on a desired schedule. Have your MOAA National membership number available. If you don't have email or have questions on obtaining this information, contact LTC (Ret) Buck Coates at buck.coates@comcast.net or 703-624-4613.

Our Chapter periodically publishes Legislative Updates for all members and works with MOAA to recommend to members that they support MOAA legislative initiatives by contacting their legislators. MOAA staff and Chapter members meet with members of Congress annually. You may review important MOAA legislative issues and activities on the MOAA website by visiting the Take Action section at www.moaa.org/takeaction .

National MOAA and the Falcons Landing Chapter, MOAA, are politically nonpartisan but seek to remain informed on political matters of concern to veterans at both the state and local levels.

MOAA'S ADVOCACY PRIORITIES FOR VETERANS IN THE 118TH CONGRESS

- **MONITORING RECENT MAJOR LEGISLATION ENACTED SUCH AS THE PACT ACT IN THE AREAS OF HEALTH CARE, COMPENSATION, AND FOLLOW-ON SUPPORT FOR SURVIVING SPOUSES AND FAMILIES AND SEEK STATUTORY OR POLICY CHANGES AS REQUIRED.**
- **COMPELLING CONGRESS AND VA TO ACCELERATE CAREGIVING AND WHOLE HEALTH CARE SERVICES, AND MODERNIZATION OF VHA WORKFORCE AND FACILITY INFRASTRUCTURE TO IMPROVE VETERANS ACCESS TO HIGH QUALITY CARE.**
- **CONCURRENT RECEIPT OF MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY AND VA DISABILITY PAY.**
- **IMPROVING SURVIVORS' BENEFITS.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO:

<https://moaa.quorum.us/issue/47366>

HELP SUPPORT OUR CHAPTER PROGRAMS

Our activities, especially the veterans' assistance and scholarship programs, require funds well beyond our annual dues. Last year, we solicited donations, and your response was generous. Again, we are asking for your support, promising to apply your donation as you designate. Please annotate your check on the memo line: "veterans assistance," "scholarships," "Adopt-A-Platoon," or "general" (meaning expenses consistent with our mission). *Checks should be made out to the "Falcons Landing Chapter of MOAA"* and placed in the mail slot of our Treasurer, Richard Searles, 46874. Those outside Falcons Landing may mail to Richard at 20540 Falcons Landing Circle, #P1, Potomac Falls, Virginia 20165. Your contributions may be tax deductible on your federal return. We will send all donors a thank-you letter to that effect.

A continuing practice of our Chapter is the award of scholarships to deserving junior ROTC seniors at Chantilly HS (Air Force), Loudoun County HS (Navy) and South Lakes HS (Army).



LOUDOUN VETERANS AND
FAMILY SUPPORT



JROTC

PROGRAMS



MOAA BICENTENNIAL MEETING

by Jim Mullen, photos by Jackie Mullen and Barbara O'Brien

On October 25 the Falcons Landing Military Officers of America (MOAA) chapter hosted the Virginia Council of MOAA Chapters (VCOC) Biennial Meeting in our Ballroom. Our MOAA Chapter president Phil Walsh and members of the MOAA staff together with Falcons Landing staff carefully planned the meeting with VCOC which included a VCOC business meeting, a presentation to the guests by Phil Walsh on our Falcons Landing MOAA chapter, a Memorial Ceremony led by VCOC Chaplain Kenneth Rupp, USA (Ret) to honor the deceased members of the past two years from each of the Virginia chapters, a presentation of MOAA and VCOC awards and service presentations including a Level of Excellence Award for 2022 to the Falcons Landing MOAA Chapter, and installation of new officers of VCOC for the 2024 term.

Guest speaker remarks included the comments of Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, USAF Ret, the current president of National MOAA, and several congressional and Virginia delegate salutations, including those from our Virginia Senator Tim Kaine. Lt. Gen. Kelly administered the Oath of Office to the VCOC officers for 2024 which included the new VCOC President, who is also one of the newest residents of Falcons Landing, Col. Diana Kupchella, USAF, Retired. Our MOAA chapter is pleased to welcome Col. Kupchella to Falcons Landing.

One of the Leadership and Service Awards for the year was presented to Falcons Landing MOAA Chapter leader Phil Walsh (Col., USMC, ret.) for his service during the year.

MOAA BICENTENNIAL MEETING (continued)

As we completed the meeting, we received many measures of appreciation from VCOC MOAA members for our support to VCOC MOAA and for our support to the conduct of the meeting. Our MOAA chapter is an active part of MOAA and an active part of the life of Falcons Landing. As you read this, consider the opportunity to join either the Falcons Landing MOAA chapter or the Auxiliary if you are not already a member. (Note: In August, Ben Romero became the new Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) Gathering Director. Since assuming this position, he has received many topic ideas. Several have already been presented. If anyone has ideas for future Gatherings, please call Ben Romero at 571-218-7910 or email b.romero9@icloud.com. He welcomes all ideas.)



Phil Walsh receives award from Lt. Gen Brian Kelly




MOAA President Lt Gen USAF (Ret) Brian Kelly installs VCOC officers for 2024: President: COL Diana Kupchella, USAF (Ret). Second VP: CDR John Prevar, USN (Ret), Third VP, COL Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret). Not shown: Treasurer, MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret)

GATHERING PRESENTATIONS DURING 2023

- *The Cold War Presentation*, speakers from the Cold War Museum
- *Seeing Earth in a New Way*, Thomas D Jones, PhD, Planetary Scientist and Astronaut
- *Nine Steps to a Longer, Healthier Life*, John Asher, Asher Longevity Institute
- *Air Refueling...a Brief History*, Scott Willey, USAF Colonel (Ret)
- *Mistakes that Altered History*, Dr. Charles N Toftoy,
- *The Last Patrol*, Bill Hilsman, LTG, USA (Ret)
- *The Negro League*, Dick Polin
- *Veteran Services & PACT Act*, Danial Kim, Virginia, Veteran Services Representative
- *USS Houston*, John Schwartz, son of Otto Schwartz, served on the Houston and POW of Japanese
- *U-2 Shot Down in USSR*, Gary Powers Jr. Cold War Museum, discussed Francis Gary Powers pilot of the U-2
- *Churchill and Marshall Relationship*, Rachel Y. Thompson, The Marshall Center

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THE
NEXT GATHERING ON JANUARY 18**



The Gathering Presents...


One Hundred Years of History: Iran, The Middle East & US

Guest Speaker, Captain Jim Fontana, USN (Ret)

Iran is the major source on instability in the middle east, an existential threat to Israel, and with the bomb, perhaps to the US and the western world.

This presentation will help you better understand Iran's primal role in the seemingly unending decades of turmoil, instability, death and destruction in the Middle East.

The talk was originally delivered at the Falcons Landing "Great Decisions" group meeting in October, just days after the Hamas terrorist attack on Israel.



THURSDAY, JANUARY 18
7:30 P.M. BALLROOM/CH.970

THE GATHERING: FRANCIS GARY POWERS

~ by Jim Mullen

Our guest speaker for November was Gary Powers, Jr., speaking about his father and his experiences. His father, Francis Gary Powers, was an American pilot whose CIA Lockheed U-2 spy plane was shot down while flying a reconnaissance mission in Soviet Union airspace, causing what is referred to as the “1960 U-2 incident.” (Note: The article is supplemented with information from the Gary Powers website.)

Gary Jr. is also the founder of The Cold War Museum, located at Vint Hill, VA and a familiar location to many of our residents. Gary founded the museum in 1996 to honor Cold War veterans, and to educate future generations about this Cold War period. In 2015, he consulted for the Steven Spielberg Cold War thriller, *Bridge of Spies*, about the 1962 spy exchange between KGB spy Rudolph Abel and CIA U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers. Gary stated in his presentation that he would have the opportunity to help dispel some of the public presentations of the time that contained misinformation surrounding the U-2 incident.

Powers enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1950. He was commissioned as a second lieutenant in December 1952, after completing his advanced pilot training and was discharged from the Air Force in 1956 with the rank of captain. He then joined the CIA as a U-2 pilot to fly espionage missions, supposedly above the reach

THE GATHERING: FRANCIS GARY POWERS (continued)

of Soviet air defenses. His U-2 was equipped with a state-of-the-art camera. The primary mission of the US was to overfly the Soviet Union. On May 1, 1960, Powers' U-2 departed from a military airbase in Europe. During the mission, Gary Powers' plane was hit by a Russian surface-to-air-missile over Sverdlovsk, Russia. According to Gary's presentation, he was thrown from the plane and couldn't activate the destruction switches on the camera. He descended under his parachute. The plane crashed somewhat intact and the Soviets recovered him and the plane's equipment, including its top-secret high-altitude camera. Powers was then interrogated extensively by the KGB for months, before he made a confession and a public apology for his part in espionage. In the wake of his apology, American media often depicted Powers as a coward and made other comments about his person. In August 1960, Powers was convicted of espionage by the Soviets and was sentenced to 10 years in prison in Russia. Powers kept a diary and a journal while confined, which he later used to write a book about his time in prison. He also could send and receive a limited number of letters to and from his family. The Russians also had one of their spies, KGB Colonel William Fisher, aka "Rudolph Abel," who had been arrested in the U.S. and was in jail. They wished to have him returned to Russia and arranged with the U.S. for a prisoner exchange between Abel and Powers. That arrangement was made, and Gary Powers was released in 1962. Upon his return to the U.S., he was debriefed by the CIA and also appeared before a Senate Armed Services Select Committee, who observed in summary, as attributed to Senator Goldwater: "You did a good job for your country." That helped provide an end to the relatively unfounded criticisms that he had faced. Gary Powers

THE GATHERING: FRANCIS GARY POWERS (continued)

continued his life in a civilian capacity, eventually flying a helicopter for a news service and he was killed in a plane accident in 1977. He later was recognized for his service to his country with a POW medal and a silver star and is buried in Arlington Cemetery. I believe we should recognize Gary Powers for his service to his country from the first days in the Air Force, his time with the CIA, to the end of his imprisonment, and perhaps take the time to view “Bridge of Spies” or read one of Gary Power Jr.’s books for more information.



Pictured above, l to r, Ben Romero,
Gary Powers, Linda Childs, Jim Mullen

THE GATHERING

GEORGE C. MARSHALL AND WINSTON CHURCHILL

by Jim Mullen, photo by Chris Malone



The title of our guest speaker's presentation in December was, "With Admiration and Respect: The Correspondence of George C Marshall and Winston Churchill." The Gathering guest speaker, Rachel Yarnell Thompson, is the Marshall House Historian at the George C Marshall International Center.

It was a great pleasure to have this guest speaker and to have her discussion of the lives of Marshall and Churchill—with more information than could be contained in this brief review—and it would be interesting to review her writings on the subject. We can note that for most or all of us we have some personal view of this history. I would recommend viewing the Gathering presentation reprise on Channel 970 and would suggest that we schedule more than one reprise, and perhaps after the holidays, for residents to review!

Winston Churchill was a product of the British upper class with a deep love for his mother and less contact with his father but, in every sense, had a love for country and a sense of duty to service to his country that

THE GATHERING

GEORGE C. MARSHALL AND WINSTON CHURCHILL

(continued)

carried him into his military education and military service and then into politics, all the while sensitive to Britain's position in Europe before WWII, until he became Prime Minister leading Great Britain through that wartime period. He was a prolific writer of 46 books, a strong speaker, and a person of dogged determination that would not easily give ground.

George Marshall was born in Post Civil War US with a strong family and a mother whom Marshall described as most important in his life and a business leader father who, although stern, encouraged him in study of history and started him on his life with education at VMI. As Marshall progressed in his military career he was assigned to General Pershing's staff in WWI and then served in service schools and on the Army staff. As war loomed to include the US, Marshall began to strength the Armed Forces from a prewar 200,000 to over 8 million during the war.

Perhaps a good sense of the two men can be given in a review of the final plans before the invasion of Normandy in WWII. They met for dinner during final planning before the invasion. Churchill with his sense of British empire and the events in Europe at that stage of the war wanted to initiate with a set of smaller military actions around Europe and Africa before invading Europe in order to weaken the German Army first and was very insistent about it to Marshall. Marshall with a sense of focus was absolutely determined to complete plans for Normandy and not to divert power and influence elsewhere. We invaded Normandy.

THE GATHERING

GEORGE C. MARSHALL AND WINSTON CHURCHILL (continued)

Winston Churchill noted that he was basically dismissed from office as prime Minister immediately after the War in Europe by the public although he continued in politics and later served a second term as Prime Minister. George Marshall is certainly noted for the development of the Marshall Plan to help rebuild Europe after the War and by continued service. Marshall served under President Truman as both Secretary of Defense and also Secretary of State.



Pictured above l to r: Ben Romero, Rachel Yarnell Thompson and Ken Thompson

THE GATHERING: USS HOUSTON

by Jim Mullen

Our guest speaker for the Gathering on October 12 was John Schwarz, son of seaman Otto Schwarz who served on the USS Houston and later, as a POW, worked on building the Burma Thailand railroad, a route that included the bridge over the River Kwai. This spirited and interesting presentation is an example of why so many residents mark their calendars to attend the Gathering each month.

As our speaker started his presentation, he had the opportunity to speak to one of our residents, Annette Smith who was present for the Gathering. Annette's husband was a crew member on the Houston and a POW.

Shortly before WWII started, Otto Schwarz joined the US Navy and was eventually posted to the USS Houston, a heavy cruiser, in the Pacific theater. His ship was part of a small fleet of allied naval ships based in the Asian area.

When the war started, Japanese plans included bringing strong naval fleets into the Asiatic seas. The Houston and the small allied Asian fleet soon ran into combat. John Schwarz indicated that the ship on which his father was stationed was engaged in three quick engagements, with damage suffered to the Houston and loss of much of the allied fleet. In the third engagement on March 3, 1942, the Houston was heavily damaged, was torpedoed and sank. The captain was killed on the bridge from shellfire. The order was given to abandon ship. Otto found a life jacket and went into the water where he swam and floated for about

THE GATHERING: USS HOUSTON (continued)

fourteen hours before being picked up by a Japanese ship. He was taken to a prison jail on the mainland.

This story really has two parts. The first and more brief is the story of the USS Houston in the 45 days of war before her sinking. The second part describes the ordeal of the survivors as POWs from 1942 until the end of the war in 1945. Many of these POWs were used in the construction on the Burma Thailand Railroad during the war to link railroads in Burma and Thailand—a 258-mile stretch which included a path on Mae Klong River and two bridges over the River Kwai (as in the movie of the same name).

The Houston POWs were part of the railroad construction crew. The POWs suffered from lack of food, lack of proper clothing and lack of medical care. However, they managed to maintain an upbeat spirit. In spite of hardships, the rail extension was completed. This included two bridges: One built of wood and the other of steel. As the war progressed the Allied forces managed to develop the air power capability to attack the bridges and to disrupt the rail service.

Otto Schwarz was captured early in WWII, after the Houston sank, but it was not until September 1945 that he was liberated and was able to return home. He suffered from an eye injury which eventually led to his blindness.

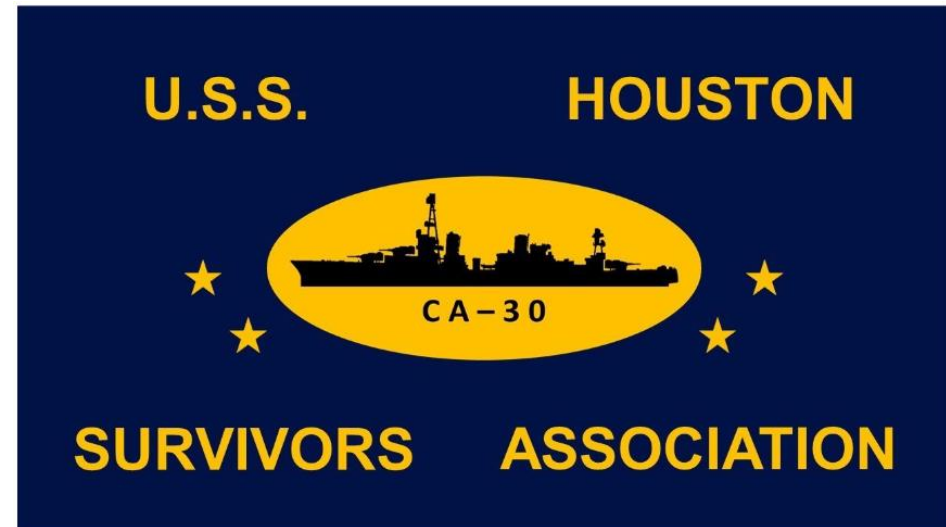
John Schwarz continued his presentation by discussing the formation of a USS Houston Survivors Association. The Association was founded following World War II by former crew member Otto Schwarz to serve as a

THE GATHERING: USS HOUSTON (continued)

network for other former crew members and to preserve the story of the Houston and her crew. The organization has held annual reunions, and preserved materials related to the USS Houston. In 1991, the Survivors Association expanded to include children and younger relatives of survivors, renaming themselves the “USS Houston Survivors’ Association and the Next Generations.”

John Schwarz is the executive director of that association.

'USS Houston (CA-30)
WWII Flagship of the U.S. Asiatic Fleet



IMPORTANT CHAPTER EVENTS AND SCHEDULE

THE GATHERING IS OPEN TO ALL CHAPTER MEMBERS AND FALCONS LANDING RESIDENTS, NORMALLY ONE EVENT PER MONTH IN THE FALCONS LANDING BALLROOM.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (BOD) MEETS ON THE 3RD THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH AT 1000 HOURS IN THE WELLNESS CENTER CONFERENCE ROOM OR VIA ZOOM. MEMBERS ARE WELCOME.

CHAPTER EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (PRESIDENT, 1ST VP; 2ND VP, SECRETARY, TREASURER) MEETS AS REQUIRED.

COMMITTEES MEET AT DISCRETION OF COMMITTEE CHAIRS.

2024 MEETING DATES

January 18	Board Meeting, 1000	July	No Board Meeting
February 22	Board Meeting, 1000	August 15	Board Meeting, 1000
March 21	Quarterly Chapter Meeting, 1500	September 12	Quarterly Chapter Meeting, 1500
April 18	Board Meeting, 1000	October 17	Board Meeting, 1000
May 16	Board Meeting, 1000	November 11	Veterans Day Program, 1030
May 27	Memorial Day Program, 1030	November 21	Annual Meeting and Election, 1500
June 20	Quarterly Chapter Meeting, 1500	December	No Board Meeting

2024 OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

President: Phil Walsh, Col, USMC, Ret. 703-978-4328, pwalsh@ida.org
First Vice President/Legislative Affairs: James Mullen, COL, USA, Ret., 703-444-4741, jfm1FL@verizon.net
Second Vice President/Dir of Programs: David Nordean, CAPT, USN, Ret., 703-861-2870, dnordean@verizon.net
*Secretary: Mrs. Genevieve Pustay, 703-444-5284, pustaygl@gmail.com
Treasurer: Richard Searles, 703-727-9202, drsearles3@icloud.com
Director/Membership: Buck Coates, LTC, USA, Ret. 703-624-4613, buck.coates@comcast.net
Director/ Auxiliary Affairs: Barbara O'Brien, LT, USNR, Ret., 540-270-8545, obrienbarbara62@outlook.com
Director/Surviving Spouse Affairs: Jackie Mullen, 703- 444-4741, travelingmimi@mac.com
Director/Public Affairs: Don Saari, COL, USA, Ret., 571-265-1236, clubmaker66d@gmail.com
Director/Communications: Bob Manning, COL, USA, Ret., 703-543-9158, Rmanning@aol.com
Director/LVFS: Howard Schue, Col, USAF, Ret., 703-433-2220, howard.schue@tsanda.com
Director/Gathering: Ben Romero, Col, USAF, Ret., 571-218-7931, b.romero9@icloud.com
Director/JROTC/Scholarships: Joe Miller, COL, USA, Ret., 434-421-2639, jbush@comcast.net
Director/Speakers Bureau: Ed Post, COL, USA, Ret., 703-978-1190, edpostusma@gmail.com
Member at Large: Bill Suter, MG, USA, Ret., 703-909-9810, w.suter1@verizon.net
Representative/LCCVEB: Peter Scott, COL, USA, Ret., 703-715-7396, Pscott1503@verizon.net
Founder, Past President: John Pustay, Lt Gen, USAF, Ret., 703-444-5284, j.pustay@gmail.com
Immediate Past President: Bob Manning, COL, USA, Ret., 703-543-9158, Rmanning@aol.com

*Preparing to step down



Falcons Landing Chapter Military Officers Association of America

[Home](#) [About Us](#) [Membership](#) [Programs](#) [Newsletter](#) [Auxiliary](#) [Legislative](#) [Gathering](#) [Documents](#)



MOAA is a nonpartisan, nonprofit veterans' association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors. MOAA's greatest mission is "to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through the tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our nation's capital". Support MOAA's advocacy efforts by going to <http://takeaction.moaa.org>.

The Falcons Landing Chapter is one of more than 400-plus local organizations affiliated with National MOAA and is a nonpartisan, nonprofit veterans' association. Our chapter provides programs to support: those who are serving; those who have served; and those who have survived, while placing special focus on community support.

We support the national organization through support of legislative priorities and "Storming the Hill" and are active in our community supporting two JROTC programs, helping recovering and needy veterans, and providing speakers to community service organizations.

[Click to view A Special Message from the President of MOAA](#)

Falcons Landing Chapter of the MOAA - 20540 Falcons Landing Cir #P1 - Potomac Falls, VA 20165

© 2023 by Name of Site. Proudly created with Wix.com

All Falcons Landing Chapter members and veterans interested in joining the Chapter are encouraged to browse through the award-winning website. The website is updated monthly with current information. *To access the website, simply type the following URL into your web browser, falconsmoaa.org.* If you want to access the Documents section, a password is required which you may obtain from our Director of Membership, LTC (Ret) Buck Coates, 703-624-4613, buck.coates@comcast.net