



Dallas Military Order News



Volume 32, No. 6

Best Large Chapter in the Nation

December 2023



Five Cadets from North Texas High Schools received our Bronze Patrick Henry medallion for Superior performance while participating in this summer's JROTC Cadet Leadership Camps. Each Cadet was accompanied at our award Luncheon by their Senior Military Instructor. (l to r) Dallas Chapter JROTC Program Chair Mark Smits; Brandon Hernandez (Plano East HS, LTC Bernard Aikens, USA); Breanna Escamilla (Seagoville HS, LTC Orlando Delgado; USA), Samuel Lebow and Thomas Whitmire (Wylie HS, LTC Darren James, USAF); and Yuleima Bates (Greenville HS, LCDR Lawrence Wilcock, USN).

This Month's Program

"All I want for Christmas is You."

Welcome to the happiest Banquet of the year. Once again the Park City Club has pulled out all the stops to make this the biggest Gala in our social calendar.



As we have done for the past decade, we invite all participants to bring a Christmas gift for a disadvantaged child (circa \$20). We will donate the gifts to the USMC Toys for Tots campaign. Over the years, we have cumulatively donated over 1,200 toys to this worthy cause. The Marines request that the gifts be unwrapped to facilitate determining age and gender appropriateness.



Toys for Tots

Companions James and Katherine Grogan have arranged for a festive evening of holiday songs accompanied by a professional pianist.

Squeeze into your Dress Uniform, tell your Chief of Staff how good she looks in her new party dress, and plan on good food, good friends, and good memories.

Joyeaux Noel.

The Commander's Report

"Things I believe in Never change."



Our Christmas banquet in December each year, is a time for celebration and rejoicing. We delight at this time of the year in highlighting the festivities, lights, and joy of our special season. For all of us who served, we are reminded of times in our military service when perhaps we were far from home on Christmas Day itself. On Christmas Day in 1966, I was in a "safe house" in Saigon with three young anti-Communist Cambodians, whom I was training for a clandestine mission into Cambodia. I learned that Bob Hope was at nearby Tan Son Nhut Airbase with his USO show. I was tempted to "desert" my post for a few hours to attend the show and have faith that my charges would still be there upon my return. But duty called and I remained by myself, with a can of C-rations for my Christmas feast. Years later, in the early 1990s, in Washington DC, I was able to meet Bob Hope, in person, at a fundraiser for the Korean War Memorial.



Allen Clark and Bob Hope

My spirit is humbled to reflect upon my limited hardship when contrasted with the many Christmases in a lonely Hanoi prison cell experienced by Air Force fighter pilot, Colonel Ken Cordier. Ken would have loved to have had a can of C-rations on those Christmases. (continued on p.2)



Commander's Report (continued)

Ken and his beautiful wife, Barbie, will join us at this year's Christmas banquet. She is known to so many of us for her graciousness and kindness to all.

Those of us who adhere to the Christmas faith recognize the extraordinary meaning in celebrating the birth of our Savior, the Christ. In my effort to understand Hanukkah, the Jewish Festival of Lights, I learned the remarkable history of this religion's tradition, which is also celebrated at this time of year. More than two millennia ago, the Jewish people rose up to fight to defend their religious beliefs, rather than live under Roman occupation.

While Ukraine and Israel are in conflict from invasions, we are reminded of the death and suffering of their people, as well as the innocents of Russia and Palestine, who are the "collateral damage" of warfare. I will pray for Peace in Jerusalem, as well as for all who are impacted by the current world conflicts.

May your days ahead be filled with peace and joy.

CPT Allen Clark

Dallas Chapter Commander

Chapter Committee Reports

1. Patriotic Education. Planning for 2024 Youth Leadership Conferences begins next month.
2. Reserve Officer Training. Chapter awarded 5 Patrick Henry awards to Top Cadets for JCLC excellence.
3. Scouting. LTC Don Munson will present 225 GSA Gold Award Citations at GSNETX Council in April.
4. Veterans Affairs. LTG Richard Carey was honored as Keynote Speaker in Southlake's Veterans Day ceremony.
5. Law and Order. Lt Chuck Daniels, current Vice Commander of Region VIII, presented our Certificate of Appreciation to the Dallas Officer of the Month at the monthly meeting of the DCPAC.
6. National Security. LtCol Michael Menefee has submitted his 25th article for the Chapter Newsletter. Look for it to be published in a future issue of the *Officer Review*.
7. Homeland Security. LT Chuck Daniels conducted another National Defense Security Briefing on November 19th on the topic of Cybersecurity.
8. Information and Publicity. LTC Martha Cenkci has assumed the Chair of the Info and Pub committee. She is currently sharing News Releases of our activities with local newspapers highlighting chapter members and students or cadets who are being recognized and awarded by the chapter.

National Defense

"These are the times that try men's souls."

War in Ukraine, terrorist attacks in Israel, cartel gangs and drugs on our border, and crime in our streets.

Thomas Paine, the author of *The American Crisis*, wrote an essay the day before George Washington ordered the **Christmas Eve** attack on Trenton, NJ. General Washington found it so inspirational that he ordered it to be read aloud to every troop in every company of his command.

"These are the times that try men's souls: the summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.

Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph.

What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives everything its value. Heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods; and it would be strange indeed if so celestial an article as FREEDOM should not be so highly rated."



With an abiding faith in the Almighty, the soldiers wintering in the bitter cold of Valley Forge crossed the frozen Delaware River on Christmas Eve and turned the tide of the Revolutionary War, giving birth to a new nation.

We are the descendants of the men of Valley Forge. May we meet today's challenges with the same depth of faith and conviction as our forefathers.

It is often said that it is darkest, just before dawn. I refuse to be a summer soldier. Together we shall overcome today's adversities and together we will share in the triumph.

Merry Christmas to one and all.

Upcoming Luncheon Speakers

Chapter Programs Just Keep Getting Better

5 Dec 23 – “Annual Christmas Banquet”
Taylor Swift, Singer and Songwriter (in your dreams)

2 Jan 24 – “Iran - The Terrorist’s go-to Partner”
Capt (USN) Marc Liebman, prolific military Author

6 Feb 24 – “Issues at the Border”
Hon. Keith Self, US Representative (TX, Dist. 3)

Companion Down

The Chapter extends its prayers.

Our Chaplain reported that Patriot Rob O’Brien was seriously injured in a car accident. He was exiting a fast food driveway when two drag racers hit his car, demolishing all three vehicles. Rob has undergone four surgeries, to date. He is currently recovering but faces numerous additional operations and long term physical therapy.



To foster fraternal relations

Local DAR honors Allen Clark

The Dallas Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) presented their highest award to CPT Allen Clark following his inspirational keynote address.



CPT Allen Clark
Vietnam 1967

Last Month’s Program, Nov 2023

Saluting Tomorrow’s Leaders

Our four Region VIII Youth Leadership Conferences hosted over 190 high school Juniors this past summer.



Outstanding students from 2023 Youth Leadership Conferences

This program is indisputably the best of the many Outreach activities which the Chapter supports. Proof of its value is the fact that all five of their High School **Principals** took the time from their busy schedules to be present to congratulate their students.

National Defense Briefing Series

Click [HERE](#) to view NDBS Seasons 1 & 2

17 Dec 23 – “Medal of Honor Museum Update”
Chris Cassidy, President and CEO MOH Foundation

20 Jan 2024 – “Defender of Freedom Award”
Named in honor of late Congressman Sam Johnson

Stay tuned for the future Line-up of Distinguished Speakers in this outstanding National Defense Briefing series.

Five living Commanders-in-Chief – Presidents George W. Bush, William Clinton, Barack Obama, Donald Trump and Joe Biden – have signed on as Honorary Directors of the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation, reflecting the importance of its mission.

The National Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington, Texas will serve as the premier national institution dedicated to the stories, impact, and legacy of the service members who went on to become Medal of Honor recipients.



With this project, Americans will gather to learn and pay tribute to our country’s bravest heroes in a state-of-the-art facility. Through recipient stories of courage and valor, the Museum will inspire current and future generations to discover and develop the shared values inherent in every Medal of Honor recipient — **COURAGE & SACRIFICE, COMMITMENT & INTEGRITY, CITIZENSHIP & PATRIOTISM.**

Check in begins at 4:30. The program starts at 5:00 pm.

Wreaths Across America

Chapter Companions may order wreaths at \$17 each for placement at headstones in the DFW National cemetery on 16 Dec 2023, by mailing a check to: **N. Texas Wreaths of Honor, c/o Larry Allen, 1404 Brazos Trail, Plano, TX 75075 .**



Checks must arrive not later than 15 Nov 23.

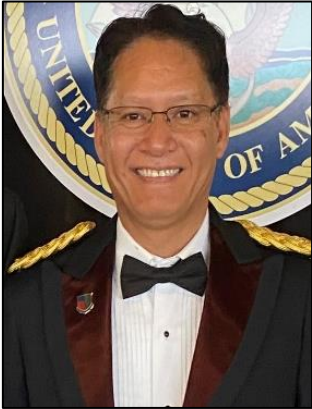
Contact LtCol Michael Menefee if you wish to ride to the cemetery in a 14-passenger van to place wreaths at headstones on the 16th. Do it now. Seats are limited.



Know Your Companions

Natan Ton-That, LT, US Army

Senior Vice Commander



Natan Ton-That was born in Da Nang, in Central Vietnam, on *Veterans Day*, November 11, 1967. His name means: “A Gift from God.” His father was a chief mechanic for the US Navy Seabees in Da Nang.

After the fall of the Republic of South Vietnam on April 30th, 1975, the local Communist leaders in Da Nang, who knew of his father’s connections to the US military,

confiscated his business, his property, his money, his tools, and his permit to travel.

After 3 years under gruesome rule by the North Vietnamese Communists, his father planned an expensive and dangerous escape to freedom, by boat. By the grace of God, the dozen families in the boat survived a vicious monsoon storm in the South China Sea and were rescued by Chinese fishermen, who transported them to Hong Kong.

With the assistance of the Catholic Church, his family located a distant relative living in America, who agreed to be their sponsor. After spending more than six months in a refugee camp in Hong Kong, they arrived in Denver, Colorado. Two weeks later, his father was offered work as an airplane mechanic, in Wichita, Kansas.

Kansas became home, starting in 1979. Natan completed primary and secondary school education there, and then earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in history at Wichita State University. While taking courses to earn a Master’s degree, he volunteered for the Peace Corps to “*repay America*.” He spent two years in Hungary with the Peace Corps, and then returned to Kansas and completed his Master’s program earning a degree in History.

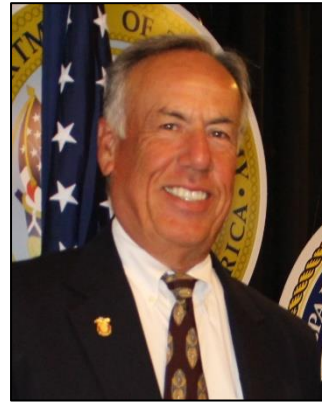
In the winter of 1995, Natan enlisted in the US Army Reserves. After completion of Advanced Individual Training at Fort Sam Houston, in San Antonio, he received a direct commission as a Second Lieutenant.

He was inducted into the Dallas Chapter of the Military Order of World Wars in 2020. His work ethic and enthusiasm became immediately apparent to the officers of the chapter. He was elected to be the Junior Vice Commander in his second year as a Companion. This month, he will be installed as our Senior Vice Commander in preparation for becoming the Commander of the Best Chapter in the Nation, in 2024.

Natan and his wife, Trang Nguyen, live in Southlake, TX.

Mark Smits, CPT, US Army

Junior Vice Commander



Mark Smits graduated from Texas A&M University with a Bachelor’s degree in Building Construction. At graduation he received the designation of Distinguished Military Student which earned him a Regular Army commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Corps of Engineers.

Upon graduation from the Engineer Officers’ Basic course at Fort Belvoir, Virginia, Mark served for four years on active duty, eventually earning the rank of Captain.

Following his resignation from the Army, he became Sales Manager for Abbott Diagnostics. After several years, he was promoted to Vice President of US Services and Support.

In 2008, he became Vice President of Strategic Marketing for Fisher Healthcare. Three years later, he assumed the position of Vice President for Sales and Marketing with NeoGenomics Laboratories. Two years later, he moved to San Diego, where he was the Vice President of Marketing for Quidel, Inc.

In 2015, he returned to Texas and became the small business owner of Smits Ranch, in the city of Milano, TX.

He retired from corporate America in 2015. Since his retirement, Mark has planted a vineyard, learned how to make wine commercially and is now the proud owner of Descarado Winery.

Mark and his wife, Missy, have four adult children, all of whom graduated from Coppell High School.

Their daughter, Meghan Tidwell, teaches at Cottonwood Creek Elementary School. Their sons, Patrick and Bryan, are regional managers for medical sales companies. Their third son, Kevin, recently obtained his firefighter certificate from Texas A&M University.

Over the years, Mark has been active in the Coppell Aggie Club and is currently serving as the Club President. He has also been active in Coppell High School athletics and served as President of the Coppell Cowboy Basketball Booster Club. He also coached youth athletics as part of the YMCA youth program.

National Defense Report

OPEN BORDERS: AN INVITATION FOR TERRORISM

By LtCol Michael W. Menefee, USMCR (Ret)

The US is one of only three countries in the world with a population exceeding 300 million. It is one of the very few large countries that allows legal immigration but is the *only* large country in the world which does not protect its borders. The US government has a responsibility to protect its borders. It does not need uncontrolled population growth. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) officials have



stated that Mexican Criminal Cartels now control the southern US border. Millions of migrants have crossed the US borders illegally

from more than 160 different countries in the last three years. An illegal alien or migrant is someone who has violated US laws to enter the US, or someone who has overstayed their visa. More migrants have illegally entered the US in the last three years, than the entire populations of 38 states. Illegals put stress on our culture, language, education system, medical care system, housing, and impact low-skilled employment. Each of these areas negatively impact the stability and national security of the US. Most illegals do not speak English, have few technical job skills, or academic degrees. Very few illegal aliens pay Federal Income Taxes. Illegal immigration costs are skyrocketing as are the numbers of illegals within the US, which some estimates say exceed 39.9 million.

Terrorism is another major concern of an open border policy. Special Interest Alien Apprehensions occur when illegals are from countries which encourage terrorism, protect terrorists, or pose a national security threat to the US. These apprehensions have increased dramatically over the past two years. Most Special Interest Aliens have entered the US from the Middle East. CBP data shows over 33,800 came from Turkey, 15,500 from Mauritania, 12,600 from Uzbekistan, 6,300 from Afghanistan, 3,100 from Egypt, 1,600 from Pakistan, 650 from Iran, 530 from Syria, and over 100 each from Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq.

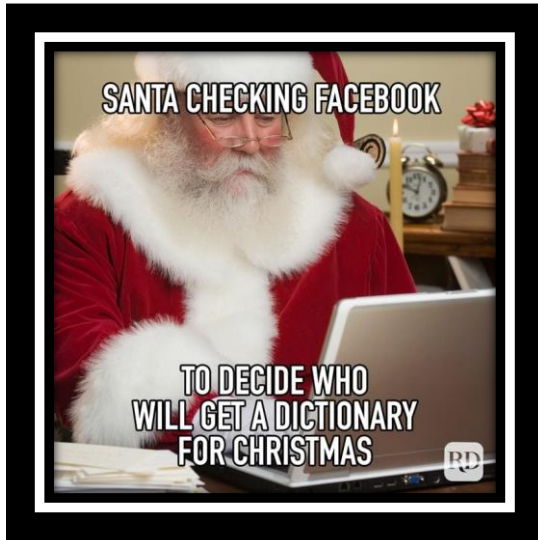
Radical extremist Islamic terrorist organizations backed by Iran like - Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and Houthi rebels are suspected to have entered the US. Since the 07 October attacks, DOD has reported over 73 attacks on US bases and ships in the Middle East. Aliens from China, Iran, and Russia have also illegally entered the US over the past three years since the current administration decided to pursue an open border policy. Large numbers of illegals on the terrorist watch list have been captured at the border, but even larger numbers of “got-aways” are suspected terrorists. In February 2023, more illegals on the Terrorist Watch List were captured on the southern border than were captured in the previous four years, and 211 terrorists on the Watch List have been captured year-to-date on our southern border.



FBI Director Christopher Wray has issued a terrorist alert for the US after saying the US has a higher risk of domestic terrorist threats because of the unrest in the Middle East. Wray said, “We assess that the actions of Hamas and its allies will serve as an inspiration the likes of which we haven’t seen since ISIS launched its so-called caliphate several years ago.” Wray also advised that individuals ‘inspired’ by foreign terrorists, and radicalized online are the ‘greatest threat’ to US security. Many analysts believe the recent \$6 billion ransom paid to Iran to release American hostages, will result in more hostages being kidnapped, enabling Iran to conduct more terrorism, proxy wars, and further their nuclear development. The unexpected Hamas terrorist attack in Israel was a massive intelligence failure for both Israel and the US. Open borders are a major national security issue which is not being adequately addressed by Homeland Security or the IC. The longer US borders remain open, the possibility and probability of a terrorist attack within the US increases significantly.

Information for this article was gathered from Open Sources – books, media, published articles, websites, graphs, charts, and the general knowledge of the author. There is no classified information in this article, no known quotations from any source, and this article does not have footnotes or endnotes due to its brevity. Any views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or positions of the Military Order of the World Wars (MOWW) or the Dallas Chapter of MOWW.

Lighten Up



Happy Birthday

"The secret to Birthdays is to pick one you like and stick to it!" ...Snoopy

1 December	Lt Col Al Johnson
2 December	LTC Paul Bauereis
3 December	CPT Paul Sermas
4 December	HPM David Merton
7 December	LT Joe Applewhite
9 December	MAJ Marshall Miles
11 December	RADM Cub Amos
12 December	MG Willard Latham
13 December	HPM Jacob Paleschic
16 December	LT Robert Betts
17 December	HRM Jeff Stevens
20 December	LT Jon Jackson
21 December	LTC James Blunk
21 December	LTC Chuck Chamberlin
21 December	COL Ron Forest
21 December	HPM Mary Hayes
21 December	Maj Terry Thorsen
24 December	COL Ron Barker
24 December	COL Gary Hoebeke
28 December	2LT Brandon Hern
28 December	LT Tommie Williams
31 December	COL Steve Minear



Your Dallas Chapter, NOV 2023



Allen Clark surprised Linda by inducting her into the Chapter and then singing Happy Birthday. The Club surprised her by serving cake for everyone.



VADM Dave Robinson congratulated the Cadet whom he had interviewed, while LT Chuck Daniels presented a Patrick Henry to the 2023 No. 1 Cadet



JROTC Program Chair Capt Mark Smits greeted Companion Lainie Meyer and then welcomed one of the five sets of parents who attended the Awards.



Law & Order Asst. Chair Trey Fife presented a Citation to the Collin County Sheriff. MG Al Zapanta was the keynote speaker for this Luncheon.



Air Force Cadet Sam Lebow took the time to talk to Captain Scott O'Grady to learn about Scott's perilous escape and evasion after having been shot down during the Bosnian War.



Captain Mark Smits personally congratulated each Cadet while presenting them with Patrick Henry medallions and medals of Achievement for their outstanding performance at summer camps.

The Chaplain's Corner



A Christmas Story

And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them:

Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

*James Grogan
Chapter Chaplain*

Mark Your Calendar

December Events

Chapter Banquet, 3 Dec 23



Our annual Christmas Banquet will feature an evening of Entertainment, songs, and gifts to support the USMC *Toys for Tots* campaign. [Click HERE](#) to register.

Wreaths Across , 16 Dec 23

Sign up to ride the van to DFW National Cemetery to place wreaths on every headstone. Families with children are encouraged to attend.



[Sign Up to ride.](#)

NDBS Luncheon, 17 Dec 23



Medal of Honor Museum update. Gleneagles Country Club in Plano, 11:30 am. [Click HERE](#) to register.

Future Events

Chapter Lunch, 2 Jan 24



Marc Liebman speaks on "IRAN – The Terrorists go-to partner." [Click HERE](#) to register.

NDBS Dinner, 20 Jan 24

Congressman Sam Johnson "Defender of Freedom award.

Museum Opening, 17 Mar 25



Ribbon cutting and Grand Opening of the Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington, next to Globe Life Park, Home of the World Series Champions, the Texas Rangers.

Command and Staff, FY 2024

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Allen Clark
CPT, US Army
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Senior Vice Commander
Natan Ton-That
LT, US Army
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Junior Vice Commander
Mark Smits
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Adjutant
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Treasurer
David Wallace
Capt, US Air Force
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Judge Advocate
John VanBuskirk
MAJ, US Army
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Marshal
Pat Teipel
Perpetual Hereditary
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Peace on Earth. Good Will toward Men