



MARCH 2025

Dallas Military Order News

BEST LARGE MOWW CHAPTER IN THE NATION



Volume 33, No. 9

This Month's Speaker



John Bagwell

Nothing Ever Happens Here

John Bagwell is a Vietnam Veteran who served in the US Army as a DJ / announcer for the American Forces Radio Station. He was wounded during the Tet Offensive during the siege of Hue, South Vietnam, where he received the Bronze Star with a "V" device and the Purple Heart. He was part of the only American Forces Radio or Television Station to be taken by the enemy during any war. Of the staff, five were taken prisoner, three were killed, and John was able to escape. Over the next two days, John was shot at over a dozen times – Six by the North Vietnamese and six by the Americans who did not know he was behind enemy lines. He has found humor in the face of tragedy; his story will inspire you to face another day.

John's experience has recently been chronicled in a documentary, *Vietnam: The War That Changed America*, released on Apple TV Streaming.

- ❖ **When:** March 4th, 2025 11:15 AM -1.00 PM
- ❖ **Where:** Park City Club 5956 Sherry Lane, Dallas



COMMANDER'S REPORT



JROTC/YLC: March is the busiest month of the year for the MOWW when it comes to our Outreach programs. This is the month in which our ROTC/JROTC Committee (Senior Vice CPT Mark Smits and LTC Greg Schmitz) needs volunteers with awards selection. More than 60 Dallas High Schools and 3 Universities have Junior and Senior ROTC programs, and the task of compiling a list of cadets to present the Cadets Superior Performance medals at their school's Awards Day ceremonies is more than daunting. Also, as we approach the last few months of the school year, we begin the process of contacting High School Principals and Counselors to provide the names of distinguished students to be interviewed and selected for the Summer Youth Leadership Conferences.

Please contact Senior Vice CPT Mark Smits & LTC Greg Schmitz if you would like to volunteer to help. Our goal is to sponsor 50 selected candidates to one of the four Youth Leadership Conferences in the summer. It costs \$350 to sponsor each student. Please help us achieve our goal of sponsoring 50 of the best students.

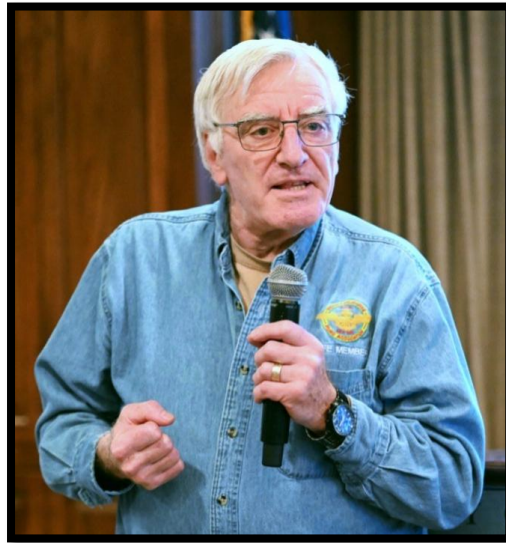
Annual Nominating Committee: The annual chapter election process starts in March. The Dallas Chapter By-Laws requires: "The Commander shall appoint a Nominating Committee at the March Chapter Meeting. The Nominating Committee shall consist of four (4) Past Chapter Commanders with the most recent Past Commander serving as the Chairman." MOWW is a Military Service Organization. Our mission require volunteers to support our patriotic programs that support the Constitution, our military services, memorials, American history and American culture. It is critical to maintain a full staff of officers and committee chairs. Please step up and be nominated to fill the vacancy positions that we currently have in our chapter.

LT Natan Ton-That

DALLAS CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

February Luncheon

Marc Liebman, Naval Aviator, combat veteran of Vietnam, novelist, and public speaker on various aviation and foreign affairs topics speaking about the Palestinians Territorial Claims.



Swearing-in ceremony and awards of new MOWW chapter members/companions during the February Luncheon.

The 2025 MOWW Nominating Committee

As required by the Dallas Chapter By-Laws, I have appointed a Nominating Committee for the annual chapter election cycle. The four (4) members of Nominating Committee for 2025 are: CPT Allen B. Clark, Jr., USA (Ret) – Chairman, LtCol Michael W. Menefee, USMC (Ret), LT Charles D. Daniels, USN (Fmr), and Capt Paul W. Brown, USAF (Fmr). The Nominating Committee shall report to the Commander and Membership at the April Chapter Meeting nominating for the next year the persons to fill the Officers Positions. We will announce the 2025 Nominating Committee at our March 4 Meeting.

“It is better to serve than to be served.”

LT Natan Ton-That

Commander

Time for Nominations for Next Year’s Officers

Need volunteers to serve for Junior Vice and Treasurer officer positions.

Please contact Nominating Chair, Allen Clark at: 469-831-0841.

NATIONAL & HOMELAND SECURITY REPORT

THE PANAMA CANAL IS A NATIONAL SECURITY PRIORITY TO THE US

By: LtCol Michael W. Menefee, USMCR (Ret)

Spanish Conquistador, Bascon Nunez de Balboa envisioned the idea of a canal across the Isthmus of Panama in 1513. The 1846 Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty was signed between New Granada (Columbia's former name) and the US. It granted the US transit rights and the right to intervene with US armed forces in the isthmus. In 1848, the canal route across Panama was decided upon and gold was discovered in California the same year. This discovery stimulated the building of a canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific across the Isthmus of Panama to shorten the trip between the two oceans. A syndicate was formed by William Aspinwall to build a railroad now named the (Panama Canal Railway) from Colon to Panama City between 1850-1855. The rail project cost \$8,000,000 to build, and it was more than 6,000 times over budget. Between 6,000 to 12,000 construction workers died of tropical diseases. However, the railroad was immensely profitable for its investors. Ferdinand de Lesseps was instrumental in the French canal effort and began the construction project in January 1881 but ended it in 1889 because of lack of investors, the high rate of mortality among the workers, and cost overruns. Over 22,000 workers died, and more than 5,000 were French citizens. 800,000 French citizens lost their savings by investing in the canal project syndicate which cost over \$287 million (M). The French were confident their canal building efforts would be as profitable as the Suez Canal. Panama separated from Columbia with US naval support in 1903. The US completed building the 51-mile Panama Canal across the Isthmus of Panama on 15 August 1914. The Panama Canal cost \$15.2B in 2023 dollars. From 1904–1914, approximately 5,600 workers died in accidents and mosquito borne diseases (mostly malaria and yellow fever), and about 350 Americans died in the US effort. During the Panama Canal construction, most mosquito borne diseases were identified and eliminated. The Panama Canal boosted world-wide maritime trade and helped to launch the US into super-power status.

The Panama Canal waterway connects several lakes with the Gulf of America and the Pacific Ocean. It was mankind's greatest engineering project at the time. The canal greatly reduces the time and costs to travel from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean. It cut the travel time to go around the southern tip of South America from the Atlantic Ocean to Pacific Ocean from 25-26 days to eight hours, and dramatically cut fuel costs. Three massive locks lift and lower ships 85 feet above sea level at one end of the canal and then three additional gigantic locks and lower them at the other end of the canal to sea level. The locks are necessary because of the continental divide. Much of the soil used to excavate the canal was used to create a dam the Chagres River and created Lake Gatun. Once the river was dammed, Lake Gatun became the largest man-made lake in the world at that time. Ships enter the canal from both oceans through the lock system and pass-through Gatun Lake and Lake Alajuela, before reentering the locks at the other end of the canal. Panama enlarged the locks for larger ships in 2016.

President Carter gave away the Panama Canal in 1977 because of growing unrest in Panama. Many US senators disagreed with the giveaway and required several treaties with Panama. The Torrijos-Carter Treaties required the US to defend Panama, and Panama must control and operate the canal. They must also charge fair and reasonable fees equally to all countries. The US is concerned that Panama is violating that treaty, and Panama has accused the US of using Theodore Roosevelt's gunboat diplomacy. CK Hutchinson Holdings Limited, a huge Chinese company, has built and owns the ports at either end of the canal. Many US lawmakers believe this Chinese influence violates the Panama Canal treaty signed in 1977. In addition to the canal, the US also gave away the land, buildings, infrastructure, roads, schools, it had built and developed for almost 65 years. During 2023, a drought caused water levels to fall because of a lack of rain. Panama used an option system to determine canal slots for ships to use the canal. The cost of the slots ranged from \$55k to \$4M per ship. In 2024, the Panama Canal profits exceeded \$3.8B and operated at a 70% profit margin. President Trump and many elected officials believe US ships should transit the canal without cost because the US built the canal and provides defense for the canal. The Panama Canal continues to be of great strategic importance to the US and its allies. Any interference, blockage, or destruction of Panama Canal by China would severely hinder maritime trade and US naval operations to rapidly respond to a crisis where the Isthmus of Panama must be transited and would likely result in war.

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NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

VIETNAM WAR 50TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION



APRIL 30, 2025

On **April 30, 1975**, North Vietnamese troops overran Saigon and snuffed out the Republic of Vietnam. In the eight years of US fighting, 58,000 US servicemen were killed and today nearly 1600 remain unaccounted for. Over 600,000 Vietnam Veterans are estimated to be alive today.

On **April 30, 2025**, combined veteran's organizations of the North Texas area along with our Vietnamese-American neighbors and the City of Arlington will conduct a commemorative event to remember the tragic fall of South Vietnam and recognize those who served during the Vietnam War and those who escaped the country to settle in the United States.

This will be one of the first public events to be held at the new National Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington, TX. This event is free and open to the public, but attendance is limited and registration is required. You can register [here](#) or scan the QR code

**National Medal of Honor Museum
1861 AT&T Way, Arlington TX**



**Featured Speaker Major General Ed Chrystal
Commander, Task Force 23**

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration

Doors open at 5:30 pm | ceremony begins at 6:00

FREE valet parking | Refreshments

Dress: Business casual/casual/organizational uniform



You can donate online when you register, or you can send a check to: **The National Medal of Honor Museum**
1717 East Randol Mill Road Suite 301, Arlington, TX 76011

Sponsor Level	Amount
<i>Presenting Sponsor</i>	\$25,000
<i>Thanks for Your Service</i>	\$10,000
<i>Welcome Home</i>	\$5000
<i>Operation Frequent Wind</i>	\$1000
<i>Partner</i>	\$500

Please make the check to: **The National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation**
(in the memo section please put "A Salute to Vietnam Veterans")

To make sure your organization is noted as a sponsor, if you mail a check, please send an email to Natan Ton-that at natanmoww@gmail.com Cc John Campbell campbell927@gmail.com

Questions: John Campbell 703-615-9324

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS



*"People who have the most birthdays –
Live the Longest"*



- 1 March CPT William Benson
- 1 March HPM Alan Clinkinbeard
- 1 March MG Michael Marchand
- 2 March LCDR Ralph Muse
- 3 March HPM Richard Bullock
- 3 March LT John Canales
- 4 March HPM Ashley Adams
- 4 March COL John Antal
- 4 March HPM Geoffrey Merton
- 5 March COL James Methered
- 6 March MAJ Edward Marty
- 6 March COL David Webb
- 8 March HPM Ned Butler III
- 8 March LT Lorelei Gaus
- 8 March MG Albert Zapanta
- 12 March LTC Jeffrey Spears
- 13 March DR Fred Aurbach
- 13 March CDR H.B. Germany
- 18 March MAJ Jennifer Colby
- 19 March LTC Don Nguyen
- 21 March LTC Wright Lassiter
- 22 March HON Pete Sessions
- 23 March CAPT BJ Bjorklund
- 23 March Col Ric Hamer
- 23 March LT Michael Sable
- 25 March Capt William Stanford
- 27 March CWO4 Monifa Rucker
- 28 March Lt Col Daniel Hagood
- 28 March HPM Shawn Hogan
- 28 March CPT Michael Metcalf
- 29 March HPM Alicia Formagus
- 29 March LT Thomas Nygaard
- 31 March CAPT Richard Stewart



~ Lighten Up ~



NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Salute to Vietnam Veterans...a few words about the April event

In 1973, the Paris Peace Accords were signed, marking the end of US participation in the war in Vietnam and setting the scene for what should have been discussions on the peaceful reunification of Vietnam. That never came about, and on April 30, 1975, the US embassy in Saigon was evacuated and the city of Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese, marking not only the true end of the war, but the end of South Vietnam as a country.

On April 30, 2025, we will commemorate this final chapter in one of our longest wars with a ceremony at the new National Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington, TX, honoring not only the men and women who served their country, but our Vietnamese American neighbors who found their way to the United States and the Dallas-Fort Worth area. In eight years of US fighting, 58,000 US servicemen were killed, and today nearly 1,600 remain unaccounted for. Over 600,000 Vietnam Veterans are estimated to be alive today. In many cases when those veterans returned home, they were greeted with hostility and disrespect. Few heard the words that are customary today: "Welcome Home; Thanks for Your Service".

Our ceremony on April 30 will not only give us one last chance to say those words to our Vietnam Veterans but also to remember the end of a nation that many of our neighbors called home. Our veterans deserve to be respected, honored, saluted and remembered as the heroes they were, and to have us say "Welcome Home; Thanks for Your Service".

As the commander of the Dallas Chapter of the Military Order of the World Wars, and a refugee from Vietnam I have always wanted to have an opportunity to honor and thank these brave soldiers who fought for my adopted home (America) and for the free South Vietnamese people. Along with Arlington Mayor Jim Ross, the City of Arlington, the National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation, the Vietnamese community and many of our DFW-area veteran's organizations, I invite you to join us at the National Medal of Honor Museum. Our Vietnamese community is grateful and appreciative for all that they have done.

Natan Ton-that

Chair, 50th Anniversary Commemoration Committee
Commander, Military Order of the World Wars, Dallas Chapter



★ MOWW ★
MILITARY ORDER
OF THE WORLD WARS



PLEASE DONATE : <https://givebutter.com/asalutetovietnamveterans>



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- ❖ March 4th, 2025 – Dallas MOWW March Luncheon
- ❖ April 14th, 2025 – Air Force Reserve Birthday
- ❖ April 16th, 2025 – MOWW Golf Challenge
- ❖ April 30th, 2025 – A Salute to Vietnam Veterans