



PMOAA BEACON

Home of the Blue Angels - Pensacola, FL

4 Star Chapter Award – 2002

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<http://www.pmoaa.org>

August 2021



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Whew, hot and humid summer days; gotta love living here in Florida where the humidity can kill you, notwithstanding other things these days, but I'm not going there. I will, however, say that masking-up in 95 degree heat feels more like "self-destruction".

I'm going to make this "Corner" shorter than usual, because the Chapter is having a very busy and most IMPORTANT function this month: the Chapter's Annual Scholarship Dinner and Awards Ceremony. The event is going to be held on Thursday, August 19th at the Pensacola Yacht Club. We will be presenting scholarships to several very worthy recipients who have been chosen by our Scholarship Committee and approved by your Board of Directors.

I can't reiterate enough how important the scholarship program is by recognizing the scholastic achievements of college students under the program's very strict criteria. I would also like acknowledge that the program's success, in large part, is the result of so many dedicated members of our chapter, who throughout the years have supported the program through their funding donations. This has allowed us to continue with this extraordinary and proud achievement.

We have ordered some very fine menu items for this event. In addition, our guest speaker is CAPT. Timothy Kinsella, Commanding Officer of NAS Pensacola. If you have never had an opportunity to hear CAPT Kinsella speak, you'll not want to miss this chance. Please plan to attend and make sure your reservations are made by Sunday, August 15th. I urge you to confirm the reservations and the choice of menu options. After the 15th there can be no exceptions.

I want to add one thing: Pensacola Yacht Club continues to follow strict guidelines insofar as CDC recommendations are concerned. The Club has replaced all carpets in the ball rooms, and new AC and air filtrations systems have been installed. They make me take off my shoes before entering, just kidding - the Club is immaculately kept.

As always, I am available to you at any time, by phone, or email.

Warmest always,

Dean Kirschner

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LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

August brings with it the “summer doldrums” and other late (HOT) summer challenges and opportunities. There is always much to enjoy in our beautiful Pensacola region. Get off the couch and

ENJOY. The Congress seems to be moving very slowly on important legislation such as the authorization and appropriations bills required to fund the government for 2022. One of the articles below covers the most important of MOAA’s priorities for the coming year. Please make your voice heard using the links in the last paragraph below. I also included an interview with Gen. Charles Brown, Chief of Staff, US Air Force.

This month we are again faced with rising Delta-variant COVID cases and hospitalizations largely (over 95%) affecting those who are not fully vaccinated. I have been vaccinated and strongly recommend vaccinations for all adults, especially us “seasoned” seniors. Other articles include a report on the upgrading of awards given to those brave soldiers who faced tremendous combat in the streets of Mogadishu, Somalia in October 1993. This is somewhat personal for me. I was deployed there as part of a four-ship Marine Amphibious Ready Group (MARG) aboard USS Wasp (LHD-1) in March, April, and May of 1993 in support of the UN and US Army Delta and Ranger forces stationed ashore. God Bless them all and their survivors and families for their bravery and service to our great Nation.

As always, my recommendation is that you subscribe to the MOAA newsletter which is sent out four times per month via email. You can sign up for the newsletter at www.moaa.org. Please let me know how you think I can make this column better for you by sending an email to me at kpyle1968@gmail.com.

Your voice needs to be heard by our Florida Congressional Delegation. Please consider using some or all of the many excellent resources and avenues available to express yourself through MOAA. The Pensacola Chapter of MOAA is a member of the [Florida Council of Chapters, MOAA](#) and an affiliate of the [Military Officers Association of America \(MOAA\)](#) who together are the nation’s largest and most influential association of military officers. We are an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization. MOAA has several critical legislative issues they are championing. Become

an advocate and Take Action NOW! at <http://takeaction.moaa.org/>

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DoD Renews COVID Vaccination Push as Delta Variant Spreads

(Adapted from an article by Kevin Lilley in the MOAA Newsletter, July 8, 2021)

Military health officials are warning beneficiaries of the rise in transmission of the Delta variant of the virus that causes COVID-19, saying the best way to avoid potential threats from the mutation is to join the ranks of the fully vaccinated.

The variant spreads easier and faster than other strains, according to information provided by both the Defense Health Agency (DHA) and the VA, and results in a higher rate of hospitalizations and deaths. [News reports blame the variant](#) for an uptick in cases in some areas, including some states seeing cases double in early July. Increased transmission rates are more prevalent in areas with low vaccine rates.

Multiple studies have shown individuals who’ve been fully vaccinated obtain significant protection from falling ill or requiring hospitalization after becoming exposed to the variant. One study put the Pfizer vaccine at 88% effective against symptomatic disease from the variant and 96% effective against hospitalization.

However, DoD and VA health officials stress a patient receiving a multi-shot vaccine won’t be fully protected until two weeks after receiving their second shot. Veterans, spouses, and caregivers who are unable to get their second shot from their original provider can get one via the VA.

How to Get a Shot

- Many localities continue to offer free vaccinations at various locations. [This search engine](#) provided

by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will help you find resources via your state health department. You can also [search Vaccines.gov](#) for locations in or near your ZIP code.

- TRICARE beneficiaries can find locations and appointment information nationwide [via this website](#).
- VA beneficiaries can contact their local facility or [visit this website](#) for step-by-step instructions.

Army Upgrades 60 Awards for “Black Hawk Down” Battle

(Adapted from an article by Stephen Losey which originally appeared on Military.com in July 2021)

The awards that 60 special operators received for the Battle of Mogadishu in 1993 soon will receive an upgrade, the [Army](#) announced July 1.

In a release, the Army said that 58 awards were upgraded to Silver Stars, and two were upgraded to Distinguished Flying Crosses. These awards will be presented later this year in ceremonies held by the units in which each soldier served at the time. These upgrades stemmed from former Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy's October 2020 order to the Senior Army Decorations Board to reevaluate previously approved awards for valor, the Army said.

The battle erupted after a mission, dubbed Operation Gothic Serpent, to capture Somali warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid went wrong. Two Black Hawk helicopters were shot down Oct. 3, 1993, sparking a ferocious battle throughout the city that involved Delta Force and Rangers as the soldiers sought to save their comrades.

Eighteen soldiers died, and 73 were wounded, during the Battle of Mogadishu. Delta operators Sgt. 1st Class Randall Shughart and Master Sgt. Gary Gordon were posthumously awarded the [Medal of Honor](#) for their heroism in attempting to protect one of the downed Black Hawk pilots, Chief Warrant Officer Michael Durant, as Somalis closed in around them.

Televised images of a soldier's body being dragged through the streets shocked the nation. In the aftermath of the battle, Defense Secretary Les Aspin stepped down amid criticism he had not provided the troops in Somalia enough support by providing tanks, armored vehicles and AC-130 gunships. The United States withdrew its forces from Somalia the next year, and by March 1995, the final United Nations troops left the east Africa country.

The battle was memorialized in Mark Bowden's book, "Black Hawk Down," and the popular Ridley Scott film of the same name.

The Silver Star is the military's third-highest combat award. It is awarded to recognize valorous acts performed during combat operations while under fire from enemy forces. The Distinguished Flying Cross is awarded to recognize heroism or extraordinary achievement while in flight.

VA Asks Female Veterans to Enroll in World’s Largest Medical Research Biobank

(Adapted from an article by Patricia Kime on Military.com on June 30, 2021)

The [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) wants thousands more female veterans to enroll in its Million Veteran Program -- a blood repository used by researchers to tackle the world's toughest medical questions.

The program, which began in 2011, has created the largest biobank on the planet, with 841,000 participants. The genetic material in the repository, managed by the Boston VA Healthcare System, has been used for studies on various types of cancer, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's, diabetes, and mental health disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder.

Just 75,000, or 9%, of the participants are women -- a shortcoming that skews the outcome of medical research and can leave gender-specific health questions unanswered, said Sumitra Muralidhar, director of the Million Veteran Program.

"Historically, women are under-represented in biomedical research and especially when it comes to biomedical research," Muralidhar said. "There are differences in anatomy, biology and physiology in men and women and so it's really important to understand what factors influence health and disease in women."

Enrollment involves completing a questionnaire and providing a finger-prick blood sample at one of the VA's 65 participating medical centers or completing online registration followed by sample donation at a VA health facility. Once enrollment is complete, the identities of donors are kept secret from researchers, and all samples are labeled with a code rather than with any identifying information.

The samples are, however, linked to their corresponding veterans' medical records, albeit with identifying

information stripped out. Each sample also comes with completed questionnaires on lifestyle and employment, including combat experience and toxic environmental exposures.

Veterans' extensive medical histories and records, along with the genetic material, allow researchers to delve into the myriad factors that may contribute to medical issues, according to Muralidhar. The biobank has already provided the basis for 65 research studies, with 30 more to come.

"For researchers, they are looking at numbers, how many have the disease and how many don't, and the genetics - if you have this particular genetic change, do you have the disease or not. And then they go about trying to figure out what is causing it," Muralidhar said.

Women currently make up roughly 10% of the U.S. veteran population, but are expected to account for more than 18% by 2040. The effort to enroll more women in the program -- VA is aiming for 5,000 more by the end of the fiscal year -- comes as the Veteran Health Administration increases services for female veterans. Lawmakers have also been calling for improvements in gender-specific health care to accommodate this growing veteran cohort.

Muralidhar said the program has been successful in [recruiting](#) Black veterans, with roughly 20% of enrollees identifying as Black or African American. The department would like to enroll more Native Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics and other ethnic or racial groups as well, for the same reasons it needs more women, she added.

"There are all these differences, and then you layer gender as well as disease conditions. You can see how this is complex and the larger numbers you have the more questions you will be able to answer with respect to all the conditions you see in veterans," she said.

Before the pandemic, VA enrolled roughly 100,000 veterans each year in the program. The department hopes to reopen all its enrollment centers by the end of July, Muralidhar said. Veterans also can go online to complete their surveys and make an appointment for a blood draw.

Veterans interested in enrolling in the program can find more information at the [VA's Million Veterans Program](#) web site.

TRICARE and Benefit Improvements, Pay Raise Top MOAA's Priority List

(Adapted from an article by MOAA Government Relations Staff from July 15 MOAA Newsletter)

The FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) timeline is now clear, with the House and Senate schedules released and DoD's "by request" [bill introduced](#) by the House. The Senate Armed Services Committee is scheduled to do a full committee markup July 21, followed by the House Armed Services Committee on Sept. 1. The dates are later than last year's markups making passage of the NDAA by the new fiscal year looks increasingly unlikely.

As the committees prepare, here are some of the many issues MOAA's Government Relations team would like to see addressed in this year's NDAA:

Active Component

- **Military Pay:** A full pay raise of 2.7% for servicemembers – given the president's budget requested this figure, it is unlikely Congress will reduce this number. However, we will watch closely to ensure the troops get their full raise.
- **SGLI:** It has been over a decade since the maximum policy amount for Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance has been increased, and improvements must be made to keep up with inflation. A bipartisan bill addressed by MOAA ([H.R. 3793](#)) would make this change.
- **Parental Leave/Postpartum Policies:** Legislation such as the Military Moms Matter Act ([R. 3047](#)) and the Servicemember Parental Leave Equity Act ([H.R. 3122](#) and [S. 1571](#)) would expand parental leave, increase the recovery time before a physical fitness test is required for active duty mothers, and create a pilot program to streamline the postpartum appointment process. These changes would bring parental leave offered to servicemembers in line with federal benefits and options provided by many private, large employers.

Reserve Component

- **Incentive Pay Parity, Including Aviation Incentive Pay:** MOAA backed the National Guard and Reserve Incentive Pay Parity Act ([S. 1859](#)) and seeks the inclusion of this bill in the NDAA to tackle this issue.
- **Ending Forced Arbitration:** MOAA signed The Military Coalition [letter](#) supporting the Protecting the Employment Rights of Service Members Act

[\(H.R. 2195\)](#), a bipartisan bill that would ensure service members can enforce their rights under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and avoid being sent through private arbitration systems because of fine print in an employment contract or other agreement. MOAA is working to prevent this provision from being stripped out by the Senate, as in previous years.

- **Standardized Discharge Form:** The Record of Military Service for Members of the Armed Forces Act of 2021 ([S. 1291](#)) would reduce paperwork burdens as reserve component servicemembers seek their earned veterans’ benefits.

Health Care

- **TRICARE Young Adult Coverage:** Premium-free TRICARE young adult coverage up to age 26 would bring TRICARE in line with requirements for commercial health plans. This issue is addressed in the Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act ([H.R. 475](#) and [S. 1972](#)) and is part of MOAA’s ongoing [Advocacy in Action](#) campaign.
- **Reserve Component Care:** Enhancements to health care benefits for these servicemembers – including zero out-of-pocket cost medical and dental care; TRICARE eligibility for “gray area” Reserve Component retirees receiving retirement pay due to deployment credits; and an accelerated fix making Federal Employees Health Benefits (FEHBP)-eligible federal employees eligible for TRICARE Reserve Select – are part of the Healthcare for Our Troops Act ([H.R. 3512](#)).
- **Mental Health Access:** Improved access to mental health care within the military health system, including a mental health schedulers pilot; a utilization report on impact of copay increases on mental health access; and a reduction in mental health copays.

Families

- **Basic Needs Allowance:** The Military Hunger Prevention Act, bipartisan legislation in the House and Senate ([H.R. 2339](#) and [S. 1488](#)), would provide an estimated \$400 monthly subsidy to servicemembers with a household gross income (not including the Basic Allowance for Housing, or BAH) at or below 130% of their location’s poverty line, as well as financial education resources. This has also been [part of MOAA’s Advocacy in Action efforts](#).
- **Spouse Employment and Child Care Improvements:** MOAA seeks legislation adding military Spouses to the Work Opportunity Tax

Credit (WOTC) and authorizing servicemembers to establish dependent care flexible spending accounts (DCFSA). In order to be included in this year’s NDAA, the House Ways and Means Committee would have to waive jurisdiction, which is unlikely. If not included in the NDAA, MOAA will continue to push for passage as a standalone bill ([H.R. 148](#) and [S. 1532](#)).

Retirees

- **Concurrent Receipt:** Correct concurrent receipt for combat-injured servicemembers through passage of the Major Richard Star Act ([H.R. 1282](#) and [S. 344](#)). Learn more about MOAA’s efforts to pass this legislation, other aspects of concurrent receipt, and the officer for whom the bill is named [at this link](#).
- **180-Day Rule:** Support a servicemember’s transition by repealing the 180-day rule, a policy which limits federal employment options for servicemembers. MOAA has backed the Retain Skilled Veterans Act ([H.R. 4031](#) and [S. 2161](#)), which would make the needed changes.

Survivors

- **DFAS Recoupment:** MOAA seeks to support survivors by backing legislation that would end recoupment of a fallen servicemember’s last paycheck by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS). The Military Survivor Comfort Act ([H.R. 2214](#) and [S. 1669](#)) would reform this process with gradual repayments and the option to appeal for debt forgiveness.

The momentum from this year’s Advocacy in Action campaign have certainly made a difference on many of the key issues that MOAA hopes to be included in this year’s final bill. Continued grassroots support will be key to getting these items over the finish line and enacted to support our troops, families, retirees, and their survivors.

MOAA Interview: Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., Air Force Chief of Staff

(Adapted from an article originally appearing in the July 2021 Military Officer magazine)

Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr. became a point of pride in the Air Force’s rich history when he was confirmed as the service’s 22nd chief of staff — marking the first time a Black general took the helm of the service. As he wrapped up his first year, Brown reflected on his experiences and shared his vision for the future of the Air Force with Lt.

Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret), MOAA’s president and CEO. The interview was edited for length and clarity.

Q. What is the Air Force doing to improve diversity and inclusion?

A. After George Floyd’s passing, we conducted an independent racial disparity review that was mostly focused on African Americans. Then we started a secondary study ... to look at a broader audience of our diverse candidate populations inside the Air Force. We’re taking a look now at some of the root causes of why we see some of these disparities, and it’s forced us to think about some of the data that we collect; the data that we do have that we probably haven’t looked at as well; and thinking about how we discipline and how we use our disciplinary tools, promotion eligibility, and career development. It’s opened up a great conversation inside the Air Force.

Q. What is the Air Force doing to meet the challenges of recruiting?

A. If you want to serve, we’re going to look at opportunities at how we might bring you into the Air Force throughout the total force. That, to me, is the approach. Recruiters typically would visit schools and strip malls — well, they’ve got to be a little more creative. There was a video shared with me about a recruiter in Mississippi. He’s got a whole rap video about Team Blue, about being part of the Air Force. It’s extremely well done. You’ve got to love the ingenuity and innovation of our airmen and our recruiters to do something like that, to grab a young person’s attention and go, “There are some opportunities inside of our United States Air Force.”

Q. How is virtual reality (VR) helping advance training in the Air Force?

A. Virtual reality is a bit more immersive. The other aspect of this is being able to tailor the course pathway to the student versus one-size-fits-all. Before students even start flying, they get a set of VR goggles. They can actually sit in a chair in a room in their house and fly the [Visual Flight Rules] pattern before they even got in an airplane because you put a GoPro [camera] on somebody’s helmet, and then they talk through all the things they’re seeing.

Q. Tell me about the Air Force’s priority of nuclear recapitalization.

A. For a number of years, we’ve looked at this and then kind of pushed it to the side for other priorities. I don’t know that we can push it aside anymore. As we continue with the programs we have, our adversaries — particularly our great power competitors — have been modernizing over the past several years. So, we have to

take a hard look at how we modernize to maintain the triad.

Q. Tell me about your emphasis on developing young leaders.

A. How do we develop better leaders and empower them to make decisions? I do believe that goes from my level down to our first-line supervisors. I think about the dynamics we’re living in today ... COVID, racial disparity, sexual assault, suicides, other stressors ... we’ve got to develop leaders that can handle those and work and lead the airmen and families. It’s giving them the right tools so they can feel comfortable leading and making those decisions.

Q. How is the Air Force working to reduce sexual assault and harassment?

A. We need to focus more on how we prevent the event and create the culture and environment where all of our airmen can reach their full potential. This is what goes back to developing those leaders that hold all of our airmen accountable on what we expect in accordance with our core values. That, to me, is the most important thing we can do in addition to the programs we lay out. It requires leadership at the lower levels to put these programs in place and give them life to drive that prevention. At the same time, we’ve got to support those that become victims of sexual assault, sexual harassment, or any other interpersonal violence or harassment.

Q. What books are on your reading list for airmen?

A. *Lincoln on Leadership* by Donald T. Phillips (Warner Books Inc., 1992), *The Infinite Game* by Simon Sinek (Portfolio, 2019), and *No Rules Rules: Netflix and the Culture of Reinvention* by Reed Hastings and Erin Meyer (Penguin Press, 2020).

**Compiled and Edited by
Captain Ken Pyle, USN (Ret)**

Now and Always
We'll be There.

★

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AUGUST SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS BANQUET

Thursday, August 19, 2021

Social hour: 1730 – 1830
Dinner: 1830

Pensacola Yacht Club
[1897 West Cypress Street](#)
Pensacola, FL 32502
Cost is \$30 per person

Menu

(1) Seasoned Baked Salmon topped with a Lemon Butter Sauce, served with Parmesan Risotto and Sautéed Green Beans

OR

(2) Grilled New York Strip topped with Chimichurri Demi Glaze Sauce, served with Parmesan Risotto and Sautéed Green Beans

OR

(3) Vegetarian Entree

All served with:

Mixed Green Salad served with choice of Buttermilk Herb and Balsamic Vinaigrette Dressing

Warm Dinner Rolls served with Whipped Butter

Dessert: Chocolate and Lemon Crème Cake
(Alternate at each place setting)

Coffee, Iced Tea and Water

Cash bar available

Guest Speaker:

**Captain Timothy Kinsella, Jr. USN
NAS Pensacola Commanding Officer**

Please R.S.V.P. by Sunday, 15 August 2021 to
LCDR Ray Judd, USN (Ret)
Email: thejuddsf@cox.net or
Phone: 850-456-8104 or
<http://pmoaa.org/Calendar.aspx?ID=42>

No Exceptions. Meals are ordered based on accepted reservations. Phone/email/web reservations are considered committed and are payable at the door.

Web Reservations – Be sure you receive an email confirmation, otherwise your reservation was not recorded.

Deadline for RSVP is: 8/15/2021

2021 PMOAA SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

This year, PMOAA celebrates its 27th year of providing college scholarships. Many thanks to committee members, Maj Charley Booton and COL Walt Sawyer. We have been working tirelessly to do the best job selecting outstanding students to receive the funds our membership and sponsors have provided. The awards dinner will be your only opportunity to meet and greet these students. And the winning raffle tickets will be drawn after dinner. Don't miss this one. Make your reservations early. **YOU MUST HAVE A RESERVATION TO ATTEND.**

**Mrs. Elizabeth Richbourg
Scholarship Chair**

SCHOLARSHIP DONATION FORM

Please accept my/our gift of \$_____ to support the PMOAA Scholarship Fund.

This gift is being made in honor of, or in memory of:

Donor Information:

Name

Address

Phone

Email

Please send an acknowledgement to:

Name

Address

Phone

Your gift is tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. Mail your donation payable to:

**PMOAA Scholarship Fund, P.O. Box 17728
Pensacola, FL 32501**

Thank you for your support!

2021 PMOAA MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

(Please Print)

Today’s Date: _____

FULL NAME: (Last) (First) (Middle)

RANK/SERVICE: _____

Circle:

Active Duty Retired Reserve Guard Former Surviving Spouse

SPOUSE/SIGNIFICANT OTHER: _____

ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER: (Home) (Cell)

EMAIL ADDRESS: (For Official Chapter Communications/Use)

Member of National MOAA: Y / N

My MOAA Number is: _____

Life member: Y / N

Please check all PMOAA activities in which you, or your spouse, can assist:

- Chapter Officer Website Administrator
Chapter Director Membership Recruiting
Survivor Assistance Committee Beacon Editor
Accounting/Finance Public Relations/ Advertising
ROTC/JROTC Liaison Program/Event Coordinator
Scholarship Committee Photographer
Legislative Affairs

Membership Dues:
\$20.00/year (E-Beacon)
\$32.00/year (Mailed Beacon)

Surviving Spouse (Auxiliary) Dues:
\$20.00/year (E-Beacon)
\$32.00/year (Mailed Beacon)

Social Member (only for grandfathered members):
\$12.00 to receive Mailed Beacon

TAX-DEDUCTIBLE SCHOLARSHIP CONTRIBUTION

TOTAL ENCLOSED

Make check payable to PMOAA and mail to:
Membership, PMOAA
P.O. Box 17728
Pensacola, FL 32501-7728

ROWWA

Greetings Ladies,

Welcome again to our 50th Anniversary Year!

Although we are all still dealing with the uncertainties of COVID-19 and the Variant, we are all encouraged by the availability of the vaccine in Northwest Florida and safe practices of the local restaurants.

As you may already know, May was our last meeting before the summer break as we do not meet in the months of June, July, and August. We look forward to you all joining us again for our Membership Luncheon to be held on Thursday, 9 September 2021 at Bonefish Grill on 12th Avenue at our usual time, 1100 hours.

Eligibility for Membership in ROWWA:
Wives and Widows of Retired Military Officers and Retired Women Officers. Guests are welcome. Annual Dues are \$15, due in September and may be paid at the door or mailed to our ROWWA President:
Brynne Cook
5810 Admiral Doyle Rd.
Pensacola, FL 32506

Membership information and Directory updates, please contact Molly Werner:
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Very Respectfully submitted by,
Molly Werner, Membership Chairman, ROWWA
for ROWWA Publicity Chairman Ruth Nichols

This nation will remain the
land of the free only so long
as it is the home of the brave.

Elmer Davis



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