



COLUMBIA RIVER CHAPTER

NEWSLETTER

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION of AMERICA

P.O. BOX 1872 VANCOUVER, WA 98668



ESTABLISHED 1970

March 2007

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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John Donnelly
360-260-7284

1st Vice-President:

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360-891-5605

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360-882-1275

Secretary:

Beth Brown
360-260-9845

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360-210-4654

Immediate Past President:

Terry Babin
360-835-5349

Chaplain:

Wilton Carter
360-571-7288

Army Rep:

Ron Thomas
360-573-4624

Navy Rep:

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360-573-5714

Coast Guard Rep:

C. S. Wetherell
630-254-1875

Marine Rep:

Mike Stein
360-835-9336

Air Force Rep:

George Dashney
360-256-6513

Public Health Rep:

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360-892-2638

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360-573-5974

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360-834-2448

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360-573-5281

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360-931-5298

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Paul Crosby
360-666-8871

In the past month we found another organization that will be deploying in March for stateside training and then overseas in April. Marv Serhan found Terri Nickle, a Navy ombudsman for **CHB-5, a cargo handling battalion**. Navy CHBs are Naval reserve commissioned units tasked with loading and unloading all classes of cargo, except bulk petroleum. They are a selective reserve Advanced Base Functional Component unit of the Naval Expeditionary

Logistics Support Force capable of worldwide deployment in its entirety or as specialized detachments. Approximately 30 personnel will deploy with this unit.

Since we still had \$500 from our fundraiser awaiting a decision from Penney's for gift certificates, the board decided to purchase 30 AT&T 150-minute telephone calling cards and two \$100 Wal-Mart gift cards for the Navy's CHB-5. Marv Serhan and I delivered the cards to Terri and CHB-5's XO, Commander Mark Braick, on 10 February, in time for the cards to be distributed to the troops as they deploy. Again, we thank all of our members for their generosity in

this year's fundraiser. We could not have helped so many different units without your support.

We will still pursue the Penney's donation for gift certificates where we can get a four to one return on our money to support the troops. Anyone interested in donating to that project, if it materializes, please let me know.

I also want to thank all of our members who took the time to fill out our survey and turn them in with your annual chapter dues.

The results of the survey show a lot of interest in support for our troops, our guest speakers, veteran's activities, legislative affairs and community involvement. We had seven members who expressed interest in becoming a service representative or committee member.

However, we did not have any members show an interest in becoming a chapter officer.

This is unfortunate as we can easily slide back into the pit we just climbed out of over the past four years. When the chapter appeared to be failing, we had several people come forward to help revitalize it. Now we need to sustain the chapter with new members and new officers.

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Marv Serhan (L) with CHB-5 XO, Cmdr Mark Braick, USNR and Terri Nickle, Naval Ombudsman at Swan Island.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE continued

We were fortunate to have Slats Wolfe and Beth Brown stay on for three years as Treasurer and Secretary. Fortunately Dave Shoemaker stepped up to the plate and volunteered to take on the Treasurer position, a key job in the organization. We now need to replace Beth as Secretary and we need to do it fast due to her failing eyesight.

The key requirements for secretary are organizational skills, basic computer skills and a love of meeting new people, as you will normally interact with all of our members over time. Currently our secretary takes and distributes the minutes for our board meetings, distributes the newsletter to our members after Rich Wersinger does his magic in

Tricare Task Force Convenes by John J. Donnelly

The congressionally chartered **DOD Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care**, mandated by the FY2007 Defense Authorization Act, is composed of 14 members appointed by the Secretary of Defense – 7 from DOD and 7 from outside. It is tasked with examining military health-care programs, structure, management and costs.

Congress required its formation mainly to examine the Pentagon's controversial proposal to triple and quadruple Tricare fees for retirees under the age of 65. The law requires the task force to provide interim recommendations to the House and Senate Armed Forces Service Committees by the end of May concerning beneficiary fees and cost-sharing.

MOAA and other military and veterans associations have already begun making our case to individual task force members, and MOAA expects to provide testimony to the task force before it makes its interim report.

Nevertheless, we can't ignore the obvious: **the Defense Department wants big fee increases, and the task force members were appointed by the Secretary of Defense.** Thus, we should not be surprised if it ends up recommending fee increases similar to those proposed by the Pentagon. So, once again MOAA will campaign to Congress to do the right thing.

Taking up the cudgel where they left off last year, **Tricare champions Rep. Chet Edwards (D-TX) and Walter Jones (R-NC) reintroduced their**

creating it, maintains a good email file of all our members, and keeps the board members straight as far as suspenses, etc. Anyone interested in coming forward to help the chapter in this important task, please contact myself or Beth Brown, who will be happy to talk to you about the position.

Don't forget that next month we will have an early meeting on 6 March, a Tuesday evening, as we will be joining the Portland Chapter for a traditional St. Paddy's Day dinner at PANG. **So help our new Treasurer out and get your RSVPs in early.** Saints and begorrah it will be a grand time in the old pub at PANG next month!

John J. Donnelly
President

"Military Retirees Health Care Protection Act" (H.R. 579). The new bill is similar to the one (H.R. 4949) they introduced last year, which gathered 164 co-sponsors and helped prevent imposition of Pentagon-proposed Tricare fee increases of up to \$1,000 a year for retired members, family members and survivors under age 65.

The Edwards-Jones Bill would remove the Pentagon's authority to increase Tricare fees, specifying that the authority should reside only with Congress. It would also establish certain principles in law, including:

~ Acknowledging that military members already pay very large premiums for their future care "up front" through decades of arduous service and sacrifice.

~ Acknowledging that the primary offset for enduring the extraordinary sacrifices inherent in a military career is a package of retirement and health benefits that must be considerably better than that afforded civilian workers; and

~ The principle that the percentage increase in health care fees in any year should not exceed the percentage increase in beneficiaries' military compensation.

Full information on H.R. 579 is posted on [MOAA's website](#), which has suggested messages for members to send to U.S. representative and urge them to co-sponsor the bill. Please take the time to urge our Washington State reps to support this bill!

Legislative Update by Dave Casteel

MOAA's Top 10 Legislative Goals for 2007 (and What You Can Do to Help)

- + Defend against shifting healthcare costs to beneficiaries
- + TRICARE upgrades
- + Repeal SBP/DIC offset
- + Full concurrent receipt
- + Accelerate 30-year fully paid up SBP
- + Military /private sector pay comparability
- + Guard / Reserve health / retirement upgrades
- + Military manpower relief
- + Improve military family support
- + Update GI Bill

Just because we now have a newly elected (and Democratically controlled) Congress does not mean we can sit back and feel veterans and their families will be taken care of. Remember, our elected officials have a number of competing interest groups who are requesting support and Congress only has finite resources. If we sit back and do nothing because we feel Congress will do what is right, Congress will think that we are satisfied with the status quo—and the best we can then hope for is to break even.

To counter this, you can contact your elected officials and tell them what you think on these issues. Even if you called or wrote your U.S. Senators or U.S. Representative last year some time does not mean you should not do it again. Remember, you elected them and they represent you. Therefore they need to hear from you—and hear from you frequently. They respond to numbers and they respond to repetition.

Last month, your Military Officer magazine had four full page tear outs to mail to key members of Congress. This is the easiest way to start. If you haven't done so already, simply tear them out, sign them (a polite hand-written note on the tear out is a nice touch), put a \$.39 cent on each of them and mail them.

Each month, call Senator Murray's and Cantwell's offices (and Representative Baird) using the MOAA toll free hotline (1-866-272-6622). Identify yourself as a national and local MOAA chapter member and tell your them your feelings on

these veteran's issues. Ask for the Senators'/ Representative's position as well. Thank them and tell them you will call back next month also (then put a tickler note on your calendar so you remember). Next month, remind them you called last month.,

If we hope to prevail for the rights of veterans, we must be consistent and persistent--make it a habit to call / contact them each and every month.



Newsletter Distribution

We are now distributing our newsletter by e-mail so if you are receiving this via postal service and would prefer e-mail please notify our Chapter Secretary, Beth Brown, ebrownrn@pacifier.com

Even if you have an e-mail address but wish to continue receiving newsletters and postcards by regular mail may also notify Beth at ebrownrn@pacifier.com or 360-260-9845.

Newsletter Editor

Newsletter Editor: Rich Wersinger. You can contact him at 360-901-1915 or e-mail him at rich@rjwconsulting.org.

Beth continues to coordinate calendar inputs and newsletter distribution. Please see the following article, **Chapter Secretary Resignation—Search for Successor**.

**Chapter Secretary Resignation—
Search for Successor**

Due to increasing vision problems I am unable to continue as your Chapter Secretary. Therefore, we are in need of a successor Secretary to complete my term, which ends in February 2008. It has been a privilege to be your Secretary and I plan to continue as an active member of the chapter. I am more than willing and available to work with the new Secretary to ease the transition. Please consider this as a rewarding opportunity and contact myself (360-260-9845) or John Donnelly (360-260-7284).

Rich Wersinger will continue as our newsletter editor.

Beth Brown, Secretary

Congressional Contacts

Congressman Brian Baird
Washington's 3rd Congressional District
<http://www.house.gov/baird/>

<p>Washington, DC Office: U.S. House of Representatives 1421 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-3536 Fax: (202) 225-3478</p>	<p>Vancouver, WA Office: O.O. Howard House 750 Anderson Street, Suite B Vancouver, WA 98661 Phone: (360) 695-6292 Fax: (360) 695-6197</p>
<p>Contact Congressman Baird via email: http://www.house.gov/baird/IMA/email.shtml</p>	

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell
<http://cantwell.senate.gov/>

<p>WASHINGTON, DC 717 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510 202-224-3441 202-228-0514 - FAX 202-224-8273 - TDD</p>	<p>SW WASHINGTON The Marshall House 1313 Officers Row Vancouver, WA 98661 360-696-7838 360-696-7844 – FAX</p>
<p>Contact Senator Cantwell Web page: http://cantwell.senate.gov/contact/</p>	

U.S. Senator Patty Murray <http://murray.senate.gov/>

<p>WASHINGTON, DC 173 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510 Phone: (202) 224-2621 Fax: (202) 224-0238</p>	<p>SW WASHINGTON The Marshall House 1323 Officer's Row Vancouver, Washington 98661 Phone: (360) 696-7797 Fax: (360) 696-7798</p>
<p>Contact Senator Murray via email: http://murray.senate.gov/email/index.cfm</p>	



MOAA Legislative Action Center
<http://www.moaa.org/Legislative/>

CHAPTER CALENDAR

6 March	Joint Meeting with Portland Chapter – PANG St. Paddy’s Day Festivities - Cocktails at 1700 Dinner Buffet of Corned Beef & Cabbage at 1830
19 April	Clark County Skill Center Luncheon - Noon Program: Joel Scott – Employer Support of The Guard and Reserves (ESGR)
17 May	Orchard Hills Country Club Dinner – 6 PM Possible Joint meeting with Portland Chapter
21 June	TBD

6 MARCH Meeting

Joint meeting with Portland Chapter
At Columbia River Point Club
Portland Air National Guard Base

Dinner Buffet to include;
Simmered Corn Beef and Cabbage
Irish Stew
Roasted Red Potatoes
Glazed Carrots
Tossed Green Salad
Corn Muffins
Mint Cheese Cake

Cost \$19 payable upon arrival

Cocktails at 1700, Buffet at 1830

Program: St. Paddy’s Day Festivities

RSVP to Dave Shoemaker by 2 March
at 210-4654 or docshoe@comcast.net

NOTE:

If you do not have a military ID card,
You need to be pre-registered at the gate -
let Dave know by noon Wednesday, 28 Feb.

All drivers should have their car registration
with them.

Directions:

Once you cross the I-205 Bridge south to
Portland, take Exit 23B for Columbia Blvd.
Go west on Columbia Blvd to 47th Avenue
N,E. take a right to go north on 47th to
Cornfoot Drive, take another right going
east on Cornfoot to the Air National Guard
Base.

