



COLUMBIA RIVER CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

4-Star Excellence Chapter



MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION of AMERICA
P.O. BOX 1872 VANCOUVER, WA 98668

ESTABLISHED 1970

website: www.moaacolumbiariver.org

September 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

President:

Rod Williams
503-317-2273

**1st Vice-President:
& Membership:**

**2nd Vice-President:
& Programs**

Secretary: (acting)

Dave Casteel

Treasurer: (acting)

Rod Williams

**Immediate Past
President,**

Evelyn Brady
360-721-0865

CRMF president:

Dave Casteel
360-834-2448

Army Rep:

Jon Frederick
360-576-9078

Marine Rep:

Terry Babin
360-608-7789

Navy Rep:

Rich Wersinger
360-901-1915

Air Force Rep:

Jeremy Baenen
360-281-9998

Public Health Rep:

Chris Rubadue
425-269-1902

Surviving Spouse

Liaison:

Terry Whisenant
360-576-7736

Legislative Affairs:

Buck Marr
757-636-8686

Membership Services:

Terry Babin
360-608-7789

Public Affairs:

John Donnelly
360-721-3792

Scholarship:

Paul Crosby
360-666-8871

Chaplain:

Rev Max Metcalf
541-961-0869

Roster Manager:

Mike Ellis
360-910-0625

My fervent wish is each of you receives this newsletter in good health and good spirits despite the difficult times 2020 has brought our way. The fire season is not fully past us but really gave all of us in Southwest Washington quite a scare this month. Even if the September fires were not near you, the heavy smoke was on top of us all. Add that to the long-term restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic and I admit feeling caged up and maybe a bit melancholy. Then we had our chapter September membership meeting and a few chats with long time friends and making a new contact and I cheered right back up.

Oh, did you miss the meeting? You are in good company as we had an exceptionally light turn out for our first virtual general membership meeting. Those on our email list should have received an invite to the September 17th meeting from **Dave Casteel** as our acting secretary. It being the first meeting via ZOOM we anticipated a turn out less than usual for our standard meeting. The good news is those who attended heard some good information from **Harold Abrams** the Vice President of Development for Clark College Foundation. He also shared some tax tips from his experience as an estate planning attorney. Attendees said they found the virtual or ZOOM meeting format to be a good alternative and encouraged us to continue using this format until we can meet in person again.

**We cannot wait to
be with you all
soon!**

You will not want to miss our next meeting on October 15th at 11:00 AM with **Greg Kimsey**, who has been the Clark County Auditor since 1999, as our speaker. As Clark County Auditor Greg supervises and administers federal, state, and local elections conducted in the county. Greg will provide current information on the voting process and election status in Clark County. Both major parties have raised questions about the Washington state mail in ballot process and election security. Join us and get the real news.



On other topics, in the newsletter you will see articles on how we are carrying on the business of the chapter in trying times. Please read the article from chapter legislative committee member **Major General Richard C. (Buck) Marr, USAF (Ret)** on current issues and the need for continued advocacy. He speaks to key issues which could prove problematic if our elected representatives do not deal with them timely.

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President's Message continued

I encourage each of you to go to the national MOAA web site at WWW.MOAA.org follow the links to the advocacy pages and use the links provided to send messages or call our congressional representatives about issues you support. You will also see an article from our scholarship committee chair, **Colonel Paul Crosby, USAF (Ret)** listing the four scholarship recipients for this year. On a related matter, see an article from our continuously busy President of the Columbia River MOAA Foundation (CRMF), **Colonel Dave Casteel, USAF (Ret)** announcing a scholarship fund raising effort. We hope through this effort we can recoup most of the donations we normally receive from our members at the September targeted fund raising activities. Please consider giving as you normally would (and maybe a bit more.)

Be safe and please take care of each other until we can meet again. If you have not seen one of your chapter friends in a while, give him/her a call and check in. Pass along any member news or information where the chapter can assist to any of the chapter leaders listed on the front page. Never stop serving!

Rod Williams
President



Chapter Volunteers Needed *by Rod Williams*

Presently we have **three openings** on the board:

Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary.

All our members have leadership experience and could capably fill any vacant roles.

Many of our spouses also bring skills and experience which make them excellent candidates. We encourage you to volunteer, too.

The frequently repeated idiom “it takes a village” is especially true about our chapter. It takes many hands to carry the load and not be a heavy burden on any one person.

- **Vice President** – can be tailored to fit any willing and able applicants to help us with programs, membership, recruiting, and advocacy activities.
- **Secretary** – some computer skills but does not have to an expert.
- **Treasurer** – does not require an accountant. Balancing and maintaining a checking account is the key skill.

There are written procedures and years of documented practice for both the Secretary and Treasurer roles. If you think you can help, contact me, Rod Williams (503) 317-2273 or rodwill50@hotmail.com

We need you!



CRMF September 2020 Update

by Dave Casteel

Dave Casteel (shilohcamas@comcast.net or CRMFpresident@comcast.net)

By now, you should all have received the letter asking for your support of our fall scholarship fundraising effort. As you know, we have not been able to meet socially as a chapter since our January annual meeting and election of officers. It's been way too long! I was really hoping we could all meet in person at our Fall Annual Scholarship fundraising BBQ and have a joyous reunion—but it was not to be. Looking back, it was just three years ago we had ash showering down on us, and this year the smoke was so bad we couldn't have had the BBQ even if we were in Phase Three. By the time you read this, the smoke will be gone, and I hope COVID-19 is also. Not having the barbecue meant not being able to see all our MOAA friends; not handing out the Five Star MOAA awards for Newsletter and Website excellence; and not receiving your generous scholarship donations.

Even if donations from this appeal equal the three year average receipt at the in-person BBQ, the CRMF will still end the year with assets slightly below the three year reserve requirement. Without this appeal, we will be well below our three year reserve requirement. The loss of these donations diminishes our future ability to continue to support our scholarship recipients at a level to which we are accustomed.

We ask your understanding and support of this appeal. In this newsletter, we are announcing the names of this year's four scholarship recipients, and very much hope we can all meet in December to celebrate and meet these deserving men and women.

On another note, I hope all of you have linked your Fred Meyer Rewards card to the Columbia River MOAA Foundation (CRMF) and did the same with your SMILE.AMAZON.com account. It all adds up and it is an easy way for you to make a difference that counts. If you want to sign up and can't locate the instructions, please let me know.

I really hope to see all of you again very soon.

Dave Casteel

Give 50* for our 50th Chapter Anniversary!

Please find \$_____ (check #_____) enclosed to support chapter scholarships for deserving veteran students at Clark and WSU-V

This donation is made in the memory of: _____

I agree to have my name(s) and in Memory of (without \$ amount) listed in the newsletter as a donor: YES NO (circle one)

Please contact me concerning other ways to give. YES NO (circle one)

Name: _____

Phone: _____ email: _____

*Note, we encourage and will gladly accept donations in multiples of \$50.00 (or any amount you are willing to donate).

Please mail your donation (with the above information) to: Columbia River MOAA Foundation (CRMF) at PO Box 1872, Vancouver, WA 98668

Membership Services' News

by Terry Babin

The Pandemic, and steps each of us individually and collectively must take for safety, have created unusual challenges. The public safety challenges have also added to the Columbia River Chapter's challenge of having sufficient participation in leadership roles. While I leave it to our Chapter President to outline the needs, I feel that I should weigh-in on the appeal for help. Priority is to fill vacant key officer positions. Next is having adequate leadership to cover key functions—like Membership Services.

One of the primary functions of the Membership Services Committee is the “Keeping Connected” semi-annual phone call program. We probably needed this program more than ever this past spring, and now need to get it going for this fall if possible. Unfortunately, last February, I was hospitalized with what turned out to be an unexpected long-term health issue for which I continue to receive intensive treatments. I had, therefore, to resign my position as Membership Services Committee Chairman.

To date we have no one who has volunteered to cover the part of my previous responsibilities as the Keeping Connected Call Coordinator—a function I am currently unable to do. Almost everything is set up to resurrect the program. Basic knowledge of EXCEL spreadsheet use, and using e-mail are the only two technical items involved. Most messages to callers and the Final Call Report are set up as templates requiring only updates to the information unique for a call series. I can “coach” a Call Coordinator through the steps; just cannot provide the availability for oversight to work with the callers and consolidate the call results for forwarding to the Executive Board for action after the month-long call series. There are detailed notes and instructions in the Committee's Desktop Procedures Manual.

If you can help, please let our Chapter President know. If you would like more information about what is involved, and the time/effort needed, before deciding to call our President, then call me ((360) 608-7789).

Vancouver Barracks Post Cemetery

The administration and management of the Post Cemetery (just off Interstate-5 and Fourth Plain Avenue in Vancouver; near the VA Campus) has been transferred from the Department of the Army to the Veterans Administration. Current information on burial eligibility and procedures for requesting burial at the cemetery can be found on the VA website under the cemeteries tab. Hopefully, several problems encountered in recent years, the confusion about burial sites being available, and eligibility will not reoccur.

Dependent Military Identification (ID) Cards

Check the expiration date on your Dependent ID card(s). Expiring before November 1, 2020, or shortly thereafter?

Latest advisory I received indicated that there is at least a 30-day waiting period for dependents of retirees (including Surviving Spouses) to get a renewal and DEERS update (includes Tricare coverage when applicable). Call the Reserve Center in Vancouver at (719) 366-5402 to get the latest information on card renewals, and procedures. New card issue and renewals are now by appointment only—NO more walk-ins. If trying to make an appointment, you will probably be prompted to leave a voicemail. Expect several days before receiving a return call to set the date and time for the appointment.

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Membership Services' News continued

Death of a Surviving Spouse

If you are a Survivor receiving annuity payments from the government, make sure a family member or personal representative know that upon your death, prompt notification needs to be made to the following agencies:

Survivor Benefits' Plan (or equivalent) recipients:

Army, Navy, Marine, and Air Force:	1-800-321-1080
NOAA and Coast Guard	1-800-772-8724
US Public Health Service	1-800-638-8744

Civil Service (Office of Personnel Mgt)	1-888-767-6738
Social Security	1-800-772-1213
Veterans Administration	1-800-827-1000

These are the listing I presently have on file. If you know of any recent changes, please let me know.

Terry Babin



Scholarship Corner 2020
by Paul Crosby

It is September and I have the pleasure to introduce the Chapter’s four 2020-2021 school year Clark and WSU-Vancouver scholarship recipients.

It doesn’t look like you or I will meet the scholarship recipients before the chapter’s holiday social now planned for December 6th. We can hope that we will be able to meet and greet at that time.

Here are the recipients of all four scholarships for this school year:

Clark College Scholarships		
Emma Johnson	Pre-Nursing	Colonel James Chriss
Frank Bowers	Music	Colonel Daniel Doty
Erin Lysne	Geology	Captain Robert Fenning
WSO-Vancouver Scholarship		
Travis Davis	Nursing	Colonel Paul and Ivadell Crosby

I am optimistic that each of them will have the opportunity to tell us more about themselves at the holiday social or in the coming months at a chapter meeting.



What You Should Know About a New \$300 Charitable Tax Deduction

By:Shane Ostrom, Lt.Col.,USAF (Ret), CFP

SEPTEMBER 23, 2020

Have you heard the news? With all the changes in the financial world due to the virus, maybe this one slipped by you.

For those of you who use the standard deduction, when you fill out your IRS form 1040 for 2020, you will be allowed to write off up to \$300 — cash only — from income for a charitable deduction. The definition of “charitable organization” will be specific; it appears donor advised funds and certain organizations that support charities won’t qualify. (This is not available to itemizers.)

The 2020 IRS forms have not been released yet, so this is the predicted game plan:

[The IRS Form 1040](#) will have a new line to insert your charitable contribution. On the draft form 1040 for 2020, it is line 10b on the front of the form. It will be an “above-the-line” reduction in your income and establishes your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI). It appears, but is not yet verified, that you will get \$300 per form 1040, not \$600 per joint filing.

This provision also appears to only be available in 2020. Don’t count on it repeating next year. Standard deductions for 2020 are \$12,400 for singles and \$24,800 for joint filers.

With this provision, you can get up to \$300 off your income for the year. For those of you crunching the numbers, this does not mean big bucks. But hey, it’s something, right? [Consider donating it to your MOAA charities](#) or to your local chapter’s charitable efforts.

The exact details and how all of the rules will work are not yet known. Consult your tax specialist for more details as details are released.

(From MOAA website 25 September 2020)



Chapter ~ Membership Eligibility

Chapter membership is open to active duty, National Guard, Reserve, retired, and former commissioned officers and warrant officers of the following uniformed services: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Surviving spouses of deceased officers are also eligible to join.

Columbia River Chapter ~ Affiliate

Our chapter is an affiliate of the 390,000 member national MOAA which is the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. MOAA and the chapter are nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organizations. Our chapter is an IRC 501(c)19 war veterans organization.

Newsletter Editor

Our Chapter Secretary coordinates calendar inputs and newsletter distribution.

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

Newsletter Distribution

We continue to distribute our newsletter by e-mail. If you are receiving this via postal service and would prefer e-mail please notify **Rod Williams**, our Chapter President at 503-317-2273 or rodwill50@hotmail.com.





Legislative Contacts

MOAA Legislative Action Center

<http://www.moaa.org/Legislative/>

MOAA Capitol toll free hotline at 1-866-272-6622

White House

Comments: 202-456-1111 Switchboard: 202-456-1414
FAX: 202-456-2461 E-mail: comments@whitehouse.gov

The U.S. Government's Portal: <http://www.usa.gov/>
U.S. Senate: <http://www.senate.gov/>
U.S. House of Representatives: <http://www.house.gov/>

**Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler
Washington's 3rd Congressional District**

<http://herrerabeutler.house.gov/>



Washington, DC Office: U.S. House of Representatives 1107 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-3536 Fax: (202) 225-3478	Vancouver, WA Office: O.O. Howard House 750 Anderson Street, Suite B Vancouver, WA 98661 Phone: (360) 695-6292 Fax: (360) 695-6197
Contact Congresswoman Herrera Beutler via email: https://herrerabeutler.house.gov/contact/	

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

WASHINGTON, DC 511 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510 202-224-3441 202-228-0514 - FAX 202-224-8273 - TDD	SW WASHINGTON The Marshall House 1313 Officers Row Vancouver, WA 98661 360-696-7838 360-696-7844 – FAX	SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 915 Second Avenue Suite 3206 Seattle, WA 98174. 206-220-6400 206-220-6404 - FAX
Contact Senator Cantwell via email: https://www.cantwell.senate.gov/contact/email/form		

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

WASHINGTON, DC 154 Russell Senate Office Building Washington, D.C. 20510 Phone: (202) 224-2621 Fax: (202) 224-0238	SW WASHINGTON The Marshall House 1323 Officer's Row Vancouver, Washington 98661 Phone: (360) 696-7797 Fax: (360) 696-7798	SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 2988 Jackson Federal Building 915 Second Avenue Seattle, WA 98174 Phone: (206) 553-5545 Toll Free: (866) 481-9186 Fax: (206) 553-0891
Contact Senator Murray via email: https://www.murray.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contactme		

Vancouver Area Washington State Legislative Districts and Representatives

Legislator	District 49	District 17	District 18	District 14	District 20
Senator	Annette Cleveland 786-7696	Lynda Wilson 786-7632	Ann Rivers 786-7634	Curtis King 786-7626	John Braun 786-7638
Representative, Position 1	Sharon Wylie 786-7924	Vicki Kraft 786-7994	Brandon Vick 786-7850	Chris Corry 786-7810	Richard DeBolt 786-7896
Representative, Position 2	Monica Stonier 786-7872	Paul Harris 786-7976	Larry Hoff 786-7812	Gina Mosbrucker 786-7856	Ed Orcutt 786-7990

Note: All phone numbers are 360 area code, except where otherwise noted. Toll free **1-800-562-6000**
More info at www.leg.wa.gov/legislature

Federal Legislative Update:*by Buck Marr*

“Our best weapon remains an engaged membership; keep reaching out to your lawmakers, encourage fellow members and others to do the same, and help us find success in another critical stretch of our history.” -Col Dan Merry, USAF (Ret) MOAA VP of Government Relations September 1, 2020.

Anybody notice life has changed in 2020? It is unlikely that 2020 will go down as anybody’s favorite. One thing that has not changed is the ongoing requirement to fulfill MOAA’s Advocacy Mission...federal and state. As a matter of fact, it is even more important in these turbulent times than ever before.

The word “advocacy” is overworked, losing its intended meaning and importance. In short, “advocacy” is the act of speaking out on behalf of another person or group of people. Through advocacy we MOAA-ites hope to ensure that the voices of veterans and their families are heard on issues of importance to them. Through articulate and frequent group advocacy, we want those who represent us in the government to protect and support the views of our constituency when decisions are made affecting their lives.

As a perennial 5/4-Star Level of Excellence Chapter, our members need to be leaders in advocating for our military constituency. Times are tough. The pandemic and the election season alone are creating havoc in every corner of our Nation. The federal legislative process is grinding forward in virtual anonymity. Decisions are being made with less scrutiny and debate by Congressional members who have the lowest military experience in the past 30 years. Less than 2% of the Congressional staffers have military experience.

The raucous Federal legislative landscape demands we double down on our advocacy for three big reasons: the November elections present the possibility of an Administration change with inherent budget priority shifts; the distinct possibility of not having a FY21 budget with a governmental shutdown at the end of FY20; and, a series of concurrent resolutions funding minimal government

operations for the remainder of 2020. We must remember that Congress in 14 of the last 19 years has failed to pass a budget, choosing to pass Continuing Resolutions instead.

We all remember the catastrophic impact the 2019 CR’s caused for the Coast Guard? Lawmakers generally don’t understand the painful impact of these scenarios on the entire cross section of military personnel—past and present.

Here is a list of “top shelf” current issues which we must advocate for in force:

The NDAA is a priority for Congress. It is the single most important document in our federal advocacy world. If Congress gets a bill to the President, it will be the 60th year in a row Congress has gotten this legislation to the President on time. MOAA’s Summer Storm campaign focused on healthcare concerns like military treatment facility downsizing, medical billet cuts, realignment of treatment facilities to the Defense Health Agency. Keep your eye on these.

Update: On Sept 22, the House passed a stopgap continuing resolution Bill which would keep the government open including the Department of Defense until Dec 11. If the Senate passes the bill it goes to the President for signing. The downside is that it effectively pushes talks about federal spending onto a lame duck Congress who is already immersed in numerous contentious issues, pre-election give and take plus a high-stakes fight over filling a vacancy on the Supreme Court. It is imperative we not let numerous red-letter veteran issues get lost in the legislative whirlwind.

Another very important healthcare issue is flying somewhat under the radar. TRICARE contracts are scheduled for recompetes with new contracts in place in 2022. The Request for Proposals indicate a desire by the government to improve patient access and quality of care but also have appeared to create the possibility for large beneficiary costs with confusing care networks.

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Federal Legislative Update continued

The Armed Forces privatized housing program is a disaster. There is a long list of fixes required and they will require dollars. The inevitable continuing resolution will add to the problems. A personal side note here. I was a Wing Commander when DOD privatized housing maintenance. I remember attending high level meetings and joining most of my fellow commanders in predicting the program would be a failure. Years later it is just that and it is costing millions to rectify the issues. We must advocate for the Government to fix housing for our families.

A major issue for Reservists is equalizing hazardous duty incentive pay. The active force receives higher pay than reservists. The House version of the NDAA fixes this situation.

Currently, both political parties support a military pay raise. The threat is that post-election, the winning political party cuts the pay to fund election promises.

MOAA supports the Senate's proposal to add three agent orange presumptives to the list of conditions linked to agent orange: bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson's symptoms.

Update: Sen. Jon Tester, Veterans Affairs Minority Leader led a bipartisan effort of 45 other senators in sending letters on Sept 22 to leaders of the Senate committees, imploring them to amend the fiscal 2021 National Defense Authorization Act to add bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism to the VA's list of conditions linked to herbicide exposure in Vietnam and elsewhere. The timetable for the NDAA conference committee does not look good for conference action until after the Nov 3 election allowing the VA to continue to hold out for two research reports confirming the need to add the presumptive diseases to the list of conditions linked to agent orange. Meanwhile 34,000 suffering veterans remain unsupported.

Independent of the NDAA is the legislation for concurrent receipt of disability/ retirement compensation for servicemembers unable to complete 20 years of service due to combat injuries.

This year's legislative activities call for "all hands" on deck! Our people are counting on us.

Secretary of State: Registered voters in Washington do not need to request a mail-in ballot***September 11, 2020 · News Release***

OLYMPIA — Washington state voters may soon receive a postcard from the U.S. Postal Service encouraging voters to "plan ahead" for the Nov. 3 General Election. Among the recommendations is to request a mail-in or absentee ballot at least 15 days before Election Day.

The following is a statement by the Office of the Secretary of State in response to the "If you plan to vote by mail, plan ahead." postcard.

"Voters in Washington do not need to request a ballot, as ballots are automatically mailed to all registered voters at least 18 days prior to Election Day. There is no need to sign up or request to receive a mail-in ballot to vote in the upcoming election," said Secretary of State Kim Wyman. "Voters who are unsure if they are registered or if their address on file is current can log in to VoteWA.gov to confirm their registration information.

"The Office of the Secretary of State and county election officials were not made aware this mailer would be sent to Washington residents, nor were we apprised of its content. By the time we learned of the mailer and reached out to the postal service to inquire further, the mailers were already in the mail stream."

Secretary Wyman recommends Washingtonians visit sos.wa.gov/elections for more information about election dates and deadlines, and how to locate a county elections office if they have any questions or concerns.

The 2020 General Election is Nov. 3.

