



COLUMBIA RIVER CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

5-Star Excellence Chapter



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

ESTABLISHED 1970

website: www.moaacolumbiariver.org

September 2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

President:
Rod Williams
503-317-2273
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& Membership:**

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

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Jim Morse
360-433-5605

Treasurer: (acting)
Rod Williams

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President,**

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360-721-0865

CRMF president:
Dave Casteel
360-834-2448

Army Rep:
Jon Frederick
360-576-9078

Marine Rep:
Terry Babin
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Navy Rep:
Rich Wersinger
360-901-1915

Air Force Rep:
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425-269-1902

**Surviving Spouse
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360-576-7736

Legislative Affairs:
Buck Marr
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Membership Services:
Terry Babin
360-608-7789

Public Affairs:
John Donnelly
360-721-3792

Scholarship:
Paul Crosby
360-666-8871

Chaplain:

Roster Manager:

The latest COVID-19 updates show Southwest Washington continues to feel the sting of rising case numbers – with the highest activity rates we’ve seen since January. **Governor Jay Inslee** stated in his September 9 press conference hospitals across Washington are being over-run by COVID admissions and demands for ICU beds. As result he expanded existing mask mandates to require masks at outdoor events of more than 500 people.

Go to the Washington state Department of Health’s Public Health Connection (<https://medium.com/wadepthealth>) for the latest information.

Given the average age and health conditions of many of our members, our chapter executive board decided to again discontinue in person membership meetings for the remainder of 2021. We will revisit this decision in January 2022 in hopes the numbers of COVID hospital admissions and deaths drop.

What does this mean to you and the chapter?

- The September 18th Scholarship Fundraiser and BBQ is canceled. You will be receiving a fund raiser appeal letter from our Columbia River MOAA Foundation (CRMF) President, **Dave Casteel**, and myself shortly. Last year we had

good support from a similar appeal and as you will see elsewhere in this newsletter it meant we have been able to continue doing the



community support work essential to the goals of our chapter. Please continue your support.

- The October 21st planned meeting at the Touchmark facility on

Village Loop in Vancouver has been cancelled. This facility has shut down visitation for key parts of their program and facility. They asked if we would reschedule in 2022 when things get better. We will hold a ZOOM meeting on that date instead. The speaker and program are yet to be confirmed.

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President's Message continued

- The November traditional Thanksgiving social for November 18th has been canceled. We will hold a ZOOM meeting on that date instead. The speaker and program are yet to be confirmed.
- The December 5th annual Holiday Scholarship Dinner has been canceled. Each year we invite our local scholarship recipients to join us. As we did last year, we will hold a ZOOM meeting on that date instead. It is always great to hear how each recipient is using this program to advance their education plans.

Now for some good news. In the June newsletter I was able to announce our chapter newsletter and website were recognized by MOAA national for the Colonel Marvin J. Harris Communications Award at the five-star level.

In August I received a message from MOAA national congratulating us on the chapter's selection as a 2020 Levels of Excellence Five-Star Award winner! They recognized our "efforts throughout 2020 to contribute to grassroots advocacy, impactful community service, and membership growth; and "well-done" on achieving success during a particularly challenging year."

I will be going to the annual meeting in Washington DC to receive the award in October. **Dave Casteel** will also be going to receive this award as President of the Washington State Council of Chapters (WSCOC). I have already highlighted some of the community service activities which contributed to this award, but a major factor is the grassroots advocacy of the chapter. Please read the article in this newsletter from our legislative chair, **MG Buck Marr**, to get a thorough update on critical issues.

I would be much remiss in a September newsletter if I did not mention and honor the service and sacrifices on 9/11/2001. We may not all agree with the timing and manor of our recent departure from Afghanistan. Those who served during what has been called "America's longest war" must be supported and respected for their service and sacrifices. MOAA President and CEO **Lt Gen Dana Atkins (USAF Ret)**

stated this well in his Sep 8 message, "The continuing tragedy in Afghanistan has left many of us thinking of those we have lost and those still suffering. Though the long war in Afghanistan has come to a close, it is time to care for our servicemembers, their families, veterans and surviving spouses. In the coming months there will be an opportunity for Congress to support our uniformed community and address injustices many from the Vietnam era still endure. The Sept. 11 anniversary and the end of the war in Afghanistan is a time for us to reflect on keeping promises to our currently serving and retired personnel — especially those we lost and those who were injured in combat."

Rod Williams
President

Happy 100th Birthday!

Happy birthday to our oldest chapter member, Grace Wetherell, who turned 100 on September 4th, 2021.

We Mourn The Passing Of LTCOL Dave Difford



Dave Difford, USAF Lt Col Retired and WWII veteran, died at age of 105 August 22 2021 at the Touchmark at Fairway Village. He graduated from the University of Kentucky ROTC in 1936 and served from 1941 to 1945 as Base Engineer of Enid Army Air Force Base (now Vance AFB (ATC). He was presented with the US Flag at Memorial Day services at Touchmark this year.

Chapter Volunteers Needed by Rod Williams

Presently we have **one opening** on the board:

Vice President.

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.

If you think you can help, contact me, **Rod Williams** (503) 317-2273 or rodwill50@hotmail.com

We need you!



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, Space 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 more than 350,000 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, **Jim Morse**, coordinates calendar inputs and newsletter distribution. You can contact him at 360-433-5605 or email him at jlmorse77@gmail.com

Newsletter Editor: **Rich Wersinger**. You can contact him at 360-901-1915 or e-mail him at rich@simplyexplainit.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 **Jim Morse**, our Chapter Secretary at 503-360-433-5605 or jlmorse77@gmail.com.



CRMF August 2021**Update by Frank Hill Treasurer**

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

It's been a busy couple of months for the CRMF, with more on the horizon. But that's good news because it means your donations are being put to work assisting veterans and their families.

Our annual scholarships have been awarded and were paid for last spring. They consisted of three \$1,000 scholarships to Clark College students, and one \$1,500 scholarship to a WSU-Vancouver student.

There is some really great news related to our Scholarship efforts. As you know, initial funding toward the "*Colonel Paul S. and Ivadell M. Crosby Columbia River MOAA Foundation Scholarship Fund*" at WSU began with a generous donation from the **Crosbys** plus a smaller donation from the CRMF. These donations, totaling \$14,600, are being held in a "Current Use Fund" pending CRMF donating the remaining \$10,400 needed to reach the \$25,000 Scholarship Gift Use Agreement (formerly 'Endowment') minimum. Our plans were to make donations over time and as funds were available until the minimum was reached.

As John Steinbeck (and before him the poet Robert Burns) said, "*The best laid plans of mice and men often go awry.*" Ours did when the WSU Foundation notified us last spring that they expected the minimum funding for a scholarship Gift Use Agreement to increase from \$25,000 to \$50,000. However, they also offered to let us lock in the original \$25,000 minimum if we would commit to contributing the remaining \$10,400 over the next five years. Otherwise the minimum would automatically increase to \$50,000, placing our plans to build a WSU Scholarship Endowment further out of reach.

After some negotiation over Gift Use Agreement terms this summer, and with final CRC and CRMF Boards approval, we committed to the agreement with WSU Foundation, agreeing to pay the remaining \$10,400 in five annual increments beginning on/before 1 May 2022. There is no interest and there is no 'early payment' penalty.

But there's a 'hook' (seems like there's always a 'hook'). Our being able to make these five payments of \$2,080 depends solely on your generous donations and continued support of your CRMF and your Scholarship Fund. The five \$2,080 payments are in addition to the current annual scholarship commitments of \$1,575 to WSU-Vancouver and approximately \$500 to Clark College (most is paid from our Clark endowment).

Though we gladly accept Scholarship Fund and Support the Troops Fund donations year-round we also have special appeals over the course of the year, and a large one is quickly approaching.

Our PCS (Post-Covid Scholarship) appeal was to be held this fall in conjunction with our annual fall BBQ (18 Sept). We regret having to cancel the BBQ and replace it with a ZOOM call. You'll be hearing more about the appeal in a letter to all chapter members. We encourage you to open your hearts and your checkbooks in response to the PCS appeal to help us lock-in the new increased (and long term) commitment toward the Chapter's Scholarship program at WSU-V.

These are good reasons to consider donating directly from your IRA account and simultaneously avoiding income tax on the amount withdrawn (**Dave** can provide more information or ask your IRA Custodian about making a "Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)"). [Note: Two of our members recently took advantage of QCDs to make generous donations to CRMF, and to avoid paying tax on their IRA withdrawals - a win-win for them and for us!]

Now for the other Foundation news. First, our funds continue to be bolstered by the Fred Meyer and Amazon Smile donations. While the amounts may seem insignificant, they are not. If you're not already a part of both please sign up and help increase their significance—if you need assistance signing up please contact **Dave Casteel**.

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CRMF Update continued

Second, since the last newsletter, the Boards approved making the following contributions, some of which are completed and some underway – all are from the Support the Troops Fund:

- \$1,015 Amazon Gift Card to the Fisher House
- \$500 in Gift Cards to the VA Transplant Lodge
- \$500 check to the Clark County Veterans Assistance Center (CCVAC)

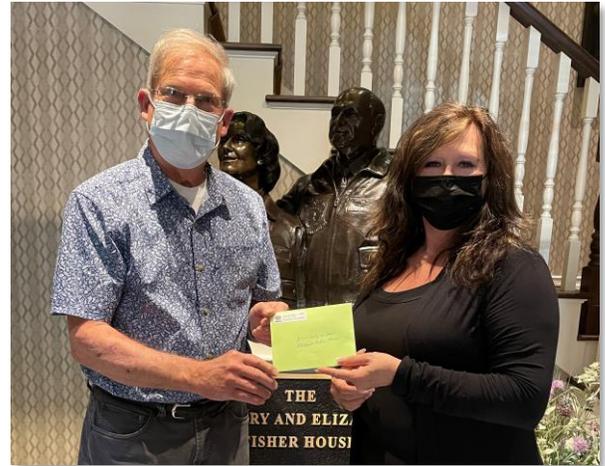
We still have funds budgeted for additional Veterans Support and will continue to evaluate options through the rest of the year.

We also temporarily delayed making our planned contributions to the AFJROTC Programs at Prairie and Battle Ground High Schools until after the beginning of the school year. We had a problem when one program experienced a lengthy delay between receipt and deposit of our check. This was caused by difficulties with handoffs and depositing into the correct accounts and exacerbated by COVID-19. We'll be working with the two programs to make sure these delays don't occur again this fall, to ensure the funds become quickly available to their programs.

Last, thank you again for your generous support of CRMF, the Funds we administer, and the organizations we support with our contributions. We are making real impacts in our community and in particular with the veterans and their families who live in our community. Every dollar donated goes to those programs.

Feel free to contact me (**Dave Casteel**) by email or phone (360-834-2448) if you have any questions or need any additional information.

The Columbia River MOAA Foundation (CRMF) is an IRC 501(c)3 public charity to which donations are tax deductible. Our Federal tax ID# is 47-4776049.



Dave Casteel Delivers Amazon Gift Card to the Fisher House, June 2021



COVID-19 Vaccines At The VA

By Rich Wersinger (from VA website 15 Sep 2021)

All Veterans, their spouses and caregivers, and CHAMPVA recipients can now get a COVID-19 vaccine at VA.

To get the latest VA vaccine updates and answers to common questions visit: <https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/>

All Veterans are now eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine at VA.

This includes anyone who served in the U.S. military, including the U.S. National Guard, Reserves, or Coast Guard.

This also includes anyone who served in any of these roles:

- Commissioned officer of the Regular or Reserve Corp of the Public Health Service, **or**
- Commissioned officer of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (or Coast and Geodetic Survey), **or**
- Cadet at the U.S. Military, Air Force, or Coast Guard Academy, **or**
- Midshipman at the United States Naval Academy

This also includes Veterans who live or travel outside of the U.S. and are eligible for the [VA Foreign Medical Program](#).

How to get a COVID-19 vaccine at VA

We encourage you to get your vaccine as soon as you can. It's the best way to protect yourself, your family, and your community against COVID-19. This is especially important as new forms (or "variants") of the coronavirus spread more quickly in the U.S.

- **Go to the facility's vaccine clinic during walk-in hours.** Be sure to check the walk-in hours before you go. When you arrive, you may need to wait for the staff to prepare your vaccine.
- **Or call the facility to schedule an appointment.** Our staff will help you find a time that's convenient for you.

Here's what to know before you arrive:

- **If you don't receive care at VA**, we encourage you to pre-register online at least 1 hour before you go to a walk-in clinic. This will save you time when you arrive.
Sign up to get a COVID-19 vaccine at VA
- **If you got your first vaccine dose outside of VA**, you can still get your second dose at VA.
- Everyone who enters a VA facility must wear a mask and complete our COVID-19 symptom screening.

[Find VA facilities near you that offer COVID-19 vaccines](#)

- Have questions before you get your vaccine?

[Get COVID-19 vaccine advice from Veterans and VA providers](#)

[Sign up to stay informed about COVID-19 vaccines at VA](#)





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	Peter Abbarno 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

This newsletter comes at a pivotal time in the history of modern U.S. national security policy. Relationships with China, Russia, Iran and our allies combined with recent dramatic events in Afghanistan would make it easy for the MOAA Nation to be distracted from our advocacy mission. Add the pandemic crisis along with critical domestic issues like immigration make it difficult to stay focused on our job. Please resist that impulse by doubling down on your advocacy efforts.

Advocacy is something we can do to support the veterans who recently served in Afghanistan as well as the Gold Star families who lost loved ones. We all must remind ourselves of the potential impact of Afghanistan events on the lives of veterans who served in that region.

As I write this, stories about Afghan veterans in crisis are popping up all around the Nation. I implore you to remain watchful for any veterans needing help in our Clark County AOR. Members of veteran organizations in the county have energized our significant reach asking community leaders to be on the lookout for veterans needing help. Health officials are seeing an uptick in help requests. The VA staff has published a list of supportive resources for troubled veterans or their families. Do not forget to take Gold Star parents and families into your cross check. The most recent MOAA Newsletter contains good specifics on the subject of veteran support.

World and national events are smothering Federal legislative activities involving our servicemembers, veterans and their families. Debate over infrastructure and proposed FY22 budgets are making for a cloudy crystal ball regarding the defense portion of the budget.

In sum, with the roughly \$1 trillion infrastructure bill enjoying bipartisan support, attention shifted for a legislative minute to the \$3.5 trillion proposed Administration budget. Most defense analysts label it as proposing “limited” increases for defense. With inflation factored in, it is roughly a “flat” budget. A budget lagging behind inflation is by any computation, a budget cut. There is some good news

in that crystal ball. On Sept 1, the House Armed Services Committee dedicated 16 hours to marking up their version of the FY22 NDAA. They reviewed a record 780 proposed amendments. One amendment which passed increased the DOD topline by about \$25B. And, at around 2:30am on Sept 2, the committee approved the entire bill with an overwhelming bi-partisan vote of 57-2. Most political followers predict that defense could win the additional budget as part of a compromise solution involving the entire budget.

So where do MOAA’s top advocacy issues stand? Fortunately, our MOAA government relations team has saved us from a search effort by providing great summaries in their August 12 and 18 newsletters. The MOAA Newsletter contains a treasure trove of detailed information regarding details and the status of current legislative issues affecting our military family.

Here are a few of the hot button issues from this year’s Advocacy in Action activities:

- Toxic exposure reform is a huge goal of MOAA’s. It is the Agent Orange of the Central Asia conflict. There are two proposed Bills in both the House and the Senate. All are well co-sponsored. 10,000 messages from MOAA members are overwhelmingly given the credit for success to date.
- The same is true to a lesser extent for Bills proposing to help fix a serious food insecurity situation for thousands of junior military members and their families.
- Additionally, Parity for TRICARE Young Adults is doing reasonably well in the House but lagging other legislation in the Senate.

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Federal Legislative Update continued

Given our current day to day stressful living environment, it would be a good time to also support the proposed Stop Copay Overpay Act. The bill would cap TRICARE mental health copays at the level paid for a primary care visit. Another proposal gaining support is a bill to increase the parity of incentive pay between active duty and reserve component members. Given the increased reliance on the Guard and the Reserve, it would appear to be common sense to offer similar benefits.

Now a word of caution. Kinda a good news, bad news report. Currently, MOAA says the annual inflation-based COLA computations point to an increase of as much as 6% for 2022. That's positive for retirement and social security adjustments. Good news. Bad news? Congress could arbitrarily cut that figure to much less and still claim they delivered the biggest retiree raise in ten years. Clearly, it would be an erosion of retiree earned benefits. We have seen this "play" before. Another great reason to keep your foot on the advocacy accelerator.

Buck Marr
Federal Legislative Affairs



Columbia River Chapter Membership 2021 Calendar Events

Date	Program	Speaker
September 18	Annual Fall Scholarship Fund Raiser – Canceled due to COVID	You will be receiving a fund raiser appeal letter from our Columbia River MOAA Foundation (CRMF) President, Dave Casteel , and myself shortly.
October 21	Membership Luncheon – Canceled due to COVID	We will hold a ZOOM meeting Speaker TBD
November 18	Traditional Thanksgiving Our social has been canceled due to COVID	We will hold a ZOOM meeting Program TBD
December 5 3 to 6 pm	Annual Christmas Scholarship Dinner has been canceled due to COVID	We will hold a ZOOM meeting Meet our four scholarship recipients

CRC Newsletter Schedule First week of month
September
November
December

