



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

February 2021

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Rod Williams
503-317-2273

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

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

Secretary: (acting)

Dave Casteel

Treasurer: (acting)

Rod Williams

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President,**

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360-721-0865

CRMF president:

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360-834-2448

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Marine Rep:

Terry Babin

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Navy Rep:

Rich Wersinger

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425-269-1902

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Legislative Affairs:

Buck Marr

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Paul Crosby

360-666-8871

Chaplain:

Roster Manager:

In this our first newsletter of 2021, I want to share how your chapter is actively supporting your interests and the advocacy objective of MOAA national office. First, we are all seeing confusing signals on how much longer COVID-19 restrictions on gatherings and public activities will continue. These will keep us from meeting in person well into this year at best. I hear from some mixed feelings about attending ZOOM meetings. Some either just do not like this virtual meeting stuff or have some difficulties with the technology. Most who attend have been pleased with it as an interim condition of our

times. We all agree it is not optimal but is essential along with these newsletters to keep chapter members informed and engaged.

In this newsletter you will see articles on how the chapter's Columbia River MOAA Foundation (CRMF) is doing the good work to support veterans in our area. **Dave Casteel's** article tells you how we have expanded our connections with veteran groups who are directly serving those in need. Our scholarship program continues full throttle, thanks to your donations, to support local veterans and qualified students continue their academic push to advance careers. These local connections have always been part of the legacy of this chapter and will continue to be a dynamic driver for us.

Also, you will see how we address the role of legislative advocacy in Washington state and in Washington, DC. We have a very engaged legislative team led by **Buck Marr** and **Dave Casteel**. A big part of the advocacy role is keeping you aware of MOAA national objectives and calls for action. When you go to the MOAA home page at WWW.MOAA.org and follow the news links or go to the Advocacy page, you are part of the process that keeps legislators aware of our community's numbers and priorities. This supports our legislative team and the national MOAA team when they reach out virtually or (when possible) in person to advocate directly for key objectives. **Dave Casteel** shares information on how through the Washington State Council of Chapters (WSCOC) we track and advocate on state level matters.



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

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President's Message continued

In his article on Federal legislative matters, **Buck Marr**, makes an extraordinarily strong case for why at this time each of us must stay aware and engaged.

In 2021 we also must make a push on the recruiting front. We must find and recruit new members as our average age continues to go up. Equally important we need to recruit new members of our chapter executive committee. We cannot sustain the load with vacant leadership positions. After the January membership meeting, **Jim** and **Pat Morse** volunteered for the open secretary position. We will formally nominate and vote to approve them at our February meeting. Thank you both, **Jim** and **Pat**. I look forward to working with you.

Rod Williams
President

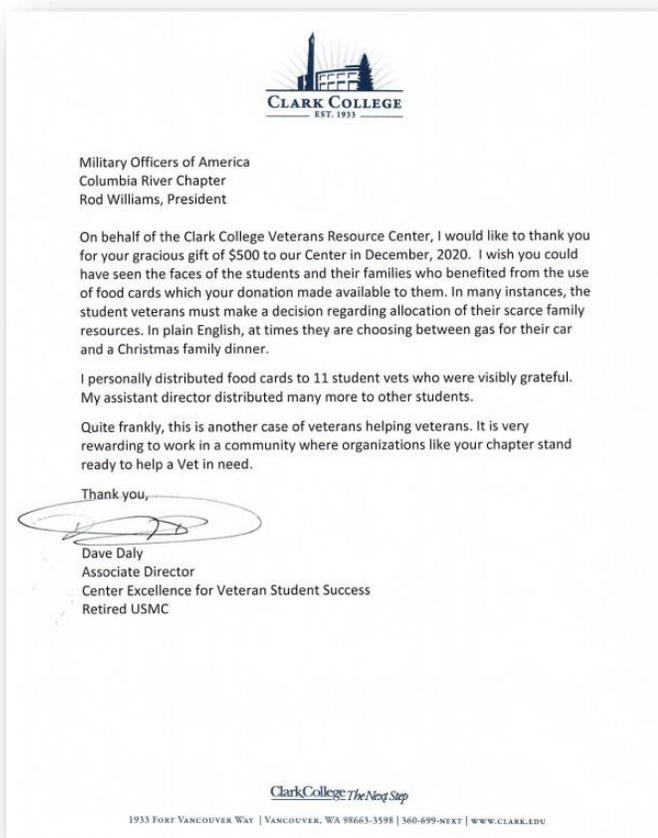
Using ZOOM by Rod Williams

When you see the invite to join a CRC meeting on ZOOM is your first reaction a curse word, anger, and stress? I wish I could tell you stop worrying as we will no longer hold virtual meetings. In this time of social distancing, many groups have chosen to meet virtually versus not meeting at all. The decision your chapter executive committee faced was simply stated – we need to meet as a chapter so how can we do that until restrictions on public gatherings are lifted?

At the same time, our sibling chapters across MOAA were addressing the same question. In our case we were able to coordinate through the Washington State Council of Chapters and share their license for ZOOM. Yet another benefit of WSCOC membership and our own Dave Casteel as the WSCOC president. Our annual dues to WSCOC is less than we would have paid for a separate chapter license.

For clarification, ZOOM is a popular computer program used to hold online virtual meeting without requiring a license or subscription to those invited to join a meeting. You can attend a ZOOM meeting on smartphone, a tablet, a laptop, or a desktop computer (as long as you have a camera, speakers, and a microphone.) It uses your computer's or phone's camera to show the live video of attendees and microphone to let you talk with others in the meeting. You can decide whether to share your video or not be seen by others. You can also decide to keep yourself on mute until you want to share something with the group. You control what everyone else sees and hears from you.

There are many guides and instructional videos on the internet and easily accessible with a simple Google or other search. One of the better ones (which I have used as reference for this article) is at WWW.seniorsguide.com. Here is a link to the full guide [A Step-by-Step Guide to a Zoom Meeting – Seniors Guide](#). It will walk you through adding the ZOOM app from the Apple App Store or from the Google Play App Store. Or you can go direct to <https://zoom.us/download>. After you install Zoom, there are a few different ways to join a Zoom meeting.



Thank You Letter: Clark College December 2020

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Using Zoom continued

Click the link in an invitation email: This is the easiest way to join. On our email invitation we send out for each meeting, click on the link at “Join Zoom Meeting.” This takes you to the Zoom website and should open the meeting for you. It may take a minute or two depending on your system. If you have any difficulty go to the next step.

Go to the Zoom website: Open the ZOOM app you downloaded or go to <https://zoom.us/join>, and enter the 9-digit meeting ID from your invitation email. Our meetings do not require a password, if we do, it will be in your invitation/email, too. When you are on the Zoom website, if you are asked if you want to open Zoom, click “Open zoom.us.” Zoom opens, showing you a preview of your camera image. Then click either “Join with Video” or “Join without Video.” Next, Zoom asks about audio. Click “Join with Computer Audio” so you can hear and be heard in the meeting. Remember you can always mute yourself.

Connecting by phone: If you cannot or choose not to attend on a computer, tablet, or smartphone, you can use any phone to dial into the meeting. The phone number to use will be in your invitation. You will be able to talk with others and hear them without video.

Two other great sources for help are a YouTube **Dave Casteel** found and shared with us. *How to participate in your 1st Zoom Meeting:* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9isp3qPeQ0E>. You can also get some great help from the ZOOM Help Center with lots of videos and guides. Go to [Zoom Help Center](#). Or you can call a friend like me or **Dave**. Our contact info is on the front page of this newsletter. If you still feel unsure, call me and we can set up a one-on-one practice ZOOM meeting.



Screen print by **Rod Williams** showing attendees at Nov 19, 2020 CRC Membership Meeting via ZOOM

Chapter Volunteers Needed *by Rod Williams*

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

Vice President and Treasurer.

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

We need you!



CRMF February 2021 Update*by Dave Casteel*

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

First, I want to thank **Joel Scott** for his donation to the Give 50 for our 50th Anniversary Appeal. Notification of his donation arrived after newsletter cutoff. Thanks to all of you who helped make a difference. More good news: Initial response from the dues letter indicates a phenomenal level of donations from our members—**THANK YOU!**

Our Support the Troops fund is designed to help local veterans and their families. In December, we donated a \$500 VISA gift card to The Lodge on the Vancouver VA campus which houses veterans and their caregiver. These veterans are receiving kidney and liver transplants and come here from all over the country for specialized treatment. The gift card helps cover transportation expenses to and from the airport as well as a special holiday meal—a treat from having to prepare their own meals in a communal kitchen.

We also supported the Veterans Resource Center at Clark College in December with \$250 WinCo no-fee family friendly food gift cards and \$250 cash. The gift cards cannot be used for alcohol or tobacco products and are only good at WinCo. These donations are administered by the Clark College Associate Director of Veterans Services. One example when cash was needed was when a veteran student could not drive his car to the grocery store or take his wife to medical appointments because he could not afford a tire. The Associate Director bought him a used tire so now he can.

We were also able to help the Clark County Veterans Assistance Center with two \$500 donations in 2020 (one in December). Due to COVID, they had to cancel their major fund raiser and therefore are highly dependent on veterans organizations and private individuals for assistance getting meals and warm street bedding to homeless veterans. They said they were nearly out of these discretionary funds and told us they were very much needed and appreciated.

We had planned to donate a large gift card to the Fisher House as we have done in past years to help with emergency expenses, but as of mid-November, they only had one guest and were “flush” with gift cards

including some from the national Fisher House Foundation. We have also donated furniture items to them in the past and will likely do so again the spring. They have asked for some outside lawn furniture. When occupancy and needs resume, we will again consider a gift card.

Thanks to all who have added the CRMF to their Fred Meyer Rewards and www.Smile.Amazon accounts. Although only a handful of you have done so, the proceeds to us have exceeded \$150 in 2020. Just think what the donations could be if more of you link your accounts. If you are interested, please let me know (shilohcamas@comcast.net) and I will send you instructions how to set them up. It's really pretty easy.

NEW IN 2020: In December, we opened a no fee (to the CRMF) brokerage account at Vanguard. WHY? So donors can directly donate (transfer) appreciated securities to the CRMF held long term (i.e., more than one year). The advantage is the donor does NOT pay any capital gains taxes on the appreciated securities if donated directly to the CRMF brokerage account. This is a WIN-WIN for the donor and the CRMF. We have already processed one donation and it went very smoothly and quickly. If you are interested, contact me and I will give you the account number and DTC. My phone number is on the front of the bulletin.

Great NEWS in 2021: On December 27, 2020, another stimulus package was signed into law to help combat the far-reaching impacts of COVID-19. In many ways, this bill extends the charitable tax incentives enacted by the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act back in March 2020, but it also provides some additional provisions.

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CRMF Update continued

Are you itemizing deductions?

The adjusted gross income (AGI) limit for cash contributions to qualifying public charities remains increased for individual donors. For cash contributions made in 2021, you can elect to deduct up to 100 percent of your AGI (formerly 60 percent prior to the CARES Act).

Not itemizing?

The CARES Act allowed for an additional, “above-the-line” deduction for charitable gifts made in cash of up to \$300. This provision is extended into 2021 for taxpayers filing single/separately.

New in 2021 is an additional “above-the-line” deduction for those married filing jointly. Joint filers (who aren’t itemizing) will be allowed to take an above-the-line deduction of up to \$600 in cash contributions to charity this year.

PS. Check the chapter website (CRMF tab) at www.moacolumbiariver.org for PowerPoint slides from our 2021 annual meeting. All the financials transactions for 2020, as well as our 2021 plan, are included.

Thanks again for all your great support. You make a difference in our community!

Dave Casteel

Let us Talk Travel & Other Adventures Chapter Travelers’ Forum for Those Who Have Traveled or Will Travel

By Dan Sockle and Terry Babin

All of us are so ready for a return to a more normal life once the pandemic subsides. Remember when the Golden Years were supposed to be a time to travel or otherwise get out and get around—to learn, explore, and relax? When the world opens to less restrictive travel again, can you offer advice, or find answers, to again engage with the world and enjoy its many possible adventures?

Recent discussions with several travel experts indicate that there is a significant and still growing pent-up demand that will likely strain options and dates for tours, accommodations, and other support for both domestic and international travel. How do you plan and time your travel now given all the current uncertainties about when the pandemic will be under control and travel is safe? How do you protect yourself from loss of pre-payments, penalties, or change and cancellation fees if your travel must be postponed? What are your other questions—or do you have advice to offer?

You are invited to participate in the Chapter’s new quarterly **Travelers’ Forum**. **This is not a sales program. This is an information exchange** to share information, advice, and cautions about travel both during this year, and the more distant future. For those members no longer desiring or able to travel, we look forward to hearing you relive some of your past adventures. (Time limits may have to be considered).

For now, the Forum will be held by Zoom meeting. If there is enough continuing interest, we hope to eventually make this a recurring quarterly coffee shop social.

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Travelers' Forum continued

Possible topics include:

- Researching travel offers from organizations and companies such as MOAA and Costco.
- Where to research for finding ideas, places, and discounts for:
 - Ocean and river cruises.
 - Airlines and using space A on military aircraft.
 - Train and bus travel.
 - Car rentals and insurance—particularly overseas.
 - Camping, glamping, biking/hiking—including best RV Parks and hotels/motels.
 - Other places to stay, and places to visit/see.
- Ideas and recommendations on travel during 2021 and 2022—your past or current “Bucket List.”
- Thinking about traveling the Alaska-Canada highway, taking an African safari, buying rugs in Turkey or sapphires in Thailand, circling New Zealand on a cruise ship, taking a river cruise on the St. Lawrence River, or touring archaeological sites like Angkor Wat, the Sacred Valley of Peru, Luxor in Egypt, or Greek ruins in Sicily? Share experiences and questions with those Chapter members who have done these adventures and many others, or members who are planning these trips.
- Recommended sources for travel information (e.g., magazines, shows, videos, library resources, online websites, subscriptions, etc.).
- Favorite (or least favorite) travel agents, tour companies, cruise lines, airlines, car rental, or other booking and travel support agencies and companies.

- Advice on “road trips” and RV trips including getting your vehicle, motorcycle, trailer, or RV ready.
- Coverage for mechanical problems, towing, or other road incidents traveling by vehicle or RV.
- Favorite trips and experiences, least favorite (or disastrous) trips and experiences, and lessons learned.
- Shopping for travel insurance, free cancellations, and free reservation changes.
- Shopping for medical coverage and other insurance when out of the country.
- Finding and qualifying house and pet sitters.
- Setting up the communications means to deal with problems back home and business when travelling—particularly when out of the country.
- Sharing photographs, videos, and other memories as well as maps and brochures.
- Any other recommendations, advice, and cautions.

Whether reminiscing or planning, you are invited to participate in the “Travelers’ Forum.” Contact **Terry Babin** (tbear06@comcast.net) or **Dan Sockle** (dsockle@gmail.com).

If there is sufficient interest, these two Chapter members will host the first Forum ZOOM meeting to talk travel in late February or early March. Further information to join the meeting will be sent by separate correspondence by either the Chapter Secretary or the meeting hosts once a date/time for the first meeting is selected.

Additionally, if there is sufficient interest, we will make this a recurring Zoom adventure with appropriate regularity to get us all out of our quarantining and safe-distancing – especially as more of us get our Covid-19 vaccinations and can come out of a prolonged and grueling hibernation of 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, 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 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

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/	

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/>



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

In our Chapter's December special legislative newsletter edition, I concluded my article by asking you to "stay tuned" for the inevitable changes in our country's government and their impact on legislation. Shortly thereafter, I said in my comments to the annual chapter meeting that there exists the possibility of a major sea state change in our government's direction and how it works legislation. Mariners will tell you that there are a large number of variables affecting a sea state. We have a huge number of new variables at work in D.C. Consequently, and shrewdly, on Inauguration Day, the MOAA President/CEO signed out a letter to our new President highlighting 23 areas of immediate concern where MOAA encourages the Administration to use its influence to implement changes. As the largest military service organization in the country, MOAA was first to stake out an advocacy position on veteran issues spanning seven Cabinet Departments. I encourage you to read the letter posted on the MOAA website.

Why could we be concerned? The answer lies in a short civics lesson. The Federalist framers of the Constitution; particularly **James Madison** and **Alexander Hamilton** were leery of centralized government power because of the ease of passing laws which were not fully debated and ignored the minority. The framers' solution resulted in establishing the three branches of government with business rules to protect the minority. Currently, two of the three branches including both legislative bodies are controlled by one majority party. In the Senate, most bills require 60 votes for passage. However, budget initiatives and adjustments can pass more easily with little debate using a specially enacted budgetary procedure known as reconciliation, which can allow fiscal matters involving taxation and spending to pass with a simple majority vote. Republicans used it during the Trump administration, for instance, as a vehicle for partisan health-care and tax bills. Nonbudgetary matters cannot use this tool which is why the current Senate majority is increasingly trying to ditch the 60-vote rule for all proposed legislation to include defense

and veterans' affairs. Add to that the momentum to outlaw filibusters and the majority would have almost an unincumbered path to passing their proposals.

Now you can see why MOAA is paying particular attention to activities in the Senate. These comments are not designed to be political statements but a description of current and ongoing debates involving changing historic legislative process rules which should alert the MOAA Nation to be on their toes and watchful on a daily basis. Potential operational changes in the Senate could speed the pace of legislative processes. All of us will need to be able to react quickly to achieve our goal of positively influencing legislation affecting military personnel matters for active duty, retired and their families.

Along those lines, I encourage all of you to make regular MOAA website checks of the [TAKE ACTION CENTER](#). The Government Relations staff maintains a rotating list of particularly relevant legislation and provides a draft advocacy letter for you to consider sending to your legislators. I especially recommend the following:

Federal – HR 5995

“A bill to amend Title 10, United States Code, to expand eligibility to certain military retirees for concurrent receipt of veterans’ disability compensation and retired pay or combat-related special compensation, and for other purposes.”

Buck Marr
Federal Legislative Affairs



Washington State Legislative Update: by Dave Casteel

Your Washington State Council of Chapters (WSCOC) is an active member of the State Veterans Legislative Coalition (VLC). The VP for Government Affairs is the current chapter president of the Mt Rainer chapter who is the primary (appointed) representative to the VLC.

The purpose of the VLC is to actively monitor veteran-related bills and testify in support of bills favorable to veterans and their families. The VLC is comprised of 16 VSOs (e.g., MOAA, American Legion, VFW, etc.) representing over 200,000 veterans in Washington state and 13 Members-At-Large, of which I am one. We meet weekly on Friday while in session (now virtually just like the legislature is meeting). Even year sessions last 60 days (including weekends and holidays) and odd year sessions, like 2021, meet for 105 days. The VLC is hosted by WDVA who provides veteran-related bill information and analysis.

In the 2020 session we monitored about veteran-related 75 bills. Some the ones we testified in favor of that passed included:

- Disabled Veteran Property Tax Exemption
- Free License Plates for Disabled Veterans
- State Employment
- Military Service Credit
- Military Commercial Driver's License Skills Test Waiver
- Washington State Conservation Corps
- Disabled Veteran Hunting & Fishing Licenses
- State Parks Disabled Veteran Lifetime Pass
- Washington State Veterans Cemetery

So far only 16 veteran-related bills were introduced as of February 4. The main reasons are, it's still early in the session (session started January 15), and all meetings and testimony will be virtual. As a result, legislators are limited to only introducing seven or eight bills per member.

Of major interest this session is [HB 1181](#), **Establishing programs and measures to prevent suicide among veterans and military members:** *Provides for various outreach and services related to preventing suicide among veterans and military service members. Creates the Veterans and Military Members Suicide Prevention Account and a suicide prevention community-based services grant program. Extends and modifies the Suicide-Safer Homes Task Force. Establishes a new special vehicle license plate emblem.*

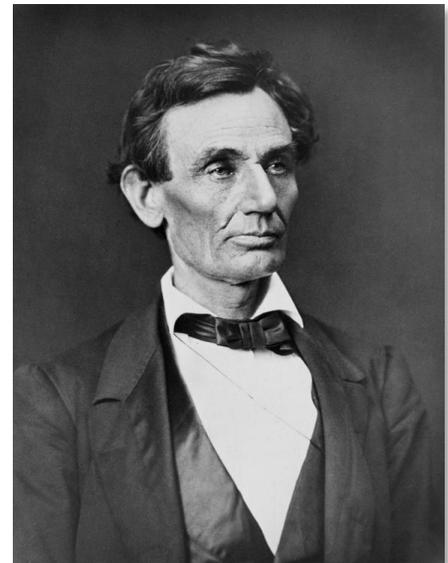
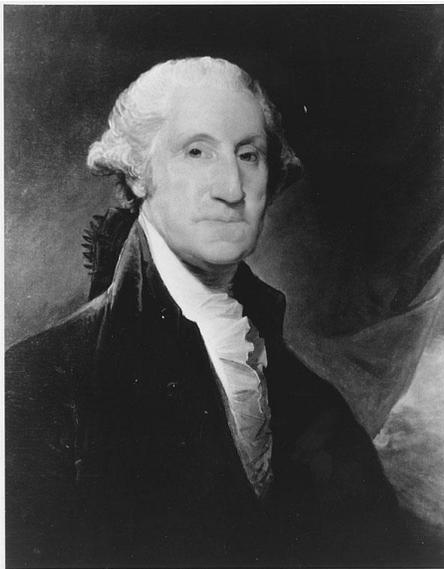
You can go to <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billssummary> to learn about current bills.



Columbia River Chapter Membership 2021 Calendar Events

Date	Program	Speaker
February 18	Healthcare changes and how they will affect you. Part 1	Karen Ruedisueli MOAA Director, Health Affairs
March 18	Healthcare changes and how they will affect you. Part 2	Samuel Lin MD , Rear Admiral and Assistant Surgeon General (Ret) USPHS Dep Assistant Secretary for Health (Ret) USDHHS
April 15	Clark College on Challenges for Veteran Students	Clark College Representative to be confirmed Chairman of Veteran Resource Center
May 20	Clark County Issues and You	Gary Medvigy , MGen, USAF (Ret) and Councilperson District 4
June (tbd)	Summer Social at a Vineyard	Social gathering (if permitted)
July & August	No meeting	Enjoy Summer Break
September (TBD)	Annual Fall Scholarship Fund Raiser – Social and BBQ	Social gathering (if permitted)
October 21	1 st Annual Oktoberfest	Social gathering (if permitted)
November 18	Traditional Thanksgiving	Program TBD
December (TBD)	Annual Christmas Scholarship Dinner	Meet our four scholarship recipients

CRC Newsletter Schedule
First week of month
April
June
September
November
December



COLUMBIA RIVER CHAPTER
MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2020

Committee Overview:

1. Committee Mission: Develop and support activities which encourage active participation and long-term membership in the Chapter.
2. Committee Members:
 - Chairman—also serves as the Chapter’s Personal Affairs representative.
 - Service Representatives
 - Surviving Spouse Representative
 - Immediate Past President

Special Comment: The Committee was mostly inactive the past year due to:

- The protocols, restrictions, and safe practices required during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Resignation of the Committee Chairman due to personal health issues.
- Insufficient number of active Service Representatives.

Responsibility: Establish and maintain a program for welcoming new members and their spouses.

1. The Chapter’s New Member Sponsor Program was implemented during 2017.
2. Program Objectives:
 - Introduce a new member to other Chapter members.
 - Help the new member become familiar with the primary functions of the Chapter.
 - Encourage participation in Chapter activities and events.
 - Build a relationship with the new member and the Chapter which encourages long-term retention and involvement.
3. There was no new member “Welcome Luncheon” was hosted by the Executive Board this past year.

Responsibility: Support a system to keep contact with members—designated as the “Keeping Connected” Program.

1. Program Objectives:
 - Maintain at least semi-annual contact with members and spouses—particularly those unable to regularly attend Chapter meetings and activities.
 - Keep records current on members’ contact information.
 - Provide information about Chapter programs, activities, and initiatives.
 - Determine needs and support which the Chapter might provide to individual members.
 - Survey members and spouses on matters of significant interest to the Chapter’s Executive Board.
2. Phone calls to Chapter members were made during December 2020.
 - Contact success rate was 76%.
 - E-mail follow-ups were made when unable to make phone contact.
 - Thirty-six (36) Action Items were identified with action completed on almost all Items at the time of this report.

[Continued on page 13]

COLUMBIA RIVER CHAPTER
MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2020
(continued)

Responsibility: Provide Personal Affairs (PA) services.

1. Provided casualty assistance for families of one (1) deceased member, and action pending for a second Surviving Spouse.
2. Sent sympathy, "get well," or "thinking of you" cards to six (6) members and spouses.
3. Provided personal affairs planning pamphlets, checklists, documentation assistance, and other support for one member's family.
4. Completed action in conjunction with the Inspector General of the Department of Defense to assist one Surviving Spouse in resolving timely payment issues of the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuity.
5. Regularly published articles in Chapter's newsletter about personal affair's planning and as well as Membership Services Committee activities.

Responsibility: Coordinate with Membership and Program Committees.

1. Membership Committee Coordination: None this year.
2. Program Committee Coordination: Participated regularly in planning Chapter programs.

Other Activities Arising from the Performance of Committee Responsibilities: None during the past year.

Special Notes/Comments:

1. A Chairman for the Committee is needed.
2. A Call Coordinator for the Keeping Connected Program is needed.

Submitted by: **Terry Babin**, Member, Membership Services Committee on January 18, 2020.

