



# 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](http://www.moaacolumbiariver.org)

February 2022

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

**President:**

Rod Williams  
503-317-2273

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

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

**Secretary:**

Jim Morse  
360-433-5605

**Treasurer:**

Larry G. DeVries  
612-743-3509

**Immediate Past  
President,**

Evelyn Brady  
360-421-0865

**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:**

**Public Health Rep:**

Chris Rubadue  
425-269-1902

**Surviving Spouse  
Liaison:**

Leah Davis  
310-491-8891

**Legislative Affairs:**

Buck Marr  
757-636-8686

**Membership Services:**

Terry Babin  
360-608-7789

**Public Affairs:**

John Donnelly  
360-721-3792

**Scholarship:**

**Chaplain:**

**Roster Manager:**

A big thanks goes out to those who joined us for the January general membership meeting. They heard full reports on our chapter status, finances, and programs from both Columbia River Chapter (CRC) leaders and from the Columbia River MOAA Foundation (CRMF) board. This information is available on our website at <https://www.moaacolumbiariver.org/>

Please mark your calendars and join us for our next membership meeting at 11:00 AM on February 17, 2021. We will have **Deputy Chief Troy Price** joining us. He will share some data and analysis on how crime rates are changing in our community. **Deputy Chief Price** will also answer question about the how and why, plus what we can do to make our communities safer. In keeping with safety protocols on large in person meetings we will meet via ZOOM but hope to return to in person meeting soon. Watch for an email notification with the meeting link and instructions.

Our chapter in 2021 received the MOAA Level of Excellence Award and the Communication Award—we remain a Five Star Chapter! This recognition is for the prior year, so we will again be applying for these awards in 2022. Our weakest area remains in membership recruiting and succession planning for chapter leadership. We need to recruit new leaders for Vice President, Personal Affairs, Scholarships, Chaplain, and an Air Force service representative. At our

January meeting we re-elected me as President and **James Morse** as Secretary. We elected a new Treasurer, **Larry DeVries**. We also introduced a new member, **Leah Davis**, who has raised her hand to become our Surviving Spouse representative.



It is time to pay your annual chapter dues which we have kept at \$20 per year. You will receive a letter in the mail shortly if not already. As an FYI, only about 50% of members are current on their dues. Those not paid up at the end of this campaign may receive individual follow-up. Even with the COVID-19 shutdowns, we continue to incur operating expenses to maintain the chapter activities of our primary community support and legislative advocacy roles. The cost of doing business, such as, registration with the Secretary of State as non-profit organization, website maintenance, postage, and printing have all risen with inflation. [Continued on page 2]

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### **President's Message continued**

I am sure you are seeing similar increases in your household expenses. This appeal is also essential fund-raising for the Columbia River MOAA Foundation's (CRMF) Scholarship and Support the Troops (STT) Funds. With your free will charitable donations, we continue to grow our endowment at Clark College, and we have made great strides toward establishing an endowment at WSUV. Our STT funds provide support for Fisher House and other veteran assistance programs. Through your donations the STT fund directly assisted veterans affected by the pandemic and identified projects in need of funds. This year we encourage you to write two separate checks for dues and donations. Please make one check for dues to CRC and another for donations to CRMF. On the CRMF check please indicate how to apply your donation to either scholarships or STT or how to split it. If you write one consolidated check make sure you annotate in the remarks how you want your donation applied.

Please contact me at [rodwill50@hotmail.com](mailto:rodwill50@hotmail.com) if you have any questions, comments, or concerns (see contact information for all chapter leaders on the front page of this newsletter.)

**Rod Williams**  
**President**

We are sad to inform you **Grace Wetherell** passed away at age 100 on February 9, 2022. She was the surviving spouse of **Captain C.S. Wetherell**, USCG (Retired). **Captain Wetherell** had been a member of MOAA since 1975 and they had been long-term members of the Columbia River Chapter. There will be no funeral or internment services at this time.



### ***Surviving Spouse Corner: End-of-Life Documents***

***By: Barbara Ann Bowman, MOAA Surviving Spouse Advisory Council member (MOAA National)***

Most people would list among end-of-life documents a will, a trust, an advance directive, a DNR (do not resuscitate) order, and a durable power of attorney. But the list of documents that deal with end-of-life issues is much longer. Deeds to real property, beneficiary declaration for life insurance, and the signature card to a bank account are all end-of-life documents. They determine who gets what and through which legal procedure when someone dies.

Fortunately, checklists to help create an end-of-life plan are available through a number of trustworthy organizations. Among them:

- MOAA's Help Your Survivors Now: A Guide to Planning Ahead
- VA's Planning Your Legacy
- Military.com's Military Retiree Survivor Checklist
- State Bar Association articles and forms

Research these resources, pick a checklist, or create one of your own. Gather legal documents you already have, including will, trust documents, health care directives, powers of attorney, beneficiary designations, asset inventory, deeds, military papers, instructions to access digital accounts, and contact information for family. Consult professionals — lawyer, accountant, insurance agent, financial advisor — to help put together the plan, and then review, update, redraft, and re-execute documents, lists, and paperwork when needed.

At least once a year, review and update the plan. Have circumstances changed? Do the documents do what they are intended to do? Have state or federal laws affecting any of these documents changed? Are lists of assets current? Are titles to real estate, bank accounts, and vehicles correct? Are beneficiary designations still good? Discuss your plan with those who hold health care proxy, powers of attorney, and other authority over your person and property. Put documents in a safe place, yet where they can be accessed by those in whom you have placed trust. Be proactive. In reality, end-of-life documents are life's documents. Deal with them now.

### **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](mailto:jlmorse77@gmail.com)

Newsletter Editor: **Rich Wersinger**. You can contact him at 360-901-1915 or e-mail him at [rich@rjwconsulting.org](mailto:rich@rjwconsulting.org).

### **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 360-433-5605 or [jlmorse77@gmail.com](mailto:jlmorse77@gmail.com).

### **DFAS Retired & Annuitant Contact Information**

#### **DFAS Retired & Annuitant Pay Website**

[www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/](http://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/)

#### **DFAS Retired & Annuitant Pay Mailing Addresses**

##### **Retirees:**

Defense Finance and Accounting Service  
U.S. Military Retired Pay  
8899 E 56th Street  
Indianapolis IN 46249-1200

##### **Annuitants:**

Defense Finance and Accounting Service  
U.S. Military Annuitant Pay  
8899 E 56th Street  
Indianapolis IN 46249-1300

#### **DFAS Retired & Annuitant Pay**

#### **Phone and Fax Numbers**

##### **Phone:**

Toll-free: 800-321-1080  
local: 216-522-5955  
DSN: 580-5955

##### **Retired Pay Fax:**

800-469-6559

##### **Annuitant/Survivor Pay Fax:**

800-982-8459

##### **myPay**

[MyPay.dfas.mil](http://MyPay.dfas.mil)

**Phone:** 888-332-7411



## **Columbia River MOAA Foundation (CRMF) Update**

*by Dave Casteel CRMF President*

Can you believe it's February 2022 already?

For those of you who did not have a chance to join our annual meeting on Thursday, January 20th, I am including a link to our PowerPoint reports which we have put on our website page: <https://moaacolumbiariver.org/events-3/> under which you can find these reports:

[2022 Financial Plan Final Approved 01-13-2022](#)

[Treasurer's Report Slides – Annual Meeting FY2021](#)

These reports summarize how we used your donations in 2021 and what our plans are for 2022.

Coming up soon in April are when Clark College and WSU-V require our payments for the four MOAA Chapter Foundation scholarships they award in the Fall, as well as our first installment that is due in May to the new WSU-V **Colonel Paul S. and Ivadell M. Crosby** Columbia River MOAA Foundation Scholarship. Which, after we have completed gifts of \$10,400, will become endowed. Our spring 2021 outlay for scholarships/ endowments and matching funds (if offered) will, in part, depend on your generous response to the dues letter.

Your CRC and CRMF boards have approved \$500 for assistance to the VA Transplant Lodge on the Vancouver campus. We called them to inform them and Program Support Assistant, **Michelle Swanson**, was ecstatic about our gift. While they have 30 rooms they are only allowed to fill 15 due to COVID restrictions at the present time. As of February 7, they had 13 rooms filled (87% of current capacity). Since this is one of two VA transplant specialty hospitals in the nation for kidneys and livers, many veterans here fly in and do not have access to a car, so their ability to get out and shop for food is more limited. The lodge has three kitchens that are shared by the veterans and caregivers--each of which can only be used by one room at a time. Each room has a microwave and a small refrigerator.

While they are unable to accept food donations from individuals, **Michele** will use our VISA gift card to personally shop to purchase much needed healthy food items for guests and caregivers like cans of chicken or roast beef, cheese, bread, butter, mayonnaise, etc., so they can make sandwiches. She also buys individual salads, two-packs of chicken breasts, and other food items that are perfect for two people. She also purchases items like pasta, small rolls of ground beef, paper plates, as well as laundry detergent, etc.

Some have asked if it would be better to just give them a check rather than a gift card. **Michelle** said no, because that can't be used to buy food if it goes into the VA Lodge account. That's why the gift card is perfect—it directly helps the veteran and their caregiver. **Michelle** shops with her guests in mind and seeks ideal healthy food items at WinCo, Fred Meyer and Safeway taking advantage of sales when possible.

By the time you read this, she should have our gift card in hand and already be shopping.

*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. As always, we recommend you consult your attorney or tax professional regarding your specific situation.*

Feel free to contact **Dave Casteel** ([shilohcamas@comcast.net](mailto:shilohcamas@comcast.net)) or [CRMFpresident@comcast.net](mailto:CRMFpresident@comcast.net) or phone (360-834-2448) or **Frank Hill** by email ([hillhouse2@comcast.net](mailto:hillhouse2@comcast.net)) or phone (360-241-8252) if you have any questions or need any additional information.



**COLUMBIA RIVER CHAPTER  
MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2021**

**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 pandemic.
- Temporary resignation of the Committee Chairman due to personal health issues.

**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 Chapter officers.
  - 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” hosted by the Executive Board this past year because of the pandemic.

**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 2021. Summary of the calls made is attached to this report.

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Continued  
**COLUMBIA RIVER CHAPTER  
MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2021**

**Responsibility: Provide Personal Affairs (PA) services.**

1. Suspended casualty assistance because of the pandemic; however, phone call planning advice and assistance was provided to several occasions.
2. Provided personal affairs planning pamphlets, checklists, documentation assistance, and other support for two Surviving Spouses.
3. Published two articles in Chapter's newsletter about personal affair's planning.

**Responsibility: Coordinate with Membership and Program Committees.**

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

**Other Activities Arising from the Performance of Committee Responsibilities:** As service and means to keep Chapter members involved despite the limitations of the pandemic, the Membership Services Committee sponsored a semi-monthly Travel Forum by ZOOM beginning in March of 2021.

1. The Forum provides an information exchange on both domestic and international travel during the pandemic.
2. Two recurring areas of interest are:
  - Travel, insurance, COVID testing, and reimbursement considerations in the pandemic period
  - Post-pandemic travel planning
3. Twenty-three members and spouses have participated one or more times.

**Special Notes/Comments:**

1. To better distribute Chapter support to its membership, the decision has been made to return to the past organization of having the Personal Affairs Representative as a separate position, but with support from the Membership Services Committee. Also, there is a need for new calling help for the Keeping Connected Program. Personnel needs are:
  - a. A volunteer to the Personal Affairs Representative.
  - b. A Call Coordinator for the Keeping Connected Program.
  - c. Two primary callers for the Keeping Connected Program.
  - d. Two alternate callers for the Keeping Connected Program.



Submitted by: **Terry Babin**, Membership Services Committee, on January 20, 2022.

## **MOAA Chapter Travel Forum Update**

By Dan Sockle and Terry Babin

The Columbia River Chapter, MOAA's, sixth *Travel Forum* was held the evening of January 20, 2022.

The guest subject matter expert was Patty Kole, owner of Patty's Travel. Patty covered river, ocean, and land tours. Here is a summary of her presentation and answers to questions from the Forum participants:

- Cruises:
  - There is a lot of pent-up demand—particularly among the elderly and young couples in part because working remotely makes travel easier for many of those not retired (i.e., Expect to begin your cruise planning earlier than in the past)
  - Cruise lines are using modern technologies to keep the ship environment safer for passengers.
  - Expect to be required to have all COVID vaccinations including the booster shots at least two weeks before embarkation.
  - COVID testing (usually the rapid test) being required within 2-3 days before embarkation by many cruise lines.
  - Many ocean and river cruise companies now offering longer cruises as a strategy to reduce exposure/risk to staff and passengers.
- Land tours: Companies going to smaller groups.
- Other information:
  - Morocco has closed to tourism.
  - All major cruise and tour companies are usually very good about giving travelers timely, current information on pre-travel COVID requirements and arranging COVID testing before return to the U.S. for their clients.
  - One the best sources for COVID rules and protocols by country is to use your browser to go to: [apply.joinsherpa.com/travel-restrictions](http://apply.joinsherpa.com/travel-restrictions).
  - Most of the travel industry is:
    - Becoming more flexible about deposits.
    - Offering “cruise or tour with confidence,” or similar programs with no penalty if cancelled

before 30 days of departure with payment credited for future cruise/tours.

- Travel insurance is recommended, and Allianz now covers COVID.
- For those who are foregoing international travel, there are many opportunities for domestic river and small-ship cruises, and many good tour packages to major cities and National Parks.

### • **Patty Kole's contact information:**

Patty's Travel

1-866-392-9117

<http://www.pattystravel.com/>

### • **Information/advice from Forum participants:**

- Information was provided about family-friendly resorts in the Caribbean including the Villa Group. Highly recommended was the St. James Club in Antigua. You can check this all-inclusive resort on [stjamesclubantigua.com](http://stjamesclubantigua.com).
- Hawaii now has elevated entry requirements regarding COVID—comply or face 10 days quarantine.
- As a follow-up to questions about travel in Costa Rica during the November Travel Forum.
  - Answers were provided to the traveling member prior to this month's Forum.
  - Costa Rica remains the exception to most countries in Central America—safe and modern.
- A summary of a recent trip to Finland/Sweden over the Christmas period was given:
  - Wonderful trip, but expensive—total costs came to about \$20K per person.
  - Several days' stopover in United Kingdom and also Norway were cancelled because of COVID and COVID-testing complications.
  - Trip was not taken as part of a tour; so, travelers had to arrange their own COVID testing for return to the U.S.—cost was \$500.00 each.
  - Temperatures down to the minus 20 degrees Fahrenheit.

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- Another Forum participant echoed the difficulties for both timing and getting testing in the UK which resulted in cancellation of an October 2021 trip.
- For travel without leaving the continent, an alternative that is available here in the area is Oregon West—a bus touring company.
  - One of the Forum participants and spouse will be taking a 6-day western Canada tour (with return flight included) during mid-June.
  - Information is available on the Oregon west website at [orwest.com](http://orwest.com) or call 1-800-333-0774.
- A summary of a recent Celebrity cruise over the holidays was given:
  - The ship (Equinox) required all passengers to be fully vaccinated, COVID tested within two days of embarkation, and limited bookings to 70% of capacity.
  - Still, the ship was not fully prepared for the COVID surge that erupted halfway into the trip—problem was internal communications and processes for accommodating passengers placed in isolation pending determination of whether they needed to be quarantined.
  - Four of the original ports of call were closed to the ship by the port authorities due to Omicron concerns—excursion pre-pays were reimbursed quickly, but the cruise line has offered no other compensation/credits for the itinerary disruption.
- There was a request for more information about Overseas Adventure Travels which has been used by two of the Forum participants. Website is [www.oattravel.com](http://www.oattravel.com).
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Several Forum members are still considering (or have booked) travel to the countries listed below during 2022. If you have any suggestions/recommendations, please e-mail them to [tbear06@comcast.net](mailto:tbear06@comcast.net) or join the next Travel Forum during March 2022.

Czech Republic	Austria	Hungary
Finland	Germany	Turkey
Portugal	Russia	England/Scotland

**Next Forum Zoom meeting is scheduled for 7:00 PM on Tuesday, March 15<sup>th</sup>.**

The Columbia River Chapter, MOAA, neither validates nor promotes or endorses any tour/travel companies and their websites, or other contact information, listed in the notes and articles from the Travel Forum. Contact information is provided only to facilitate research by Chapter members. Members are advised to act with caution and due diligence in the use of the information.







## Legislative Contacts

### MOAA Legislative Action Center

<https://www.moaa.org/> then Select "Advocacy"

**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](mailto:comments@whitehouse.gov)

### Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler Washington's 3<sup>rd</sup> Congressional District

<https://jhb.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: <a href="https://jhbr.house.gov/contact/">https://jhbr.house.gov/contact/</a>	

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 <https://www.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: <a href="https://www.cantwell.senate.gov/contact/email/form">https://www.cantwell.senate.gov/contact/email/form</a>		

### U.S. Senator Patty Murray <https://www.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: <a href="https://www.murray.senate.gov/write-to-patty/">https://www.murray.senate.gov/write-to-patty/</a>		

## Vancouver Area Washington State Legislative Districts and Representatives

Legislator	District 49	District 17	District 18	District 14	District 20
<b>Senator</b>	Annette Cleveland 786-7696	Lynda Wilson 786-7632	Ann Rivers 786-7634	Curtis King 786-7626	Peter Abbarno 786-7638
<b>Representative, Position 1</b>	Sharon Wylie 786-7924	Vicki Kraft 786-7994	Brandon Vick 786-7850	Chris Corry 786-7810	Richard DeBolt 786-7896
<b>Representative, Position 2</b>	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](http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature)

**Federal Legislative Update:***by Buck Marr*

It is Feb 4, 2022 as I write this article. “Happy Ground Hog Day!” **Punxsutawney Phil** saw his shadow meaning six more weeks of winter. It’s Ground Hog Day in Congress also—six more weeks of trying to pass legislation.

**Tick Tock. The clock is running.** There are a ton of major legislative things to do and not much time to do it. Job One should be passing a budget. As we know, the government is operating on a Continuing Resolution (CR) due to expire on Feb 18. **Senator Shelby**, ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, said on 3 Feb “it’s all but inevitable Congress will pass another CR extending fiscal 2021 funding levels past Feb 18. But whether that stopgap lasts a few weeks, a few months or the remainder of the fiscal year will depend on the level of progress appropriators make in omnibus talks.” On Dec 6, the SecDef warned Congress of ‘enormous’ negative effects of a yearlong stopgap bill. He warned that the net effect would be a \$37B cut to defense accounts including a \$5B shortfall to the operations accounts. The impact of inflation is not considered in the \$37B. While the MOAA Nation generally advocates for focused veteran specific issues, it cannot be overstated how important it is to avoid a full year CR.

**Tick Tock.** Money will be tighter than ever and that is my theme today. Meanwhile, the all-important National Defense Authorization ACT (NDAA) was signed on December 27, 2021. It was about 3% above the President’s proposed budget and included a 2/7% troop raise. But, recall that a NDAA does not appropriate money for spending. This circles back to a looming fiscal dollar shortage should the government be forced to operate on a CR for the entire year.

**Tick Tock.** Without a FY22 12-bill omnibus appropriations package the USG operates at the previous year’s levels. At press time, many in Congress and elsewhere agree with Senator Shelby that there is not enough time to pass an Omnibus Appropriations Bill by 18 Feb. This opens the door

for a full year CR or a shorter period which brings little advantages.

**Tick Tock.** I foot stomp this because everybody on the Hill will be looking for money to fund their pet rocks. And, if history is any teacher, they will look deeply into military personnel and readiness accounts. Some of our most defense minded legislators are pounding tom-tom’s sending out dire warnings. We MOAA-ites must be on our toes and follow MOAA’s advocacy guidance weekly. What could be the legislative targets? I recommend you read the January 2022 issue of the Military Officer magazine. It has a comprehensive review of this year’s priorities. They will be in jeopardy of no funding. But, let me remind you that we did not achieve 100% success with 2021’s legislative priorities. For example, Toxic Exposure Reform is still languishing in the legislative process. Last June, the House passed H.R. 3967 *Honoring our PACT Act* which proposes very comprehensive measures to improve health care and benefits for veterans exposed to toxic substances. On 2 Feb, 2022, the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee unanimously passed the *Health Care for Burn Pit Veterans Act* which is their version of health care for toxic exposed veterans. The House version is judged to be more comprehensive but the point is that either version is very expensive. It is estimated that the House Bill carries a price tag of around \$300B. Another important initiative carried over from 2021 is the Major Richard Star Act. It would provide concurrent receipt for over 50,000 servicemembers unable to complete 20 years of service due to combat-related injuries. It too is very expensive in the long term. Everyone wants to help but not all want to pay.

Does this sound familiar? How about the long fight over the **widows’ tax**? The effort started in 1972, was rejected over 12 times in various ways and finally in the FY2020 NDAA, a Bill was born which repealed, over three years, the original legislation creating the SBP-DIC compensation offset. Only because of the advocacy of MOAA and their comrades in other veteran organizations was this misjustice rectified.

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**Federal Legislative Update (Cont'd):**  
*by Buck Marr*

**Senator Patty Murray (WA) on February 2, 2022.**

“We make a promise to our veterans—that after their service ends, we’ll take care of them when they come home. But many who served post-9/11 are suffering from illness caused by toxic exposures, and have been unable to access the VA medical treatment they need,” said **Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.)**. “I am proud this Committee [SVAC] could work together on this important legislation to provide life-saving care to our nation’s heroes—but this is just the first step we need to take here. Supporting all of our veterans is a top priority for me, and I will never stop fighting to ensure Washington state veterans get the care and benefits they’ve earned.”

**Please join me in aggressively reminding our legislators of their promises and the need to actually fund them.**

**Tick Tock.**

**9 Feb Postscript:** Much has happened since 4 Feb.

**Tick Tock.** On 8 Feb, the House passed a measure to put into place a third CR to extend federal government funding until March 11. Should it pass the Senate, it will allow time for final work on the 12 appropriations bills. On 9 Feb, the appropriations committee leaders announced they had agreed on a framework for the appropriations top line figures. This sets up the opportunity to put into place a FY22 budget slightly before the estimated time for the President’s FY23 budget submission.

**Buck Marr**  
**Federal Legislative Affairs**



**WA State Legislative Update. By Dave Casteel**

If Punxsutawney Phil says we have six more weeks of winter that means the WA Legislature will already be out of session before winter officially ends March 20. As Buck so astutely noted, **“Tic Tock The clock is running,”** In our legislature, this is especially meaningful as the even year regular 60-day session this biennium officially ends March 16th.

For our focus, there were 28 veterans-related bills as of February 5th being monitored by the Veterans Legislative Coalition (VLC) on which MOAA is a member of the executive committee. You find the most current list of them provided by WDVA here: <https://www.dva.wa.gov/about-wdva/laws-legislation/legislative-updates>. You can get your “oar in the water” and give your “two cents” about any of these bills, by contacting your District Senator and Representatives. Go to: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/>, then enter your address, and select your senator or representative. When their photo and name populate, select “e-mail,” then enter the bill number and either select “support, oppose, or neutral” and add your comments including if you wish for them to respond to your position/comments.

The next milestone is 5:00 PM February 15, **“Tic Tock”** which is the last day to consider (i.e., pass) bills in the house of origin. Bills that are not passed in the house of origin by this time are dead and will have to be reintroduced in the 2023 legislative biennium. You can find the full session calendar with key dates here: <https://leg.wa.gov/legislature/Documents/2022%20Cutoff%20Calendar.pdf>

For an excellent primer about our legislative process in Washington, you can find an excellent Washington Legislature article here: [https://leg.wa.gov/LIC/Documents/Information/Overview\\_of\\_Legislative\\_Process.pdf](https://leg.wa.gov/LIC/Documents/Information/Overview_of_Legislative_Process.pdf)

It is said all politics are local, so take a few minutes to check out these veterans-related bills as well as other major issues being considered by your legislator.

## Columbia River Chapter Membership 2022 Calendar Events

Date	Event	Program/Speaker
February		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clark County and Vancouver Police – Update on Crime (Rising or not?)</li> </ul>
March		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TRICARE For Life – What is changing?</li> </ul>
April	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBD</li> </ul>
May	TBD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>TBD</li> </ul>
May 30	Memorial Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Memorial Day ceremony at Ft Vancouver Barracks</li> </ul>

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

