



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

April 2022

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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503-317-2273

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& Membership:**

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& Programs**

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360-433-5605

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Yes, it really is happening! We are coming out of COVID hibernation aware the virus and its future mutations will be around well into our future. That translates for Columbia River Chapter members we can once again have “real” and “social” meetings. Many of you, as my family has, have already loosened some of the controls with small groups, going to shops, and attending public events again.

On April 28th, 2022, we will hold our monthly membership meeting in person. Did I hear applause? Our speaker(s) will address a topic which impacts all of us – the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program (IBRP). **Nicole Sherbert** is the IBRP Community Engagement Lead and will give us the latest update and seek feedback of key points. We will meet at the 40 & 8 BOXCAR facility at 2809 NE 78th Street, Vancouver, WA. We have used this location multiple times in the past and you may recall it is next to the old Bingo Hall on 78th Street. Enter the fenced compound directly from 78th Street and park in the lot in front of the BOXCAR building. The lunch menu is TBD as they are in the process of re-opening for the public. We will be catering a lunch of sub-style cold sandwiches and garden salad. The meal price will be kept as low as possible determined by the number of RSVPs and costs.

Less than half of our members responded to our annual dues appeal. That means some of you will be getting

a follow up letter from me. We need your support to keep the chapter thriving. COVID hibernation did not stop the chapter from fulfilling our charter objectives of support for veterans in our community and scholarships for local veterans and family members. Our ongoing costs remained the same even while we were primarily virtual. We also need your help to fill open positions you will see on the left margin of the front page of this newsletter.

The MOAA national Advocacy in Action outreach to all members of Congress is underway. While legislative matters are covered well in this newsletter, I want to draw your attention to this important program.



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President's Message continued

Here in Washington, our own **Dave Casteel**, as President of the Washington Council of Chapters (WSCOC) is leading the way with virtual calls to all Senators, Representatives, and their staff. Our chapter legislative lead, **Buck Marr**, is also participating on calls. Even if you are not actively engaged in this year's advocacy campaign, we need your help reaching out to your elected officials to let them know what topics we are advocating. You can do this by going to the MOAA web site, www.moaa.org, and selecting "Advocacy" then going to "Take Action" on the right margin for each of MOAA's three advocacy topics this year.

- **The Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282/S. 344)** would provide concurrent receipt of retired pay and disability pay for combat-injured veterans. This bill already has 205 co-sponsors in the House – adding 54 since January – and 56 in the Senate. Ask them to ensure support through floor votes and potential amendments to the FY 2023 NDAA.
- **The Stop Copay Overpay Act (H.R. 4824)** would overturn the doubling of TRICARE copays for mental health care for uniformed services families and retirees. By co-sponsoring this legislation, they can help remove costly barriers to mental health care.
- **Ensuring a 4.6% military pay raise** as a minimum across all ranks would keep faith with members of all eight uniformed services, maintaining the link to the Employment Cost Index (ECI) established by statute. Keeping this full raise intact in the NDAA remains one of MOAA's constant priorities.

Additionally, MOAA is advocating for comprehensive toxic exposure reform. To help in these efforts, please share your stories for possible use in MOAA articles, testimony, or meetings with lawmakers. Share your story about toxic exposure challenges related to:

- Global War on Terror exposures like K2 and burn pits
- Persian Gulf War exposures
- Agent Orange, to include exposures outside Vietnam
- Stateside exposures like Fort McClellan, Ala., or Red Hill, Hawaii
- Radiation exposure (Enewetak Atoll)
- This list is not all encompassing given the hundreds of exposures. If you have an experience, please share it with us.

Please contact me at 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





Free Smoke Alarm Installation

You may have as little as **two minutes** to escape a burning home.
Working smoke alarms save lives, cutting the risk of dying in a home fire in half.



There are three easy way to get free smoke alarms installed by trained Red Cross volunteers:

1. Call 360-768-3129
2. Visit redcross.org/GetAnAlarm
3. Email preparedness@redcross.org

CALL
360-768-3129
to schedule an appointment.

SOUND THE ALARM
Save a Life

Welcome Our New Surviving Spouse Advocate, Leah Davis

I am excited to join the MOAA Columbia River Chapter (CRC) as the lead Advocate of Surviving Spouses.

On March 7th, 2021, I lost my USAF Fighter Pilot husband, **Richard**. We had almost 2 years to prepare for the inevitable. As much as we prepared, it was still a hard climb, especially with COVID on the rise. After filling out forms, answering questions, making tons of phone calls & uploading files to various organizations by myself, I decided to get involved – even if just to lend support or help with the paperwork.

Because my husband was a Life Member of MOAA, I thought they might be the place to start on my quest. They provided the contact information to the local CRC. At the same time, I also read in a MOAA Magazine that there was a Surviving Spouse Website where one could join and get answers to a plethora of questions.

I have joined the National Surviving Spouse Network and through them, I contacted **Cheryl Toland**, the Surviving Spouse Liaison for MOAA Mt. Rainier Chapter & Washington State Council of Chapters.

And, in speaking with **CRC President Rodney Williams**, he mentioned that the current CRC Surviving Spouse Advocate, **Terri Whisenant**, wanted to step back from being primary lead for this program. I am grateful **Terri** and **Marlene Laurie** both have agree to join me in this endeavor.

I am pleased to join the CRC team, and hopefully we can help families be prepared, as well as provide comfort and support to the surviving spouses.

Thank you for the invitation and I look forward to meeting everyone.

Leah Davis
Surviving Spouse Liaison:
310-491-8891
leah@sanfill.com

Caring for Survivors Act, by Leah Davis

At the beginning of the 117th Congress (Jan. 3, 2021, to Jan. 3, 2023), Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Co-Chairmen **Jon Tester** and Sen. **John Boozman** introduced the Caring for Survivors Act of 2021 (S. 976) to adjust benefits awarded to survivors and family members of veterans who died as a result of their military service.

S.976 would ease the eligibility criteria for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) to allow additional survivors to receive this stipend as well as the monthly benefit amount to match benefits provided by other federal survivor programs.

The rate of compensation paid to survivors of service members who die in the line of duty or veterans who die from service-related injuries or diseases was established in 1993. It has only been minimally adjusted since that time.

S.976 fixes this inequity and brings surviving spouses' and family members' earned benefits in line with other federal programs.

Leah Davis
Surviving Spouse Liaison:
310-491-8891
leah@sanfill.com



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@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.



Columbia River MOAA Foundation (CRMF) Update

by Dave Casteel CRMF President

Wow! What can we say, but thank you, Thank You, and THANK YOU again for your tremendous generosity in response to the dues letter invitation to support veteran students and veterans in need! As of April 2nd, 47 members donated \$1,660 to the Scholarship Fund and \$2,280 to the Support The Troops (STT) Fund for a total of \$3,940.

On the scholarship side, our Clark Endowment generated \$3,190—more than enough to cover our three \$1,000 annual scholarships at Clark College. This means we do not have an outlay this year to Clark college. At this point, The Clark Foundation has not offered any matching opportunities, but we plan to keep our financial “powder dry” in the event an opportunity arises for us to do so. This month, the first of five annual installments payments of \$2,080 is due to WSU-V to fully fund an endowment there. Due to your generosity, we hope to fully fund this in less than five years, so it starts producing revenue to offset out annual \$1,500 scholarship as quickly as possible.

In case we have not mentioned it, we have revised the scholarship selection criteria at both Clark College and WSU-V to ensure veterans receive the highest priority and we have also included surviving spouses:

- First preference will be given to honorably discharged military veterans or to currently serving or retired military personnel
- Second preference will be given to children of honorably discharged military veterans, or currently serving or retired military personnel
- Third preference will be given to spouses or surviving spouses of currently serving or honorably discharged military veterans

On the STT side, your CRC and CRMF boards have approved \$3,000 in funding for worthy STT fund recipients. We should be able to tell you in the next newsletter who received your donations and how they helped veterans in need.

Again, all this is made possible by your generosity. As you consider how you will take or use your IRA RMD this year, please consider making a donation directly from your financial institution to the CRMF in the form of a Qualified Charitable Deduction (QCD). Your QCD reduces your Adjusted Gross Income dollar-for-dollar by the amount of your QCD. As an example, on the 2021 IRS Form 1040, Line 4b Taxable amount, will reflect your line 4a IRA distributions less the amount of the QCD. All you have to do is instruct your financial institution that holds your IRA(s) to issue a QCD check payable to the “Columbia River MOAA Foundation (CRMF),” and have them mail it directly to us at P.O. Box 1872 Vancouver, WA 98668. Once initiated, tell me you have done so and how you want it applied (i.e., Scholarship and/or Support the Troops fund). That way, our Treasurer will know to expect it. If you do not wish to designate how your donation is applied, we will split it 50/50.

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) or

(CRMFpresident@comcast.net) or phone (360-834-2448) or (**Frank Hill**) by email

(hillhouse2@comcast.net) or phone (360-241-8252) if you have any questions or need any additional information.



MOAA Chapter Travel Forum

By Dan Sockle and Terry Babin

March 15, 2022, Update

Special Announcement: Coming soon to the Chapter Website will be a section for Travel Forum notes starting with our first forum, and special information and announcements.

The Columbia River Chapter has not validated and does not promote or endorse any websites or references provided by Travel Forum members. Websites and references are included in the Forum Notes solely to assist the readers' in researching travel opportunities, and readers should exercise appropriate caution.

The Columbia River Chapter, MOAA's, first *Travel Forum* for 2022 was held the evening of March 15.

REMINDER: On March 14th the Columbia River Chapter Secretary sent out an e-mail notice to all members about the special opportunity offered our Chapter for booking one or more cabins for MOAA Vacations' Douro River Valley Cruise this June 5-12. If you did not receive this e-mail, more information is available on www.MOAAvacations.com under the MOAA Signature Group's tab.

The guest subject matter expert for the March Forum was **Jon Brenneman**, President, MOAA Vacations. The following is a summary of the presentation and answers to questions from the Forum participants:

MOAA Vacations is the official travel agency for MOAA. The mission is to provide the very best vacation experience for MOAA members and guests. MOAA Vacations offers the opportunity to enjoy the camaraderie of traveling with your fellow MOAA members from across the country. As a top account with every major cruise line and all the top tour companies, MOAA Vacations can secure the best prices to include negotiated special value-added offers. Close working relationships with the cruise lines

means better care for MOAA members. MOAA Vacations' highly trained and experienced staff handle the smallest of details.

Of special note was MOAA Vacations' "Satisfaction Guarantee for MOAA members." Customer service is the #1 priority. The staff is committed to solving problems before there is a complaint. Key features of their guarantee include, but not limited to:

- Superior service. [*Of note was that MOAA tried a different travel agency approach, and then reestablished its relationship with this group after discovering that no other agency could offer the quality service consistently delivered by Jon Brenneman and his staff.*]
- Lowest prices for value received.
- Many amenities, which usually are charged separately, included in the price.

1. General overview of travel as 2022 begins:
 - a. Cruising is better than ever (Some Chapter members have already noted this during the 2021 Forums).
 - b. Cruise staffs are making extraordinary efforts to be welcoming, delivering exceptional service, and reducing lines and waiting times—in part because cruise lines are booking at less than capacity.
 - c. Health/safety is the foremost concern in the COVID era.
 - d. Rules for individual travel embarkation/boarding and cross-border transit are being relaxed.
 - e. You still need to do your research on vaccination and testing requirements before traveling because rules can change quickly.

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Travel Forum Update continued

2. MOAA Vacations' MOAA Signature Groups offer a twice-a-year opportunity for exclusive cruises and land tours hosted by the MOAA leadership. "Exclusiveness" includes:
 - a. Cruise/tour is only for MOAA members and their accompanying family members and guests.
 - b. Onboard events.
 - c. Amenities, which start at the arrival airport, usually include such "goodies" as: Transfers upon arrival and departure airport(s), meals, beverages, excursions, gratuities, local entertainment, free internet/Wi-Fi, bicycles, etc.)
 - d. 2022-2023 scheduled Signature Groups:
 - Douro River Valley Cruise: June 5-12, 2022.
 - Tour of Germany with Oberammergau and Oktoberfest: September 12-21, 2022.
 - Columbia River Cruise: July 2-10, 2023.
 - Iceland Tour: September 13-23, 2023.
3. Special event: "50 Years of Freedom Cruise and Tour."
 - a. MOAA Vacations is honored to be working with former POW and retired USAF Chaplain Colonel **Robert Certain** to mark the 50-year anniversary of the Paris Peace Accords.
 - b. Vietnam, Cambodia, and the Mekong River: February 17 – March 1, 2023, with optional 3-day Hanoi extension.
 - c. Starts in Ho Chi Minh City and ends in Siem Reap Cambodia. For those doing the extension, there will be a flight from Siem Reap to Hanoi.
 - d. For further information, contact **Mike Tyrell** at 1-800-211-5107. You can also use mail@moavaca.com or watch for further information in the MOAA magazine.
 - e. If interested, act quickly. Only 14 rooms remaining as of last check.
4. For many, single travel for cruises and tours is difficult to arrange at a reasonable cost. Not so

with MOAA Vacations. Their Single Share program helps solve this problem by helping you to find a compatible cabin-partner, and can arrange a chat time between the prospective clients before you make a commitment.

General Information:

1. The date and time for the May Forum has not been set. If you have a preference, let Dan or Terry know your recommendation(s).
2. Also, as we move towards being able to gather as a Chapter in-person again, do you prefer to continue the Forum as Zoom sessions, or transition to a no-host social and discussion venue at a commercial business (e.g., coffee shop, restaurant, etc.)? Again, let us know your preferences.

Next Forum Zoom meeting: Place and date/time TBD

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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

Congresswoman Jaime Herrera Beutler Washington's 3rd 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: https://jhbr.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 <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: https://www.cantwell.senate.gov/contact/email/form		

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: https://www.murray.senate.gov/write-to-patty/		

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*

On your MARK, Ready, Set, BANG...GO! The FY23 Defense Legislation marathon has begun. The Washington MOAA team led by **Dave Casteel**, is off and running...are you? Advocacy in Action has started for the month of April and organized conveniently for your participation on the MOAA website.

With so many things going on in the world, country and your life, let me ask and plead for your attention to this year's advocacy topics:

GO: Support the Major Richard Star Act concerning concurrent receipt for combat-injured servicemembers. Advocates have been working feverishly on the Richard Star Act for over a year. There is strong support for H.R. 1282 and S.344 to provide concurrent receipt relief for over 50,000 combat-injured service members not able to complete 20 years of service due to their injuries not to mention future affected members. Like the former SBA/DIC surviving spouse concurrent relief issue, it is absurd that retired pay be reduced by a person's VA disability compensation.

GO: Reduce TRICARE mental health copayments. Mental health issues have risen to the top of our list due to the past two plus years of pandemic related events affecting not only our adult service members but also their children's' wellbeing. There is a shortfall across the country in quality mental health care. A fix to TRICARE like H.R. 4824, Stop Overpay Copay Act, can provide an important remedy by limiting copayments for outpatient mental health visits under the TRICARE program.

GO: Enact a 4.6% military pay raise in the FY23 NDAA. Supporting a 4.6% military pay raise should be a no-brainer given the obvious facts about the injurious effects of inflation on service members and their families. Junior grades in particular need our support.

Again, I say, please go to the MOAA Login page/advocacy tab. Click on 'Advocacy in Action is Underway 2022.' Follow the easy-to-understand

instructions for sending the prepared letters to our legislators.

Why is this important to MOAA marathoners? Aside from the obvious validity of the issues, the content of the President's proposed FY23 budget makes it clear that there will be a classic Congressional "food fight" regarding the content of the ultimate NDAA and appropriations bills.

As your federal legislation point of contact, I have surveyed dozens of opinions, partisan and bipartisan, regarding the proposed budget. The #1 theme of the reviews is that the budget will not mitigate the negative impacts of inflation as written. In fact, the Pentagon Comptroller, **Michael McCord** told reporters that "when accounting for inflation, the request represents 1.5% of real growth over what was enacted."

The proposed 4.6% military pay raise will not be in fact much of a "raise." It is likely it will keep our members about even with inflation. The overwhelming opinion is that this proposal as written will actually diminish the buying power across the five-year defense program.

Defense forces are being retired and end strength figures are being reduced in order to create pockets of funding for other Administration priorities like \$3.1B for a Civilian Climate Corps with more personnel than the Marine Corps. What does that mean for the MOAA Nation? It's fairly obvious, that if this budget is voted on before the Fall Mid-Term Elections, there will be interest groups in Congress competing for scarce dollars for their own constituencies.

Many Congressional groups say Defense gets too much money and many say Defense is not funded enough. We cannot get caught up in the fracas. We must remain focused on service members' earned benefits by virtue of their service and advocate in numbers.

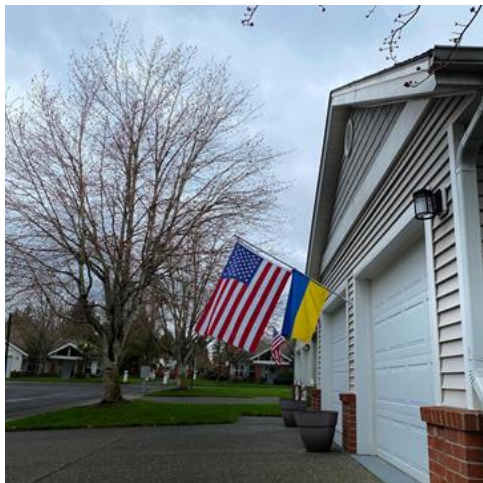
[Continued on page 10]

Federal Legislative Update continued

My friends, if you thought FY22 was fun, keep up your pace, FY23 is going to be a tougher marathon. **Ready, Set, Go.**

Breaking news added: The Senate Veteran Affairs Committee started negotiations on a measure to provide health care, benefits for veterans exposed to burn pits. Bottom line. There needs to be a reconciliation between the House passed proposal and the “skinny” incremental Senate version. Keep working this issue along with your AIA topics!

Buck Marr
Federal Legislative Affairs



Applying For VA Disability Compensation and related Compensation Benefits:

by Rich Wersinger

Prompted by a conversation I had with **Dave Casteel** late last year, I sent an email to our Chapter Board asking for any advice/help that might have about submitting claims to the VA.

I thought sharing my experience thus far could help and encourage another Chapter Member contemplating applying.

I fear I have service-related hearing loss working in US Navy ship propulsion plants lo those many years ago.

So many members were so very helpful, and I thank you so much.

Dave Casteel's email was super!

The first thing Rich needs to do right away is file VA Form 21-0966 INTENT TO FILE A CLAIM FOR COMPENSATION. It is a one page form he can file on line tomorrow. This will start the clock telling the VA he is planning to file a claim (he doesn't have to say what the disability is and it gives him a full year to file the claim retroactive to February 2022).

Then Rich should contact a VSO. There are two in Vancouver. I recommend Veterans of Foreign War (see below). I made initial contact and she was so busy I had to file on my own. When I did I mentioned her name on my form and said she was too busy due to COVID to file in a timely manner.

The VSO will help him fill out VA Form 21-526EZ "Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation benefits." The VA will want his audiology report and will set up an appointment with a third party (mine was in Portland) that will conduct their own hearing test for the VA. They can't measure tinnitus so they will ask you what it sounds like. I told them it was hard to describe and sometimes it drives me crazy and other times it is tolerable. I said sometimes it wakes me up or I wake up with it going loudly in my ears.

[Continued on page 11]

Applying For VA Disability continued

The Veteran Service Officers (VSO) Dave mentioned were:

Veterans of Foreign War

1603 E 4th Plain Blvd, Building #15, Room 112-B,
Vancouver, WA 98660

360-696-4583

vancouvervfw@outlook.com

Services:

Claims assistance

Vietnam Veterans of America

Clark County Veterans Assistance Center, 1305

Columbia St, Vancouver, WA 98660

360-693-7030

Services:

Claims assistance

Employment

I contacted both the Vietnam Veterans of America and the Veterans of Foreign War. In early March 2022.

I received a swift and professional response from the Veterans of Foreign War VSO, **Cyndi Blake**.

We set up an appointment and I met with **Cyndi** in her office in the VA Vancouver complex on 23 March 2022. She coached me before hand on the all the “evidence” I needed to share with her and what to bring to our meeting. Before that meeting I was asked to complete a VA Form 21-22 that authorized the VFW VSO to communicate with VA on my behalf. Also, I shared a copy of all my DD-214’s with her by email.

Cyndi was so thorough, professional, and respectful. She determined that I needed to have two separate, but related claims. One for tinnitus, a completely new claim. And second, to reopen a claim for bilateral hearing loss. My first claim for hearing loss was denied in February 21, 2013. I had no help when I submitted my claim in 2012-2013.

I brought recent audiology tests results that were included in this claim.

Cyndi prepared these two applications during our 23 March appointment that I signed and submitted them soon after our appointment.

In less than two weeks I received snail mail communication from the VA of receipt of my applications; arranged for an independent VA approved audiology examination.

I have completed that exam and am waiting for the VA’s decision that they expect to be able to complete sometime in June 2022.

During our appointment, **Cyndi** (the VSO) suggested that I work on submitting service-related injury related to mental health and my Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia. So, I have lots of homework to complete. And she will continue to help me submit further applications.

CONCLUSION:

1. Chapter Members’ Advice was so very helpful.
2. Never hesitate to ask for help.
3. Get help from an accredited Veteran Service Officer (VSO).

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) accredits three types of representatives—Veterans Service Organization (VSO) representatives, attorneys, and agents—to help ensure that claimants have access to responsible and qualified representation on their VA benefits claims. VA-accredited representatives must have good moral character and be capable of providing competent representation, and VA’s Office of General Counsel is responsible for making those determinations through its accreditation process. The accreditation process differs depending on which type of accreditation is being sought. An accredited VSO representative is someone who has been recommended for accreditation by a VSO that is recognized by VA to assist on VA benefit claims.

Columbia River Chapter Membership 2022 Calendar Events

Date	Event	Program/Speaker
28 April	Membership Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lunch / Interstate Bridge Replacement
19 May	Membership Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lunch / WSU and Clark College veteran support
30 May	Memorial Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ceremony at Ft Vancouver Parade Ground
June (Day TBD)	Membership Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wine tasting and lunch at local winery

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

