



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

June 2022

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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503-317-2273

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It is June! The weather is warming. Kids are getting out of school. Vacations are being planned. But before we take our summer break, we have our now traditional June wine tasting meeting. Let the good times roll.



I would be remiss if I did not first mention Memorial Day and thank all chapter members and spouses who supported our part in the Vancouver Memorial Day Ceremony at Fort Vancouver. Our partners in the Community Military Appreciation Committee (CMAC) worked hard to bring all the moving parts together in the largest Memorial Day ceremony in the greater Portland/Vancouver area. The music, the lowering of the huge garrison flag to half-staff, the speeches, the patriotic attire of many in the crowd, all remind us of why we celebrate this special day – to remember the price many have paid so we can enjoy the freedom to BBQ with family and friends (I did) and shop at the big sales (I did not.) No matter how you spent the day, I hope you took a moment for the true meaning of Memorial Day.

As a chapter we have survived the COVID-19 hardships and are thriving.

There are signs of chapter resurgence even with work to be done on leader succession at the top and in some key committee roles. Recruiting is starting to pick up now that we can meet recruits face to face. In the last year we have added six new members, and several have stepped up to take on key chapter roles.



We have a new dynamic Surviving Spouse lead who found us after her husband passed away and now wants to help others.

Our chapter participation supplying and serving refreshments at the Memorial Day Ceremony gave us the opportunity to identify four more potential recruits.

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Sunday, June 12th

Let's Get Together
Wine Tasting Social
at Stavalaura
Winery, Ridgefield
See Page 11 for
details

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President's Message continued

The chapter has two very strong leads in our legislative advocacy role in **Buck Marr** and **Dave Casteel**. You will see their work and get the latest update on the legislative page of this newsletter. I am constantly impressed by this dynamic duo.

During the MOAA national Advocacy in Action campaign **Dave**, as President of the Washington State Council of Chapters of MOAA, chased down each Washington member of congress, scheduled and rescheduled (occasionally several times) meetings to encourage their support on key bills being pursued through the legislative process. He and Buck talked with each of our elected representatives and or their staff to get the message across. That took a lot of commitment and time. I am sure **Marylin** and **Sherry** are happy to have the husbands time back.

Now we can talk wine tasting! Join us at the June 12th, 2022, meeting of the Columbia River Chapter. It will be more social than business meeting at a local winery owned by a new member of our chapter, **Joe** and **Beverly Leadingham** in Ridgefield. Visit their website ([Ridgefield Wineries | Stavalaura Vineyards and Winery | Clark County](#)) to learn their story. It is a small batch family owned and operated winery, so they do not have a full kitchen for catering. As we have done before on wine tasting ventures, we ask you to bring a "picnic lunch" for yourself. **Joe** and **Beverly** suggested one of the Ridgefield businesses, Fuel Bistro & Wines, 109 S 65th Ave. See all the details in our Chapter Calendar Events, page 11.

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



Gert Ionata receives US Flag from Prairie HS JROTC unit at Touchmark Memorial Day 2022 ceremony. Her husband Dick is on the right.



John Donnelly, Rod Williams, Jim Morse, and Dan Sockle volunteers at the Vancouver Memorial Day Ceremony



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.



**TAPS ADVOCATES FOR THE
MILITARY SURVIVINGSPOUSE,**
by Leah Davis

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors is an excellent resource to add to your “Surviving Spouse” file. TAPS is a 501(c)3 Veterans Service Organization and is not part of, or endorsed by, the Department of Defense.

This organization offers comfort and support to surviving spouse families for military loss and to advocate for improvements in programs and services provided by:

1. the Federal government through the Department of Defense (DOD),
2. the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA),
3. Department of Education (DOED),
4. Department of Labor (DOL),
5. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS),
6. as well as State and local governments.
7. TAPS also works to advance policy and legislation to strengthen the families of America’s fallen military heroes and much more.
8. TAPS can get you connected to counseling in your community and help navigate benefits and resources during your bereavement. They are just a phone call away.

To learn more about TAPS, their contact information is listed below.

Phone 24/7: 800-959-8277

Email: policy@taps.org

Online: taps.org

*******NOTICE*******

ATTENTION CRC MOAA LADIES. There has been some talk about starting up again our ladies’ group. We are working on plans to make this happen. Stay tuned... 😊. HAVE A GREAT SUMMER.

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

MOAA Chapter Travel Forum

By Dan Sockle and Terry Babin

May 19, 2022, Update

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 following items were submitted in advance by **Dick Ionata:**

- Planes are usually totally booked, and flying “standby” is very unlikely.
- Expect longer than usual waits going through TSA checks at the airport. Plan on checking in NLT 2 hours before boarding time for domestic travel and 3 hours for international travel.
- Regularly check for departure gate and time changes and cancellations.
- Though masks are not required, recommend continuing masking in the airport and on flights because the new COVID-19 variants are exceptionally contagious.

Report on upcoming Central Europe tour and Eastern Mediterranean cruise:

- Many countries (including Italy) have dropped the requirement for submission of the Personal Locator Form—but always check to confirm there are no changes for any Europe destination.

Travel Forum Update continued

- COVID tests (observed antigen—no home self-test) are being eased—again check regularly for changes.
- Port of Venice temporarily being closed for cruise ship embarkation/debarkation—Holland America docking being moved to Trieste, Italy.

Other updates:

- Gas prices are forecasted to remain high throughout the summer.
- Many State and private RV parks are receiving cancellations because of cost of travel—more people staying close to home.
- If planning to travel to Canada, pay close attention to entry requirements and changes—particularly those that are pandemic-related.
- Travel to/from Hawaii getting more complicated again.

Portugal trip report:

- Unsuccessful in finding direct flights to Lisbon; best to plan for a layover, and travel break.
- A recommendation was made to find flights (with layover) via the Azores
- Bring home test kits; helps monitor whether colds or flu during travel are not COVID infection.
- Biggest challenge was finding a place to schedule and take the COVID test for re-entry to the U.S.A.
- Masking was commonplace.
- Local transportation (including 35 Euros for shuttle to/from airport) not that expensive, and much cheaper than a car rental.
- Walking can be difficult because streets/sides are mostly cobblestone.
- Stay was relatively inexpensive compared to most European destination.
- People friendly and helpful, and food (particularly fish) was delicious.
- Consider getting the TSA Global Entry Pass for International travel—saves an hour or more going through U.S. Customs

Subject matter expert was Chapter member Allan Jeska on Space A travel.

- Space A travel has opened again.
- Great opportunity to meet interesting people.

Best sources for current information are www.amc.af.mil and most Space A terminals are now on Facebook.

- Nothing much has changed:
 - Need your military and dependent(s)' ID card(s).
 - Can't be bound by a schedule and need to find out estimated seats available to assess likelihood of making flight.
 - Usually not the luggage restrictions of flying commercially.
 - Stay visible in case someone of higher priority cancels at last minute.
 - Check destination COVID requirements.
- Widows can now fly Space A in CONUS.
- Tips on good Space A opportunities on the West Coast:
 - JB Lewis-McCord.
 - NAS Whidbey Is. (nice planes).
 - Fairchild AFB—good opportunities to fly to London.
 - Travis AFB—good twice a week opportunity to fly to Okinawa.
 - NAS in San Diego.

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Travel Forum Update continued

Other comments:

- Lee Golden provided an excellent list of places to stay if making a CONUS road trip. He has been requested to e-mail that list which will then be sent out upon receipt to Travel Forum regular participants.
- Advised getting a COVID test (PCR) in advance of a Hawaii trip (whether required or not) because the rules can change at the last minute.
- To avoid long travel time from origin to destination, consider layover time on East Coast to sightsee and recoup energy.
- Try to make the return from international travel arrive for the Customs check in Portland since lines and times are much shorter.
- A reminder from past Forums to consider flying Icelandair to/from Europe with up to 7 days layover in Iceland considered “continuous” travel.

Next Forum Zoom meeting is Thursday, July 21st at 7:00 PM.



MOAA certificates and medals presented to top JROTC graduates 2022 at Battle Ground and Prairie High Schools





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*

Each month I challenge you to keep your noses to the legislative advocacy grindstone. We are a small chapter but a five-star chapter. From that I have to assume that after reading last month's newsletter, each of you fulfilled an individual and chapter responsibility to advocate for our military family during the Advocacy in Action (AiA) 2022 campaign. We all know that uniformed members are prohibited from lobbying legislators directly. We are their voices.

We have a job to do and I think we do it admirably. AiA 2022 was a success. MOAA tells us that all 535 members of Congress were contacted resulting in 235 meetings and over 7500 letters transmitted. **Dave Casteel** led the Washington (WA) Council of Chapters and our chapter in a collective effort. He should get a purple heart for the work coordinating with the legislators' offices.

Dave and **I** met in person or virtually with principles and/or legislative aides for seven Washington State Representatives and two Senators.

In last month's newsletter, I provided brief summaries of the AiA topics.

Here is a post-AiA update:

Major Richard Star Act: H.R.1282/S.344 would allow those injured in combat to receive both their DOD retirement pay and VA disability pay without an offset.

We need to push this issue over the goal line and into the NDAA this year. There are 233 House cosponsors and 58 in the Senate. Six of ten WA Representatives have cosponsored and one of two Senators. Contact me for the specifics.

Stop Copay Overpay Act: H.R. 4824 would reduce TRICARE mental health copays by reclassifying the treatment as primary care versus specialty care.

The current national mental health crisis has manifested itself most noticeably in the form of suicides. Veteran suicides in Washington are significantly higher than the national rates. H.R. 4824 must pass. Cosponsors have grown from five to

18 in the past month. There is only one WA cosponsor—our District Representative.

Military Pay Raise: The President's FY23 budget proposal asks for a 4.6% pay raise for uniformed servicemembers.

These members will continue to lose buying power in FY23 for as long as inflation exceeds 4.6%. The "pay gap" is currently 2.6% due to pay raises below inflation for FY2014-16. The pay raise will be an NDAA issue. However, there is strong support in Congress for the 4.6% pay raise.

Now, let's look over the horizon for some hot button issues which need our attention for the remainder of FY22.

Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Bill: On 18 May the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee leaders announced they had reached agreement on toxic exposure legislation.

Senate floor vote is anticipated this summer. With Senate passage, it will require a House re-vote. It can provide comprehensive medical care with disability benefits for millions of veterans. We need every chapter member to help push this through...put those cards, letters and calls in high gear.

Curbing rising commissary prices: The Dept of Labor announced a 9.4% food inflation at the end of April.

Commissaries are not immune from this inflation and have raised prices in order to comply with a DOD requirement for them to make a profit (\$108M in FY21 and \$119M est. for FY22). Eight Representatives have written to the Secretary of Defense asking that he remove the requirement for commissaries to make a profit. It is estimated this would provide a 3%-5% customer cost savings.

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Federal Legislative Update continued

The Military Hunger Prevention Act (H.R.2339/S.1488): This bill requires the Department of Defense (DOD) to pay a **basic needs allowance** to certain low-income members of the Armed Forces. This initiative was in the FY22 NDAA but was not implemented due to eligibility details. It addresses the growing reality of hunger amongst our junior currently serving military families. The current proposal supported by MOAA would remove a servicemember's Basic Allowance for Housing as a factor for calculating income. During this period of increased inflation and high spousal unemployment, we need to support this proposal to relieve food insecurity for families.

Great work during AiA Columbia River MOAA-ites. For your reward, I offer the three topics above for ongoing advocacy. I recommend the Legislative Action Center or MOAA's Capitol Switchboard number (866) 272-6622 to make your voices heard. We only need remember the Memorial Day purpose of honoring those who have died in America wars to keep working tirelessly for their legacy of freedom.

Buck Marr
Federal Legislative Affairs



FOR THOSE WHO ARE SIXTY AND ABOVE: *Shared by Rod Williams*

{A friend found this on Facebook and shared it with me. I do not know the author or origin but feel each of us will find a golden nugget of advice and be happier for having read it. If you have seen the original, you will note I took a bit of editorial license to rearrange a few bits and cut it in half. If you want to see the full version, email me and I will share it.}

Between 60 and death, it's time to live and enjoy the fruit of your lifetime of work. You worked hard to reach retirement so use your savings to live happily and long. Always buy the best, most beautiful items for your significant other if they desire them and they can be afforded. The key goal is to enjoy your money with your partner. One day one of you will miss the other, and the money will not provide any comfort then, enjoy it together. Stop worrying about the financial situation of your children and grandchildren, and don't feel bad spending your money on yourself. You took care of them for many years, and taught them what you could. You gave them an education, food, shelter, love, and support. The responsibility is now theirs to earn their own money.

Respect the younger generation and their opinions. They may not have the same ideas as you, but they are the future and will take the world in their direction. Give advice, not criticism, and politely remind them yesterday's wisdom still applies today. Never use the phrase: "In my time." Your time is still ticking. You are alive and a part of now.

Always stay up-to-date. Read news you can trust and seek out new sources of news. Go online and read what people you trust are saying. Keep your values but be aware of other perspectives. Make sure you have an active email account and try to use some of those social networks. You'll be surprised at what old friends you'll meet.

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For Those Who Are 60 & Above continued

Keep a healthy life. Do at least moderate exercise (like walking every day), stretch, eat well, and get your sleep. It's easy to become sick, and hard to remain healthy. You need to be in good shape and aware of your medical and physical needs. Keep in touch with your doctor. Do tests even when you're feeling well. Stay informed. Pains and discomfort go hand in hand with getting older. Try not to dwell on them but accept them as a part of life. Sunshine and movement are great remedies for many aches and pains.

Regardless of age, always keep love alive. Love your partner, love life, love your family, love your neighbor. Don't stress over the little things. You've already overcome so much in your life. Don't let the past drag you down nor the future frighten you. Feel good in the now. Small issues will soon be forgotten.

Be proud and appreciative of yourself both inside and out. Don't stop going to your hair salon or barber, do your nails, go to the dermatologist and the dentist, keep your fashions and cosmetics well stocked. When you are well-maintained on the outside, it seeps in, making you feel healthy and strong.

Some people embrace their golden years, while others become bitter and surly. Life is too short to waste your days on the latter. Spend your time with positive, cheerful people, it'll rub off on you and your days will seem that much better. Don't abandon your hobbies. If you don't have any, make new ones. You can travel, hike, cook, read, dance. You can adopt a cat or a dog, grow a garden, play cards, checkers, chess, dominoes, golf. Get out of the house, meet people you haven't seen in a while, experience something new (or something old). The important thing is to leave the house from time to time. Go to museums, go walk through a park. Get out there.

If you've been offended by someone – forgive them. If you've offended someone – apologize. Don't drag resentment around with you. It only serves to make you sad and bitter. It doesn't matter who was right. Someone once said: "Holding a grudge is like taking poison and expecting the other person to die." Forgive, forget, and move on with your life.

Make new friends. You have so much to give to new friends regardless of their age. Teach them good qualities and how to do hard work that pays off but also give them the benefit of your experience where it applies. Just because your lifelong friends or family members have died doesn't mean that there aren't new opportunities for friendship. Join a civic club, volunteer at your church, help at the homeless or animal shelter and find other ways to give back to your community.

Laugh. Laugh away your worries. Remember, you are one of the lucky ones. You managed to have a life, a long one. Many never get to this age, never get to experience a full life.

My valued friends, enjoy peaceful life at this point in your life ...Don't worry... be happy.



Columbia River Chapter Membership 2022 Calendar Events

Date	Event	Program/Speaker
June 11 th	Heroes Night	CMAC sponsored event at Hudson High School From 3 to 7 PM. CRC will have a display table
June 12 th	Membership Meeting	Wine Tasting Social at Stavalaura Winery Ridgefield WA
September 18 th	Membership Meeting	Scholarship Fundraiser and BBQ
October (TBD)	Membership Meeting	Octoberfest theme



Where: Stavalaura Vineyard and Winery, 29503 NW 41st Ave, Ridgefield WA 98642

When: Sunday June 12th, 2022, from 1 to 3 PM (some may stay longer)

Menu: Bring your own picnic lunch of choice

Price: No host. Wine tasting fee and wine by the bottle

RSVP: email how many in your party to Larry DeVries at larrydev1@earthlink.net or call at 612-743-3509.

RSVPs are requested by Monday 6 June PM so the host can be prepared.

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

PLEASE JOIN US!

SATURDAY,
June 11, 2022
3—7 PM

HEROES NIGHT & CAR SHOW

Hudson's Bay High School
1601 E. McLoughlin, Vancouver
FREE attendance and parking!

Join CMAC in honoring SW Washington Military, Law Enforcement, VA Healthcare Providers, and First Responders at Heroes Night!

Music by One-Eyed Kats ★ Food ★ Resource Information

Car show: register on site for \$20; all makes and models; dash plaques and trophies awarded; raffle and goodie bags. All proceeds benefit local Veteran and military families.

Non-perishable food donations gratefully accepted for Clark County Veterans Assistance Center

Special thanks to our sponsors:

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