



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 2023

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

President:

Rod Williams
503-317-2273

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

Terry Babin
360-608-7789

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

Secretary:

Jim Morse
360-433-5605

Treasurer:

Larry G. DeVries
612-743-3509

**Immediate Past
President,**

Evelyn Brady
360-721-0865

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:

Dave Casteel
360-834-2448

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:

Jim Morse
360-433-5605

“What do I get from being a member of the Columbia River Chapter?” I hear that question from every potential member I contact. Recently, as I gave my standard response, the prospect countered he understood the need for advocacy and community support. He added he could get that from national MOAA and other community or church groups—what difference does the chapter add? Every member of the chapter should think of themselves as a recruiter whenever you meet an eligible veteran as they are essential for continued viability of the chapter. How would you respond to this question? My response was to focus on the local connection the chapter gives us.

The national MOAA advocacy program is highly successful largely due to grassroots support. The best written MOAA fact sheet or position paper without evidence of voter support is easily set aside given the volume of contacts each of our representatives gets daily. Our legislative leads have direct contact with our Senators and district Representative and their staff in concert with efforts of the Washington State Council of Chapters (WSCOC.) We are especially blessed to have MG **Buck Marr** as our federal legislative lead with his history from service, experience on the MOAA Board, and personal contacts with key legislators. On the state level, we are also blessed

to have Col **Dave Casteel**, who is President of WSCOC and a member of Washington’s Veterans Legislative Coalition (VLC.) Both gentlemen will soon be travelling to Washington, DC, to



participate in the MOAA Advocacy in Action effort to contact every senator and representative on targeted issues. You can help by going to the MOAA Legislative Action Center at <https://moaa.quorum.us/> to communicate with our representatives.

At membership meetings and in prior newsletters you have heard me expound on our constant and growing involvement in local veteran support, community involvement in local patriotic events, and our scholarship program.

[Continued on page 2]

Monday, April 17th

Membership Meeting

11:30 am

Touchmark

Vancouver

See Page 12 for details

Newsletter Highlights

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President's Message continued

The Clark County Veteran Assistance Center, Clark College Veteran's Resource Center, Fisher House, VA Lodge for transplant patients in Vancouver are among the list of recent agencies being supported by your Support the Troops donations. We have also initiated a relationship with the only active duty unit in our area, the Portland Oregon Coast Guard at Swan Island. Chapter members **Troy** and **Paulette Fryar** connected us with them and enabled us to contribute to efforts supporting junior enlisted members experiencing harsh economic times around Christmas. On March 22nd, **Dave Casteel** and I met with the current USCG leadership team and discussed on going contact and support. We are making plans for the new Commander of the unit to be a guest speaker at a fall 2023 membership meeting so we can learn more about their extensive mission and operations in the Northwest.

Our scholarship program continues to serve veterans and their family members at Clark College and WSU Vancouver. Those at the March membership meeting were able to meet our latest scholarship recipient. **Danielle (Dani) Hansell** was very impressive and was most appreciative of our scholarship support. As a veteran who had deployed to Afghanistan, a working mother, and a student she was a great example of why the CRC has preferred to support local scholarships where we can actually know the people we help and hear their stories.

With all of that said, I believe one of the strongest reasons to be a member of the Columbia River Chapter is exemplified by the *Keeping Connected* campaign underway this month. Twice yearly a team of volunteers strive to contact every CRC member. The primary objective is just that...keeping connected. The callers check in with the member on how they are doing, confirm the contact details we have on our roster is still current, and make sure they are receiving communications from the chapter. This effort has identified members who were experiencing significant life events and helped the chapter get them the support or information they needed. *Keeping Connected* is essential for our personal affairs program so we can "be there" when help is needed. The CRC Surviving Spouse program is active and engaged thanks to **Leah**

Davis and **Terry Whisenant**. The May membership meeting speakers will be our dynamic Membership Chair, **Terry Babin**, and our Surviving Spouse Liaison, **Leah Davis**, who will walk us through our checklist and guides for when a retired service member dies. The intent is that our spouses are prepared with essential information, documents, and contacts before they become survivors.

I hope the above will help you be prepared for questions from potential CRC recruits, and you can add to our numbers.

Before I close, let me remind you of our next membership meeting. If you have not received an invite from us already, please reach out to our secretary team, **Jim and Pat Morse**, so we can make sure we have good contact details. This will be a variation from our normal date and venue. Join us at the Touchmark at Fairway Village at 2911 SE Village Loop, Vancouver, on Monday, April 17, 2023, at 11:30 AM. Long term CRC member **Dick Ionata** will be our guest speaker on the history and future of the B-52. As you may know, this 50 year old plane is much more than a strategic bomber. Please RSVP to our treasurer, **Larry De Vries**, at 612.743.3509 or email: larrydev1@earthlink.net as early as possible. When you RSVP please tell us which luncheon choice you prefer: (1) Caesar salad with salmon or (2) Philly steak sandwich with French fries. The cost will be \$20.00 per person. Don't forget to bring a book or bottle of wine to donate for the drawing, the proceeds from which help support our programs. I look forward to seeing you there.

Rod Williams
President



Federal Legislative Update: by Buck Marr

In our last newsletter, I encouraged you to carefully watch the newly elected legislators and watch even more carefully what issues they support. In that article, we discussed the issues which are currently at the forefront of MOAA advocacy efforts. The Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282/S.344) is off to a good start. As of 18 March, the Bill has 234 House cosponsors, 56 short of achieving expedited attention via the Consensus Calendar process. The Bill has 62 cosponsors in the Senate. Seven of 10 Washington State Representatives and both Senators have cosponsored. In April, hundreds of MOAA members will descend on the Hill to advocate for our other top priorities: restoration of the Basic Allowance for Housing to 100% and reversal of recent cuts to the TRICARE Pharmacy network. With the look at hot topics completed, let's look at the other side of the legislative equation...the elected officials themselves.

A big challenge for MOAA and other advocacy focused organizations is: can you send people to lobby who can relate to and hopefully influence the legislators? Congress members are assumed to represent the people in their districts. That is why MOAA sends a large representative group of people to participate in Action in Action. The idea is to send people who closely mirror the legislators' experience and who are well versed in their electoral district.

That said, let's take a deep dive into the group of 535 legislators. Successful advocacy depends on a convincing elected officials that our arguments are sound, just and would benefit their constituents. That job is getting more and more difficult because of two things which the Congressional Research Service recently highlighted. First, the 118th Congress is the most demographically diverse Congress in history. Second, despite the diversity, the collective "Congress remains out of step with the broader U.S. population by several demographic measures."

The current Congress is the most racially and ethnically diverse in history. Roughly, one quarter of the Congress is non-White. Yet, the Congress is considerably less diverse than the Nation at large. The number of women serving is at an all-time high; almost

30% of the members are women but that figure is well below the national average of 51%. This Congress has the highest number of self-identified lesbian, gay or bisexual members in history (13). This category has more than tripled over the last ten years but remains less than the national average. The Congress is getting younger and more influential—Millennials (27-42) and Gen Xers (43-58) have grown in number and there is a Generation Z for the first time. However, the bulk of the Congress remains Baby Boomers (59-77). The influence of members not born in the U.S. and members who have foreign born parents has reached a new high in this Congress. Seeing the shifting demographics begs big questions about veteran presence in Congress.

Far fewer members of Congress have military experience than in the past. In the 118th Congress, the number of members with military experience is among the lowest number since at least WWII. An interesting sub-statistic shows Republican legislators with military experience outnumbering Democrats 3 to 1. While there has been a dramatic decrease in Congressional members with military experience, it remains **triple** the national average. (Sources: Military Times and Congressional Research Service)

Successfully influencing important legislation is difficult and getting more difficult given the legislators lack of intensity on current legislation. In large measure, our elected officials are busy with partisan gridlock involving subjects like the national debt limit, immigration, inflation/economy, congressional investigations, Ukraine, geopolitics involving Taiwan, China, Iran etc. etc.

The bottom line: Being well read and knowledgeable on the issues is not good enough anymore; we must be continually communicating with our national legislators to be effective advocates.

Buck Marr
Federal Legislative Affairs



***WE NEED YOUR HELP, by Leah Davis,
Surviving Spouse Liaison***

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

As a member of the MOAA Surviving Spouse National Network, I am asking for your help. There is currently legislation, S414 in the Senate and HR1083 in the House, "Caring for Survivors Act 2023" in the 118 Congress. We are seeking Congressional co-sponsors to support this bill.

This important legislation would raise DIC to the same levels as other federal survivor programs. The DIC rate paid to survivors has been minimally adjusted since it was first established in 1993. It would boost DIC to 55% of the compensation of a 100% disabled veteran, up from the current 43%. Correcting this injustice is long overdue. The bill would also reform the so-called "10-year rule," which currently prohibits survivors from receiving DIC benefits if a 100% disabled service member dies of a non-service-connected injury less than 10 years after receiving that disability rating. The law allows beneficiaries to receive a portion of DIC beginning at five years, with that amount gradually rising until full compensation at the 10-year mark.

Securing passage of the bill is the No. 1 goal for [The Military Coalition's Survivor Programs Committee](#).

PLEASE, HELP US

The "Caring for Survivors Act" currently has only 4 cosponsors. This bill will go nowhere unless we send emails, make calls, and/or tweet our WA State US Congressman/Woman and Senate Representative Offices. Ask for the legislative assistant who handles Veterans Affairs.

If they are not available ask to leave a message for that person and ask for a call back. I have found calling their local Washington State office and asking for the name of the correct staffer works, too.

Go to Pages 13 & 14 below in this newsletter for samples of the letters you can send to your Congressional representative(s).

THANK YOU!!!!

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





Legislative Contacts

MOAA Legislative Action Center

<https://moaa.quorum.us/issueareas>

MOAA Capitol toll free hotline at 1-866-272-6622

White House

Comments: 202-456-1111 Switchboard: 202-456-1414
TTY/TTD: 202-456-6213 E-mail: <https://www.whitehouse.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/>

Congresswoman Marie Gluesenkamp Perez Washington's 3rd Congressional District

<https://gluesenkamppez.house.gov/>

Washington, DC Office: U.S. House of Representatives 1431 Longworth House Office Building Washington, DC 20515 Phone: (202) 225-3536	Vancouver, WA Office: 1053 Officers Row Vancouver, WA 98661 Phone: (360) 695-6292
Contact Congresswoman Gluesenkamp Perez via email https://gluesenkamppez.house.gov/contact	



U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell <https://www.cantwell.senate.gov/>

WASHINGTON, DC 511 Hart Senate Office Building Washington, DC 20510 Phone: (202) 224-3441 Fax: (202) 228-0514 TDD: (202) 224-8273	SW WASHINGTON The Marshall House 1313 Officers Row Vancouver, WA 98661 Phone: (360) 696-7838 Fax: (360) 696-7844	SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 915 Second Avenue Suite 3206 Seattle, WA 98174. Phone: (206) 220-6400 Fax: (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	John Braun 786-7638
Representative, Position 1	Sharon Wylie 786-7924	Keven Waters 786-7994	Steph. McClintock 786-7850	Chris Corry 786-7810	Peter Abbamo 786-7896
Representative, Position 2	Monica Stonier 786-7872	Paul Harris 786-7976	Greg Cheney 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

Vietnam: 50 Years Later: Contributed by Rod Williams

Vietnam Veterans Day was March 29 2023 and the 50th Anniversary of the end of US fighting in Vietnam was commemorated at a ceremony at Clark College. The ceremony was presented by the Community Military Appreciation Committee (CMAC) and the Clark College Veterans Center of Excellence. Organizer **Mike Butler**, Colonel USAF (retired) and CRC member, led a panel discussion by individuals who faced the fighting and how it affected them. CMAC Chairman, **Larry Smith**, Colonel USA (retired) and CRC member, then led a dedication of a Witness Tree for all Vietnam Veterans on the campus of Clark College. The crowd included many chapter members.

Captions for photos from The Columbian



Attendees stand around a Turkish fir, which was designated as a Vietnam Veteran Witness Tree, on Wednesday during a Vietnam War Veterans Day event at Clark College. (Taylor Balkom/The Columbian)



Retired Col. **Larry Smith** talks to the crowd during the Vietnam War Veterans Day event at Clark College. (Taylor Balkom/The Columbian)

Vietnam: 50 Years Later: (continued)



Clark College Board of Trustees Chair **Paul Speer**, center, Vancouver Mayor **Anne McEnerny-Ogle**, right, and retired Col. **Mike Burton**, left, place a plaque at the base of the newly designated Witness Tree at the Vietnam War Veterans Day event. (Taylor Balkom/The Columbian)

**A SPECIAL GIFT AT A TIME OF GRIEF
A PERSONAL AFFAIRS UPDATE
by Terry Babin**

Not the news I wanted—a serious cancer diagnosis. Looking back, it was a blessing in disguise.

For over a dozen years I have been the Columbia River Chapter's Personal Affairs (PA) Representative. Many times each year, I worked with the families or family representatives of a recently deceased member. The loss was often expected; however, unexpected losses also happened. While grief and the grieving process had to work its course, there was a defining difference among survivors. Those survivors who received the benefit of the member preparing for the eventuality of their own passing clearly received a priceless "gift." Pre-planning and documentation of important records reduced anxiety, provided emotional and financial relief, and assisted everyone in focusing on what needs to be done for the support and wellbeing of the member's survivors.

This was the gift I wanted to leave for my wife and other family members. Make it easy for my wife and family to move forward in the adjustments and opportunities still ahead in their own lives. I didn't want to have my final thoughts be a harsh critique of myself and review of what I should have done, but procrastinated until it was too late. No matter the outcome of my pessimistic medical prognosis, I wanted my next of kin to have the gift, and caring effort, to make their continuation of life after me as smooth a journey as possible.

Yet, there I was—getting the unsettling diagnosis, and realizing I was the one who needed to take the time, and make the effort, to get my personal affairs in order. I needed to get off the PA pulpit and quit procrastinating myself. I was lucky. I had time to do what I started years ago, but never finished.

[Continued on page 8]

Special Gift – continued:

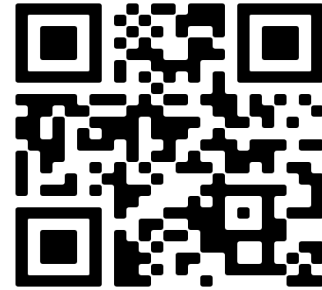
Surprise! It was easier than I expected once I became focused and organized. Having a method for gathering, organizing, recording, and storing essential documents [e.g., DD Form(s) 214, insurance policies, will, and memorial and burial instructions as well as financial account information, etc.] helps you identify and catalogue this information. Providing for the quick access and ease to find and use essential information, particularly when grief and uncertainty make doing even the simplest of things difficult for your survivors, is one of the most important gifts you can give.

Accordingly, the Chapter meeting on May 18th will feature Personal Affairs planning, and provide updated checklists and information to help you organize and prepare your end-of-life documents, or update those records if you already have put something together.

The Chapter’s Surviving Spouse Representative, **Leah Davis**, will join me as part of the May 18th presentation. There are special considerations in cases of single, widowed, and widower members. Plus, important information to know in advance if there are existing, or potential for, service-connected underlying contributing factors of death which might support a survivor’s claim for Veterans Administration benefits.

We look forward to your participation for our first Personal Affairs briefing since pre-pandemic times.

Terry Babin
Personal Affairs Representative



Jump to Our Chapter Website



***The OWC & MOAA Spouses Lunch
Bunch***

by Leah Davis Surviving Spouse Liaison

Another Fabulous gathering of the OWC AND MOAA SPOUSES. We met at Beaches Restaurant on March 23rd 2023 where a GREAT lunch, laughter and stories were shared.

More of these adventures are on the horizon. So, if you have not attended one of our luncheons, please plan on coming to the next one.

We'd love to have you.



For Immediate Release:

March 27, 2023

Contact:

Sam Runyon (Manchin), 202-740-6241

Curtis Kalin (Budd), 202-763-5441

Matthew Wester (Boozman), 202-224-4843

MANCHIN, BUDD, BOOZMAN REINTRODUCE BIPARTISAN RESOLUTION TO HONOR GOLD STAR SPOUSES

Washington, DC – U.S. Senators Joe Manchin (D-WV), **Ted Budd** (R-NC) and **John Boozman** (R-AR) reintroduced a bipartisan resolution to designate April 5th, 2023 as Gold Star Wives Day. The resolution honors the sacrifices made by the spouses and families of fallen members of the United States Armed Forces.

"I cannot imagine the pain of losing a loved one in the line of duty, and West Virginians and Americans are forever grateful to the brave patriots and their families who have sacrificed so much for the country we all love. We will never be able to repay our brave servicemen and women and their families who have paid the ultimate price to protect their fellow Americans. I'm proud to reintroduce this bipartisan resolution to designate April 5th, 2023 as Gold Star Wives Day to honor their dedication and sacrifice to our nation. I extend my deepest condolences and sincere gratitude to every Gold Star family and spouse," said **Senator Manchin**, member of the Senate Armed Services and Veterans' Affairs Committees.

"Americans are forever indebted to those who serve our country and particularly those who lay down their lives for us. We often forget the sacrifice that military families also bear. That's why I'm proud to help introduce a bipartisan resolution honoring Gold Star wives. I would like to extend the gratitude and condolences of all North Carolinians to the wives of those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country," said **Senator Budd**.

"The men and women who have laid down their lives protecting our nation and defending freedom aren't just heroes – they are parts of families that can never truly be made whole from the loss of their loved one. When Americans make this incredible sacrifice, we owe it to them not just to carry on their legacies but also to remember and support those they were closest to – their spouses, children and parents – with each new day they face without them. I'm honored to join Senators Manchin and Budd in ensuring these Gold Star families are not forgotten and our country expresses the eternal gratitude they so richly deserve," said Senator Boozman.

On April 5, 1945, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt convened the first meeting of the Gold Star Wives of America, a Congressionally-chartered non-profit to acknowledge the incredible sacrifices of the families of those who died in service during World War II. To learn more about the organization, visit their [website here](#).

Senator Manchin introduced the Gold Star Wives Day Resolution in the 117th Congress on April 5th, 2021.

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 editor@moaacolumbiariver.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 Chapter Membership 2023 Calendar Events

Date	Event	Program/Speaker
April 17	Membership Meeting	Luncheon 11:30 AM at Touchmark. Dick Ionata to speak on history and future of the B-52
May 18 th	Membership Meeting	Luncheon 11:30 AM at 40&8 Boxcar. Review of Personal Affairs Checklist and Support
May 24 th	Our Community Salutes	Area graduates joining services recognized. Skyview High School 6PM
May 29 th	Memorial Day Ceremony	Fort Vancouver Parade Ground at the Flagpole CRC will serve coffee
June (Date: TBD)	Membership Meeting	Winetasting at Stavalaura Winery.
September (Date: TBD)	Membership Meeting	Traditional BBQ and Scholarship Fund Drive. Location yet to be confirmed

Membership Meeting on Monday, April 17th, 2023 Luncheon at 11:30 am.

Where: The Touchmark, 2911 SE Village Loop, Vancouver, WA.

Free will scholarship donations gladly accepted.

Cost is \$20 per person at the door	Menu Choices: 1. Caesar salad with salmon, or 2. Philly steak sandwich with French fries
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And remember, spouses are welcome and encouraged to attend!

Also note we have resumed our raffle program with wine, books, and other items as prizes. You are encouraged to contribute a bottle of wine or a prize of your choosing.

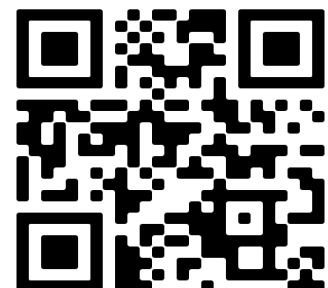
Our April membership meeting is a variation from our normal date and venue. Please mark your calendars and RSVP to join us at the Touchmark at Fairway Village

Management asks us to please stop at the main entry to sign in and get a visitor name tag.

We have a number of CRC members who reside there, and this will better allow them to attend. One of those is Dick Ionata, who will be our guest speaker on the history and future of the B-52.

Please RSVP to **Larry DeVries** at 612.743.3509 or email: larrydev1@earthlink.net as soon as possible. Please tells us which luncheon choice you prefer.

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



Sample Letter to Congresspersons

Rep's full name _____

Reps Address _____ (in the files or use google)

Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman or woman _____ (Last Name)

I am writing to ask you to co-sponsor HR 1083, "The Caring for Survivor's Bill 2023" sponsored by Congresswoman Johana Hayes D-CT-5).

A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve and to expand eligibility for dependency and indemnity compensation paid to certain survivors of certain veterans, and for other purposes.

This bill would increase DIC (Dependency and Indemnity Compensation) for veterans' surviving spouses to equal to compensation paid by other Federal programs. DIC is indemnity compensation paid by the Veteran's Administration to the widow/ers of veterans who died due to a service caused illness or injury or on active duty in the line of duty. HR 1083 also reduces the 10-year requirement of 100% disability to 5 years for awarding DIC for a non-service connected death.

I am the surviving spouse of _____ (Veteran's name). My spouse died or was killed as a result of his military service. Tell a little about your spouse/story if you choose) _____

Please cosponsor HR 1083. Thank you.

Sincerely,

_____ Name
 _____ Address
 _____ Phone
 _____ Email

Sample Letter to SENATORS

Senator's full name: _____

Senator's Address: _____ in the files section)

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Honorable Senator _____
(Senator's Last Name),

I am writing to ask you to co-sponsor S.414 “**The Caring for Survivor’s Bill 2023**” sponsored by Senator Jon Tester. A bill to amend title 38, United States Code, to improve and to expand eligibility for dependency and indemnity compensation paid to certain survivors of certain veterans, and for other purposes.

This bill would increase DIC (Dependency and Indemnity Compensation) for veterans ’surviving spouses to equal to compensation paid by other Federal programs.

DIC is indemnity compensation paid by the Veteran’s Administration to the widow/ers of veterans who died due to a service caused illness or injury or on active duty in the line of duty. S. 414 also reduces the 10 year requirement of 100% disability to 5 years for awarding DIC for a non-service connected death.

I am the surviving spouse of _____ (Veteran's name). My spouse died or was killed as a result of his military service. (tell a little about your spouse/story if you choose)_____

I live in your state and currently receive DIC.

Please cosponsor S.414. Thank you,

Sincerely,

Name
Address
Phone
Email

ANNUAL REPORTS**Membership Services and Joint Audits**

Published below in this Newsletter are two reports presented at the Annual Meeting of the Columbia River Chapter and its Foundation this past February. These two Reports are customarily published each year after the Annual Meeting for the benefit of those members unable to attend that February meeting.

The Membership Services Committee's Report summarizes the accomplishments and challenges encountered in providing services to members and spouses of the Chapter during the last year of pandemic period.

For health and safety reasons, the Joint Annual Audits of the Chapter and the Foundation were not conducted during the pandemic. The audits were conducted, however, this past January. The Joint Audit Report covers the period from the last audit of the fall of 2019 through October 31st of 2022.

**COLUMBIA RIVER CHAPTER
MEMBER SERVICES COMMITTEE
ANNUAL REPORT FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2022**

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: Most of the Committee's activities remained suspended during the past year due to the protocols, restrictions, and safe practices required during the pandemic.

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.
4. There is a need to reconstruct the "Welcome Aboard" package for members as they join the Chapter.

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 September 2022. Summary of the calls made is attached to this report.

Responsibility: Provide Personal Affairs (PA) services.

1. Suspended casualty assistance because of the pandemic; however, phone call planning advice and assistance were provided on several occasions to members, spouses, and veterans
2. Provided personal affairs planning pamphlets, checklists, documentation assistance, and other support for two families.
3. Published information in the Chapter’s newsletter about personal affair’s planning.

Responsibility: Coordinate with Membership and Program Committees.

1. Membership Committee Coordination: As needed.
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.

1. The Forum provides an information exchange on both domestic and international travel during the pandemic. Primary interest of participants was post-pandemic travel planning.
2. Approximately 25 members and spouses have participated one or more times.

Special Notes/Comments: Resumption of all Committee activities will be dependent on level of availability and participation of the Service Representatives.

Submitted by: Terry Babin, Membership Services Committee, on February 16, 2023

ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY
of the
2019-2022
JOINT AUDIT OF THE FINANCIAL RECORDS

Purpose: This summary of the Joint Audit of the Columbia River Chapter (CRC) and the Columbia River MOAA Foundation (CRMF) is provided for the record at the Annual Meeting of the CRC and CRMF.

Audit Date: January 9, 2023.

Period Audited: October 1, 2019, through September 30, 2022.

Audit Areas:

- ✓ Documentation
- Budgeting
- ✓ Income & Receipts
- ✓ Expenses & Expenditures
- Petty Cash
- Chapter Assets
- ✓ Internal Controls
- ✓ Administration, Procedures, and Processes

Prior Year Recommendations:

1. The recommendation that the Chapter By-laws be amended to better reflect the financial responsibilities of the Chapter officers still are awaiting final vote of the Chapter members.
2. The recommendation for the CRC and CRMF Treasurers to tighten procedures for maintaining the audit trail documentation when a substitute is filling in for a Treasurer is in the testing phase and needs to be completed/approved.

Audit Objectives: Both the CRC and CRMF Final Audit Reports address the pandemic's impact on both the operations and accounting as well as audit constraints. The audit was based on the fundamental that internal audits are "... designed to add value and improve an organization's operations...(it) helps an organization accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control, and governance processes." The most recent audit of January 2023 had two primary objectives given the restraints and constraints imposed during the pandemic:

Objective 1: Determine if there were any indications that waste, fraud, or abuse, or any other forms of fiduciary misconduct occurred in high-risk areas.

Objective 2: Evaluate if records and procedures supporting the audit trail, internal controls, and overall financial management and accounting functions of the Chapter and the Foundation are sufficient to resume normal operations in the post-pandemic period.

1. **Ensure essential documentation for registering with Federal and State agencies, to include certification of non-profit status, is complete and current.** Documents that were specifically examined were complete and current for both the CRC and the CRMF.

2. **Review the adequacy of the audit trails for income and expenses, as well as internal controls, are sufficient to support an external (e.g., IRS) audit.**
 - Sampling used because of the number of years covered in the audit.
 - Records and documentation of income/receipts, deposits, and expenditures for the CRC and CRMF were complete and accurate for the samples.
 - Internal controls are prudent and practical.
3. **Determine any areas of weakness, or areas requiring further examination/discussion, with respect to processes, procedures, and overall management of assets and finances.** The primary recommendation for both the CRC and CRMF is to establish “custodial responsibilities” for key records and documents.
4. **Make a risk assessment of potential for waste, fraud, or abuse.**
 - Treasurers for both the CRC (Larry DeVries) and CRMF (Frank Hill) been very attentive and diligent in performing their duties, and doing so in a timely manner, despite navigating the challenges of the pandemic period. Both continue to develop new and improved accounting tools and record formats that facilitate a transparent and efficient audit trail.
 - Special note: CRC President made an exceptional effort during the time the CRC Treasurer’s position was vacant.
 - Overall, the risk for waste, fraud, or abuse is very low in both the CRC and CRMF.

Findings: The Chapter and Foundation have been well-served by the respective Treasurers during the pandemic, and the Chapter and Foundation are ready to resume normal business.

Other Remarks:

- A special thank you to Ron Pastor and Dave Shoemaker, both past Treasurers, for serving as Audit Team members.
- *Final Audit Reports* have been previously sent to the CRC and CRMF Presidents by e-mail.

Submitted by: Terry Babin, Audit Team Leader, on February 16, 2023.