



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 2024

Happy Spring

The longer days of daylight and warmer temps are sooo welcome (and once the pollen stops, we can all go outside and plant our gardens...)

If you have tried to log in to the MOAA.org website you have noticed that you receive this message: “NOTE TO MEMBERS...Members will not be able to log into their account during MOAA’s migration to a new customer database.” The new AMS system should rollout before the end of April, so keep trying. MOAA promises a better experience using their AMS database.

As you know, MOAA’s Advocacy in Action (AIA) just concluded. State teams from all over the nation visited



Representatives and Senators (or their veterans affairs Legislative assistants) on April 17th in Washington DC. Locally, **Roger Rosenberry** (L) and **Dave Casteel** (R) visited with **Congresswoman Gluesenkamp Perez**’ Case Worker and Veterans Affairs legislative assistant, **Tony**

Sprague on April 15th and **Dave** visited **Senator Murray’s** SW WA Outreach Director, **Caitlin Harrington**, on April 16th. (He was scheduled to meet with **Senator Cantwell’s** Outreach Director on April 17th but she had a family emergency and the meeting was postponed).

Issues discussed were 1) The Richard Star Act HR 1282 and S 344, 2) Restoring BAH to 100% HR 2537 and S1823, and 3) Preserving TRICARE for Life benefits. All issues were well received, especially the unfair withholding of pay for approximately

52,000 medically retired combat-wounded veterans. Because they are chapter 61 medical retirees who did not retire with 20 or more years of service, their VA disability pay (called VA waiver) is taken out of their retirement pay instead of being paid concurrently.

[Continued on page 2]

Thursday, April 25th
Membership Meeting
Cascadia Technical Academy Culinary Center of Excellence
Vancouver
See Details Page 8

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Happy Spring continued

This is patently unfair--just as the “widows’ tax” (i.e., SBP-DIC offset) was unfair for approximately 60,000 widows (receipt of both entitled payments was finally approved and phased in over three years).

Congress knows the current Combat-Related-Special-Compensation rules unfairly penalize medically retired combat-injured veterans. As proof, 236 Representatives in the House and 73 Senators cosponsored HR 1282 and S. 344 respectively. Although the one-day AIA event is over, we still need to keep telling Congress to pass this act (this has a proposed five-year phase in). It took over 20 years to get Congress to fix the unfair “Widows tax,” let’s hope the Richard Star Act doesn’t take that long. With your support, it won’t.

On another note, we welcome three new Service Representatives to our board of directors’ leadership team: **Roger DeRoos**, USPHS, **Jack Holland**, USN, and **Roger Rosenberry**, USAF. Together, they are working on a continuity leadership plan going forward. **Rod Williams** will be formally stepping down this summer and we don’t currently have anyone ready to step in to replace him. **Rod** just finished his second four-year stint (he preceded Eveyln and **Dave** many years ago in his first of two, two-year terms) as President. He deserves his well-earned “retirement,” but we need a successor. Perhaps this can be a “team relay” so to speak, or serve shorter terms. We also need to fill other vacancies on the leadership team. We look for your support and welcome your ideas. Don’t be afraid, we have many great mentors available to assist you. Contact any of our officers or service representatives for information.

We hope to see you at our April 25th lunch meeting at Cascadia Technical Academy Culinary Center of Excellence for a delicious plated meal. Please remember to RSVP to Larry at larrydev1@earthlink.net.

Chapter Dues Renewal for 2024 and New Two-Year Option,
by Larry G. DeVries, Treasurer

The Columbia River Chapter annual dues for 2024 are up for renewal now We are taking those chapter dues renewals now, after January 1, 2024.

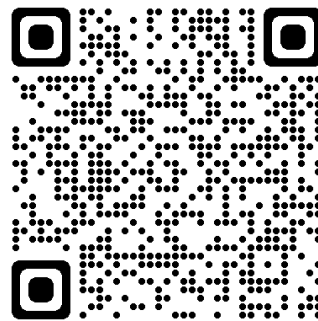
The one-year dues renewal is standard. The fee is \$20.00 per member.

An additional feature of the MOAA Join/Renew/Donate function is a Two-Year Renewal option.

If you wish to renew for two years that option is available to you. Choose whatever fits your situation. We will keep records of those taking the second year.

If you have tried to log in to the MOAA.org website you have noticed that you receive this message: “**NOTE TO MEMBERS**...Members will not be able to log into their account during MOAA’s migration to a new customer database.” The new AMS system should rollout before the end of April, so keep trying. MOAA promises a better experience using their AMS database.

Use the Join/Renew/Donate steps described in the November 2023 newsletter (page 9).



To get to those pages quickly, scan the above QR code with your smartphone and the link will be displayed for you on your phone. Click the link.

Proceed with the Join/Renew/Donate pages.

This QR code is now on the chapter website also.

We will continue to accept chapter dues renewal payment by check through the USPS mail as we have in the past. Renewal letters went out in February 2024.

Larry DeVries
CRC Treasurer

Federal Legislative Update: ***submitted by Rich Wersinger***

MOAA's Retiree Advocacy Priorities for the 118th Congress

MOAA NEVER STOPS SERVING TO HONOR THEIR SERVICE AND HELP THEM RETIRE THE WAY THEY ENVISIONED.

With more than 350,000 members from every branch of service - including Active Duty, National Guard, Reserve, retired, former officers, and their families - MOAA is a powerful force speaking for a strong national defense and representing the interests of military officers at every stage of their careers. Retirees and their dependents deserve the full earned pay and benefits their decades of service and sacrifice entitle them to.

For more than 90 years, MOAA has engaged with Congress to protect pay and benefits from budget-driven threats, continued access to quality medical care, and countless other areas of concern to retirees, those currently serving, and the wider uniformed services community. MOAA will also continue to inform Congress of the importance of protecting and expanding benefits for those who have served, and of preserving earned benefits such as COLA increases for retirees and survivors and the commissary benefit that frequently become targets for cost cutting.

MOAA's advocacy priorities for retirees in the 118th Congress include:

- Ensuring pay at or above Employment Cost Index, allowances, and programs necessary to recruit and retain a quality force.
- Concurrent Receipt of military retirement pay and VA disability pay.
- Maintaining the hold on medical billet reductions until required reports clarify how any cuts will fully support both readiness and beneficiary access to care.
- Reversing the degradation of the pharmacy benefit, specifically ensure access and achieve limits to copay increases.
- Requiring DoD to establish a transparent and well-publicized problem reporting system for TRICARE beneficiaries experiencing access

challenges within the direct care system of military hospitals and clinics, including an annual report to Congress on the number and types of beneficiary access problem reports by MTF and steps taken by DHA to address systemic access problems.

- Monitoring recent major legislation enacted such as the PACT Act in the areas of health care, compensation, and follow-on support for surviving spouses and families and seek statutory or policy changes as required.
- Compelling Congress and VA to accelerate caregiving and whole health care services, and modernization of VHA workforce and facility infrastructure to improve veterans access to high quality care.
- Improving congressional support for uniformed services families: enhancing programs to support spouse employment, ensuring implementation of an effective basic needs allowance, and providing accessible, affordable childcare options.
- Overcoming the lack of effective problem-reporting mechanisms and resolution systems in the Military Health System.
- Repealing the recoupment of last month's paycheck after retiree's passing, and continue to improve SGLI/VGLI updates to match inflation.
- Improving DIC baseline to align with other government entitlements' baseline of 55%.

Derived on 22 April 2024 from:

[MOAA.org's Retiree Advocacy Webpage](https://www.moaa.org/retiree-advocacy)



Washington State Legislative Update:
by Dave Casteel

As you know, the Washington legislature met for 60 days this year. The 2024 regular session started on January 8th and ended on March 7TH.

These veterans related bills went to the Governor’s desk for signature into law:

Bill Number	Title
ESHB 1862	Disabled veteran assist./tax
SHB 1905	Equal pay/protected classes
HB 1917	Physician assistant compact
SHB 1939	Social work compact
HB 1943	National guard ed. grants
HB 2004	Military student early reg.
2SHB 2014	Definition of veteran
EHB 2088	Crisis teams/liability
HB 2111	Subsidized child care
SB 5180	Teacher mobility compact
SSB 5803	National guard recruitment
SB 6238	Property tax/veteran widows

Go to <https://app.leg.wa.gov/billinfo/> for more detailed bill information. The Veterans Legislative Coalition (VLC) monitors all veteran related bills and testifies on

appropriate bills. MOAA has a permanent appointed representative position, and Members-at-Large, of which I am one. I attend these weekly meetings normally via ZOOM.

One of our members, **Terry Babin**, worked with 17th District Rep **Paul Harris** to craft a bill to exempt active-duty military and veterans from paying fees beyond that charged for a regular driver’s license when they apply for an Enhanced Drivers License.

When I attended the annual reception that the VLC puts on for Legislators and their Legislative Assistants on January 12th in Olympia, I chatted with Rep Harris about Terry’s bill. Rep Harris told me he had just filed the bill. It is HB 2340 titled “Military service/DOL fees.” As of now, there is no scheduled hearing and no companion Senate bill. Rep Harris felt it would need to be reintroduced in the 2025 full 105-day session.

Rep Harris asked Terry if he would consider modifying the bill to apply just to “disabled veterans.” Terry agreed. The conventional wisdom being that everyone can support a bill benefiting “disabled veterans.” Once the bill passes with this change, then it can be modified to included active duty and veterans in the next or subsequent session(s).

Remember, all politics are local. Often, more state bills directly personally affect you than Federal bills do!

Dave Casteel
Washington State Legislative Affairs



Legislative



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

Columbia River MOAA Foundation (CRMF) Update by Dave Casteel CRMF President

Thanks to the generosity of our members, 2023 was a very good year for the Columbia River MOAA Foundation (CRMF).

Because of your generosity, we were able to increase our three scholarships at Clark college to \$1,250 each and continue our \$1,500 scholarship to WSU-V, while also contributing \$4,160 to the WSU-V Col Paul & Ivadell Crosby Columbia River Chapter MOAA Gift Use Agreement (GUA). In 2024, we will make our final payment of \$2,080 to the GUA, at which time it will become fully endowed. We always look for the opportunity to have our gifts matched. In December, we were able to take advantage of that opportunity to make \$1,500 gift to our Clark College MOAA endowment where the gift was matched!

Using our Support The Troops fund, we continued to look for ways to help individual veterans, but this often proves to be difficult. We were able to help one veteran's family directly with a \$500 donation to repair a broken garage door. Because of the difficulty of locating and vetting individual veteran's needs, we found that supporting organizations that directly help veterans is generally the most effective use of your donations. To this end, we donated \$1,750 to the Clark County Veterans Assistance Center (CCVAC) who works directly with homeless veterans daily helping to get them sober, get off the street and into permanent housing so they can become productive citizens again. (Note, this was in addition to the \$1,500 the chapter gave CCVAC through the MOAA community grant program). We gave \$500 to the Clark College Center of Excellence (veterans center) which was matched. We gave \$1,000 in gift cards to the Vancouver VA transplant lodge which provides temporary lodging (sometimes up to a year) for veterans and their caregiver waiting for, or after receiving, a kidney or liver transplant. We also gave the Vancouver Fisher House \$1,000 in gift cards to support families staying at the Fisher House while their veteran is receiving care at the VA Hospital in Portland, or receiving oncology treatments at the Vancouver VA facility. Of course, we continue to support our two AFJROTC units at Prairie

and Battle Ground High Schools. We also learned that there is interest in starting a JROTC unit (or units) in some of the Vancouver area high schools. If that becomes a reality, we look forward to supporting them as well.

In total, we donated \$12,492 in 2023 thanks to the generosity of our members. We are a relatively small charity, but we (YOU) definitely do make a difference to veterans in our community.

In 2024 we encourage you to consider making a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) donation from your RMD because it is a win-win for you. We also have a Vanguard Brokerage account that you can use to donate appreciated securities (again, another win-win for you). Vanguard does not charge us any fees or commissions, but you would have to check with your financial institution about their policies. If you are interested, please contact me (phone number and email are on the cover page) for the Vanguard account number and the Depository Trust Company (DTC) code. Another often-overlooked way to donate is by leaving a bequest--a gift that is a memorial for you or a loved one. Of course, donations by check are always welcome and appreciated.

If you have questions or need additional information please contact **Dave Casteel** at 360-834-2448, shilocamas@comcast.net or CRMFpresident@comcast.net, or **Frank Hill** at 360-241-8252, hillhouse2@comcast.net.

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. We encourage you to consult with a tax advisor for complete information about the tax deductibility of your gift.



Helping Where We Can, by Leah Davis, Surviving Spouse Liaison

As we approach the different seasons in our lives, let us remember that there are those around us that may be in need of support. We may not always be aware of what could be a challenging time for someone. It may be from sickness, an individual who has just lost a loved one, or maybe someone who is lonesome and needs a friend to talk with.

As I was looking around for something to write in our April CRC Newsletter, I ran across the article below that is from "Winnie the Pooh". I thought this was a good reminder for us all...

.... "It occurred to Pooh and Piglet that they hadn't heard from Eeyore for several days, so they put on their hats and coats and trotted across the Hundred Acre Wood to Eeyore's stick house. Inside the house was Eeyore.

.... "Hello Eeyore," said Pooh. "Hello, Pooh. Hello Piglet," said Eeyore, in a Glum Sounding Voice. "We just thought we'd check in on you," said Piglet, "because we hadn't heard from you, and so we wanted to know if you were okay."

.... Eeyore was silent for a moment. "Am I okay?" he asked, eventually. "Well, I don't know, to be honest. Are any of us really okay? That's what I ask myself. All I can tell you, Pooh and Piglet, is that right now I feel really rather Sad, and Alone, and Not Much Fun To Be Around At All, which is why I haven't bothered you. Because you wouldn't want to waste your time hanging out with someone who is Sad, Alone, and Not Much Fun To Be Around At All, would you now."

.... Pooh looked at Piglet, and Piglet looked at Pooh, and they both sat down, one on either side of Eeyore in his stick house.

.... Eeyore looked at them in surprise. "What are you doing?" "We're sitting here with you," said Pooh, "because we are your friends. And true friends don't care if someone is feeling Sad, Alone, or Not Much Fun To Be Around At All. True friends are there for you anyway. And so here we are."

.... "Oh," said Eeyore. "Oh." And the three of them sat there in silence,

and while Pooh and Piglet said nothing at all; somehow, almost imperceptibly, Eeyore started to feel a very tiny little bit better. Because Pooh and Piglet were There. No more; no less."

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

2023 LOE and Communications Award Winner Announcement

Congratulations Team! The Columbia River Chapter has again been recognized as a top tier chapter of MOAA. For the year 2023, we earned the 5-Star Level of Excellence Award as a chapter and the Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Award at the 5-Star top level for our Newsletter and Website.

The CRC is a wonderful chapter with terrific programs to support our members and community. I thoroughly enjoyed my time as one part of the leadership team for almost 20 years. For it is truly a team success story. Thanks to all of you. Now as I must step down and let someone else come forward, I know our chapter is in very good shape and able to continue it's 5-Star journey.

Rod
Rodney Williams
President, Columbia River Chapter of MOAA
cell: (503) 317 2273
Website: moaacolumbiariver.org



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 2024 Calendar Events

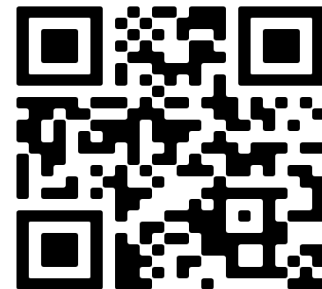
Date	Event	Program/Speaker
25 April Thursday	Membership Meeting 1130 Luncheon	At Cascadia Tech Center. Our speaker will be Lt Col Mathew Krempel, USMC, Commander of the Portland Recruiting Station, on "military recruiting."
8 May Wednesday	"Our Community Salutes" 1830-2030	Program at Skyview High School for those graduates going directly into the service. Rod encouraged CRC participation.
16 May Thursday	Membership Meeting	Possibly at 40 et 8, with Cascadia Tech Center as an alternative. The speaker will be from the Veteran's Administration, speaking on V.A. programs and changes in the pipeline, the impact of the Pact Act, changes in availability of care, etc.
27 May Monday	Memorial Day Ceremony Booth Setup 0830 Event 1100	Memorial Day Ceremony at Fort Vancouver. Our chapter will be asked to provide a table for coffee and water for workers setting up and attendees of the program. CRC members encouraged to attend.

On Thursday 25 April, the Columbia River Chapter of MOAA will be meeting at the Cascadia Tech Academy, 12200 NE 28th St, Vancouver at 1130 hours for a membership meeting. The culinary academy will provide us with a complete lunch with salad, main course, dessert, and beverages. The main course will be a chicken entree. The cost will be \$25 per person. Our speaker will be Lt Col Mathew Krempel, USMC, Commander of the Portland Recruiting Station. He will address current DoD challenges in recruiting and suggest ways that we veterans can assist. This should be a very timely and important topic for all chapter members.

We will have our customary raffle for wine, books, DVD's, etc., so please bring something for the raffle! Please contact our Chapter treasurer, **Larry DeVries** at 612.743.3509 or by email: larrydev1@earthlink.net as soon as possible. All RSVPs are needed by Tuesday, 23 April. Please advise Larry if you need a modification to your meal (e.g., vegetarian rather than chicken).

See you on the 25th!

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



Jump to Our Chapter Website

