



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 2025

President's Message

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Greetings again to Chapter Members. April and May are busy. Two luncheons focused on potential regional disasters and recommended individual preparations. Much appreciation to **Toby Clairmont** and **Jody Blackwell** (Clark County Emergency Services Agency) with liaison by **Larry Smith** for their two powerful presentations.

Two members of Washington State Council (WSCOC) attended the annual MOAA Advocacy in Action (AIA) in Washington DC in April with representatives from all 50 states and U.S. territories. I received positive feedback from our SW Washington State Congressional Representative, Congresswoman **Marie Gluesenkamp Perez**, with more to follow after the WSCOC meeting in Yakima the end of May. At a national level, MOAA is the recognized premier lobbyist active and veterans organization for all ranks, all services, and surviving spouses.

The month of May has unfolded quickly with community support activities at the annual Memorial Day

Remembrance at historic Fort Vancouver. Much planning and superb execution with great cooperation of the weather. For many, including myself, the day of remembrance of fallen soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen is paramount to our mission, both locally and nationally. Much appreciation to the CMAC and our Chapter volunteers for everyone's successful assistance. The US Park Service reported attendance in excess of 1500 visitors to this event. The speakers included our

Vancouver Mayor, our Congressional Representative, the Fort Vancouver Park Superintendent and distinguished Combat Veterans bringing tears to the eyes of many. Past President, **Rod Williams**, excelled as the new Master

of Ceremonies.

Friday, June 19th
CRC Wine Tasting Event
The Barrel Room
Vancouver, WA
5:30 pm
Please RSVP soon!
See Page 12 for details

Newsletter Highlights

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President's Message continued

A personal note of appreciation to new Chapter Member **LtCol Josh Hovanas** who sorted out the “red tape” resulting in a perfect Flyby as the 17th and the last scheduled of the day 142nd Fighter Wing remembrance flyby. Lest we forget, Memorial Day is foremost about our lost comrades-in-arms, making it all the more meaningful when those now severing contributed their devoted diligence. Lead pilot reported a great view around the flag pole.

In May, our Chapter Members also attended the pre-swear ceremony of 97 recruits (all services) and officer cadets into joining the Armed Forces. Great presentations and a great community support event to recognize their future service to country. Chapter Members **John Donnelly** and myself had the honor to present MOAA Medals to distinguished cadets at two local high schools. Youth from various organizations participated at Memorial Day raising of the massive 28’x40’ Garrison Flag raised only once a year over Fort Vancouver.

Looking ahead, the annual CRC Wine Tasting event brings a great turnout for a popular event. Chapter activities slowdown in Summer but keep 14th of September on your calendar for our annual Barbeque and annual Scholarship Fund Raiser.

Roger "Ramjet" Rosenberry

LATE Breaking GOOD NEWS:

Roger reported during the 30 May 2025 WSCOC Zoom Meeting that our Chapter was awarded:

- Comm Award - - Newsletter
- Comm Award – Website
- 5 Star Excellence

Federal Legislative Update: by Buck Marr

In the past the Columbia River Chapter has been very engaged in supporting the passage of the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson PACT ACT. Member online advocacy as well as our presence in Wash D.C. during Advocacy in Action was very helpful in getting the Act passed in 2022. But, let’s not stop advocating for other forms of toxic exposure not explicitly covered in the original Act. Servicemen are continually and routinely exposed to equally toxic other substances: uranium exposure, water contamination, nuclear testing, firefighting foam, PFAS substances to name a few. The PACT ACT was a giant step forward but there remains much to do. We are on a roll with toxic exposure. Yet, we must finish the job as articulated in MOAA publications. We need to push “for a more perfect PACT Act!”

And, while our chapter mates are pushing to improve the PACT Act, we should vigorously endorse support for another element of our veteran community --surviving spouses. Our chapter needs to throw its collective weight behind the “Love Lives on Act of 2025.” Currently, surviving spouses who remarry before age 55 lose their benefits. Surviving spouses are forced to choose between renewed companionship and financial stability through benefits previously earned. In many cases the surviving spouses have minor children who would be difficult to raise without those earned benefits. The **Love Lives on Act** would ensure surviving spouses could remarry at any age without losing their benefits. I urge members to support this proposed legislation to correct a long-standing injustice.

Finally, I strongly suggest each CRC member continue to visit MOAA’s legislative action center and send in proposed letters on various important subjects to our elected WA legislators.

MGen Buck Marr, USAF, Retired





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/>

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	

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 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	Paul Harris 786-7632	Adrian Cortes 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	Gloria Mendoza 786-7810	Peter Abbarno 786-7896
Representative, Position 2	Monica Stonier 786-7872	David Stuebe 786-7976	John Ley 786-7812	Deb Manjarrez 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

Fort Vancouver Memorial Day May 26, 2025, Candid Photos





VA ANNOUNCES MAJOR SURVIVOR BENEFITS REFORMS

by Leah Davis, Surviving Spouse Liaison

The following is a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs [news release announcing major survivor benefits reforms](#). I thought this might be of interest to our MOAA CRC membership and surviving spouses. This article was extracted from the VA website.

VA ANNOUNCES MAJOR SURVIVOR BENEFITS REFORMS

For immediate release

May 5, 2025 10:12 am

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced a three-pronged approach to eliminate barriers and streamline the process for how eligible survivors and dependents of deceased Veterans and service members apply for and receive VA benefits and services.

Specific improvements include:

- Starting this month, VA’s [Office of Survivors Assistance](#) will be moved from the Veterans Benefits Administration to the Office of the VA Secretary, reversing a Biden-era decision that buried OSA under layers of bureaucracy.
- Starting this month, VA will create a “white-glove” survivor outreach team to guide and assist eligible survivors throughout their [Dependency and Indemnity Compensation](#) (DIC) claims process.
- Starting immediately, VA will begin work to identify areas where automation can be used to make the DIC claims process easier to navigate for survivors.

“The last thing survivors need in their time of grief is frustrating red tape and bureaucracy. That’s why we are creating a better system to more quickly and effectively provide survivors the services, support and compassion they’ve earned,” said VA Secretary Doug Collins.

Background information on the changes VA announced today is below.

(1) Relocating OSA

In 2021, the Biden administration moved OSA from the Office of the VA Secretary to the Veterans Benefits Administration, creating a siloed system at odds with the intent of the [Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2008](#). Starting this month, VA will reverse this decision and move OSA to the Office of the VA Secretary, where a staff of five full-time employees will advise the Secretary on all matters related to the policies, programs and legislative issues affecting survivors and dependents.

(2) “White-Glove” Survivor Outreach Team

Under previous administrations, there were gaps in the survivor claims system and no defined outreach process for VA employees to gather information from survivors navigating the benefit process. VA’s “White-Glove” Survivor Outreach Team will begin operations in May 2025 and consist of experts based out of the Philadelphia VA Regional Benefit Office. These experts will receive specialized training and guide and assist eligible survivors throughout every step of the DIC claims process with the goal of getting to “yes” on DIC claims decisions for eligible survivors.

(3) Automation Improvements

VA now automates more than 1,000 DIC claims payments or adjustments per day and is in the process of ongoing enhancements to increase automation that will expedite survivors’ claims and improve their experience. VA will also be identifying additional areas where automation can be used to make all benefits delivery processes easier to navigate for eligible surviving dependents.

NEVER STOP SERVING!!!!

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

**DID YOU KNOW THE DOD HAS A NEW
UPDATED MILITARY ID CARD?,
Acceptable Where Real ID Required**
by Leah Davis, Surviving Spouse Liaison

Next Generation Uniformed Services ID Card



Legacy USID cards remain valid through their expiration date, however, individuals with an indefinite (INDEF) expiration date on their legacy USID card may replace those ID cards with a Next Generation USID card.

Be aware, Legacy USID cards are not REAL ID-compliant and NOT accepted by the TSA.

USID cards may now be renewed online. Please see the [online USID card renewal page](#) for more information.

The above information was gathered from the <https://cac.mil> website

NOTE: Uniformed Service widowed spouses are also encouraged to renew their ID's.

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

The Department of Defense transitioned from its legacy paper-based Uniformed Services Identification (USID) card to a more secure, next generation USID card.

The Next Generation USID card incorporates an updated design and security features to deter counterfeiting and fraud and is printed on a plastic card stock.

This Next Generation USID card is REAL ID-compliant and accepted by the TSA.

Initial issuance of the Next Generation USID card began on July 31, 2020, at select DoD ID card facilities, with phased implementation at all DoD ID card facilities, and completed in December 2020.

USID cards are issued to retired and reserve members, dependent family members of uniformed Service members, and other eligible individuals in accordance with DoD policy to facilitate access to benefits, privileges, and DoD bases.

The Next Generation USID card does not change the populations who are eligible to receive the current card.



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

Thanks to our generous donors there's much to report since our last update.

In April **Frank Hill**, CRMF Treasurer, and I met with three members of the WSU-V Foundation staff. They confirmed that we would no longer be charged the 4.76% administrative fee on any contributions we make toward scholarships or the endowment. This was the first application of the Bylaws amendment prohibiting payment of administrative fees that you approved at our annual meeting last February.

We also confirmed that WSU will honor our request that we continue paying for the scholarship (increased from \$1,500 to \$2,000 this year) so that the annual endowment distributions can be reinvested back into the endowment basis where they can continue to grow. We hope to be able to continue along this path of reinvesting annual distributions so long as your donations support our direct payment for the scholarship.



21 April 2025 (L-R) Dave Casteel, Grant Yenney (WSU-V Director of Development), Frank Hill

We presented WSU-V staff with two checks. The first is for our annual \$2,000 scholarship (above). The second, for \$5,000, is to be invested in the endowment where it will continue to grow. Importantly, because we are no longer charged the administrative fee, the full \$7,000 was applied where intended. Had we not exempted ourselves from paying administrative fees, our scholarship would have been \$95 less (while this doesn't seem like much, it may cover the cost of one textbook), and the contribution to the endowment would have been reduced by \$238.

At Clark College our endowment's distribution funded the full cost of all three of our scholarships (\$1,250 apiece), enabling us to leverage our planned scholarship share by taking advantage of matching opportunities this spring. We contributed \$500 to the Veterans Center of Excellence and \$1,400 toward our endowment, both of which were doubled. We hope to participate in match opportunities at Clark again in the fall.



21 May 2025 (L-R) Dave Casteel, James Dorce (Fisher House Manager), Frank Hill

On 21 May **Frank & I** attended the 9th anniversary celebration for the Fisher House located on the VA Vancouver Campus. We received a guided tour, including a couple of updated guest rooms. The floor coverings in all 16 rooms were recently upgraded: Worn carpeting yielded to durable plank flooring highlighted with large floor-hugging rugs. Guests who use walkers and canes will appreciate the more user-friendly floor coverings. Some additional minor room enhancements were also noted. We were pleased to present a check for \$500 to **James Dorce**, the manager, to be used to support guests.

While at the VA Campus, we also met with two of the staff from the VA [Transplant] Lodge (Bldg. 18), **Tiffany** and **Clint**. We were prepared to present a check for \$500 to them but discovered that the check/funds must be processed through the VA system, limiting what it can be used for and delaying access to the money for weeks. However, cash cards can go directly to the staff and be immediately used to support the veterans staying at the Lodge awaiting treatment or release.

CRMF Update continued

So, we voided the check and instead purchased a Visa cash card, which I presented to their supervisor, **Claire**, at the Lodge the next day.



22 May 2025 (L-R) Clint (Transplant Lodge Specialist), Claire (Transplant Lodge Supervisor), Dave Casteel

We continue to receive Qualified Charitable Distributions from a few members who choose to donate a portion of their RMDs throughout the year; I hope one of them is yours! If not please remember that QCDs are a win-win. The CRMF benefits and so do you by way of receiving a “gift” from the IRS in the form of a dollar-for-dollar reduction of your AGI. And a reminder, too, that we gladly accept stock donations (letting you avoid capital gain taxes). (IRS rules apply to both—please consult your tax advisor).

With the summer break, the next major opportunity to support our veterans will be at the Fall BBQ at Roger’s home on Sunday, September 14. While this is traditionally the fall Scholarship Fund raising social, your gifts to our Support the Troops (STT) fund are also gladly accepted. A Final Note. We will again be assisting at the Clark County Veterans Assistance Center (CCVAC) Stand Down on September 26th and we’ll be presenting them with \$1,000 from our STT fund to help defray expenses. This is also an excellent volunteer opportunity for members – we, and they, need your help during the Stand Down! Please contact Roger if you can help.

Meanwhile, enjoy your summer, be safe, and we’ll see you at the BBQ in September!!

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.



JROTC Awards News submitted by John Donnelly



The Prairie HS JROTC Awards ceremony was held on 28 May in the auditorium and it was a packed crowd with a large class of Cadets and supporting parents. The instructors recognized several cadets from each year in a slide show and then the community organizations presented their awards to deserving cadets.



We awarded our MOAA Medal for Leadership and Academic Excellence to **Cadet/Col Hassan Mohammed**. He was the Leader of the Drill Team, which gave a demonstration that night. (Hassan is center above and to the right.) Hassan was given the nickname of "The General" by his fellow cadets and awarded the rank of Colonel and led his cadets to a very successful year!



The Battle Ground HS JROTC Awards ceremony was held on 6 May and **Col Andy Woodrow's** selection for our MOAA Medal was **Cadet/Lt Liam Coulter**. Liam is a sophomore and served as The Facilities Management Officer. His father was a former A-10 pilot.

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.



Jump to Our Chapter Website



Columbia River Chapter Membership 2025 Calendar Events

Date	Event	Program/Speaker
19 June Thursday	Wine Tasting	Uptown Barrel Room, 2011 Main St, Vancouver will begin at 1730 hours
14 September Sunday	Annual CRC BBQ	Roger Rosenberry's Home
16 October Thursday	Membership Meeting	Speaker: David Stuebe, Mayor of Washougal (awaiting confirmation) Cascadia Tech Center Culinary Academy
20 November Thursday	Membership Meeting	Speaker: Congresswoman Perez, Washington's Third Congressional District (awaiting confirmation) Cascadia Tech Center Culinary Academy
December (TBD))	Holiday Party	Venue to be determined!

YOU ARE INVITED TO
THE MOAA COLUMBIA RIVER CHAPTER
CRC Wine Tasting Event

The annual wine tasting event at the [Uptown Barrel Room](#), 2011 Main St, Vancouver will begin at **1730 hours** on **Thursday**, 19 June.

Get your RSVP into Jim Morse (360.433.5605) or jlmorse77@gmail.com) soon as possible as seating for this event is limited to 32 guests.

The Uptown Barrel Room owner is a former Marine who is very welcoming to us Vets and his price for wine tasting and three good appetizers are reasonable at \$25 per person.

Please get your RSVP to Jim by 15 June!

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

