



**Military Officers Association
of America (MOAA)**

Brass Bulletin Newsletter

“One Powerful Voice”

**Portland, Oregon
Chapter**

**--
P.O. Box 68959
Portland, OR 97268**

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www.MOAAPortland.org

February 2012

The President’s Forum

by Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)

Happy New Year! It is hard to believe that 2012 is upon us. I hope that you all enjoyed the holiday season and that you will be attending the February brunch, the first chapter meeting of the year. As you will note, we have a new venue on the west side—thanks to chapter board member, **Col Duncan Koller, USAF (Ret)**, who worked so hard to find Hayden’s Lakefront Grill in Tualatin! So, I encourage all of you who live on the west side to make a special effort to attend! *And I challenge all of you to bring at least one guest to the brunch!!!*

We are fortunate, indeed, to have **Mr. Jim Willis**, the Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs (ODVA), as our guest speaker. He will update us on a myriad of veterans’ initiatives taking place in the state and at the national level. Oregon veterans are very lucky to have a man of Jim’s caliber, knowledge, enthusiasm, and energy at the helm in Oregon. As a new member of the ODVA Advisory Committee, I am becoming more and more impressed with Mr. Willis and his very capable staff; they truly live up to Jim’s motto: “Every day is veterans’ day.”

Have received lots of feedback that our December meeting was one of the best in recent memory! I want to thank all of you who helped ensure its success—it was certainly a team effort! And thanks to all of you who generously donated to our Chapter Scholarship Fund, Portland Police Sunshine Division, and Operation “Homefront.”

Reminder:

Chapter Board of Directors’ Meeting on

Friday, 10 February 2012

At 0930 hours at the

Colwood National Golf Course

NEXT MEETING:

Saturday, 4 February 2012

Social: 0900, Brunch: 1000

Hayden’s Lakefront Grill

8187 SW Tualatin-Sherwood Road

Tualatin, Oregon 97062

Phone: 503-885-9292

PROGRAM:

Mr. Jim Willis, Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans’ Affairs, will give us “An Update on Veterans’ Issues.”

MENU:

Eggs Benedict

French Toast with Marionberries and Whipped Cream

Breakfast Sausage

Pepper Bacon

Home Fried Potatoes

Fresh Minted Fruit Salad

Oregon Field Greens Salad

Classic Caesar Salad

Pasta Salad

Assorted Juices

Coffee, Tea, and Milk

COST:

\$21.00 per person (includes 21% gratuity)

*Please make checks payable to **PDX-MOAA**.*

RESERVATIONS:

To make your reservations, please contact **Lt Col Boyd C. Yaden, USAF (Ret)** at 503-650-9506 or **b.yaden@comcast.net** or online at our chapter website **NLT 1100 on Wednesday, 1 February 2012**. No late reservations, and please call if you must cancel as we have to pay for no-shows.

***MINUTES FROM THE
DECEMBER DINNER MEETING
by Lt Col Boyd C. Yaden, USAF (Ret)***

On 6 December, there were 66 members and guests who came out for dinner at The Gray Gables Estate in Milwaukie, Oregon. During the social hour, raffle tickets were sold for seven beautiful gift baskets; the proceeds were for the MOAA Portland Chapter Scholarship Fund. In addition, donations were being accepted for the Portland Police Sunshine Division and diapers for "Operation Homefront." After the social time, Chapter President--Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)--called the meeting to order at 1835. The colors were then posted by the Oregon City High School Army JROTC cadets, under the command of MAJ Doug Thomas USA (Ret). The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Mayer, Cadet Emilee Cunningham sang the National Anthem, and the colors were then retired by the following cadets: Sandy Garcia, Zach Fournier, Austin Weseman, and Noha Brown. Chaplain (LTC) Grant McAllister, USA (Ret) gave the invocation.



Members of the Army JROTC Color Guard from Oregon City High School presented the colors at the December Dinner Meeting

Since it was the anniversary of Pearl Harbor, a special commemoration ceremony was held. President Mayer read a short summary of what had

occurred on 7 December 1941; LTC Bill Kroger, USAR (Ret) read the poem "A Soldier Died Today" by Lawrence Vaincourt; President Mayer read a short history of "Taps;" and CAPT Jim Main, USNR (Ret) played "Taps" on his bugle.

Chapter President's Comments: President Mayer then reminded the members to pay their 2012 Chapter dues to the chapter treasurer, CAPT Jim Main, USNR (Ret), that evening or send him a check. Dues for regular members are \$25 a year; auxiliary members are not required to pay annual dues but may do so if they wish. She also indicated that she still needed volunteers for the two Navy Rep vacancies and Women in Service Rep on the Chapter Board of Directors.

Membership Committee Chair Report: MAJ John Sampson, USA (Ret) asked the new members, guests, and first time attendees to stand up and be recognized. President Mayer then introduced her special guest who was visiting from North Carolina, MAJ Bill Tidd, USAF (Ret). The Membership Appreciation Drawing was then held, and a chapter member received a free dinner that evening. In addition, John mentioned the "Give Me 10" Program and the Gold Bar Program for ROTC Cadets. CAPT Larry Roberts USNR (Ret) then gave the Scholarship Committee Chair Report. All were urged to purchase raffle tickets for the seven gift baskets being raffled off that evening. Dinner was then served. After dinner, CAPT Larry Roberts, USNR (Ret) finished his Scholarship Committee Chair Report by awarding MOAA Scholarship pins to 5 chapter members who had generously donated to the scholarship fund.



MOAA Scholarship Pins were given to Chapter Members (left to right) James Asaph, Jim Patrick, Edie Rieken, Gary Brink, and Mary Mayer

Since it was the Christmas party, most committee reports were tabled. However, **Mrs. Edie Rieken** did remind all that the next Auxiliary Luncheon would be at 1300 hours on Tuesday, 13 December 2011 at Albertina's. Auxiliary members and wives were cordially invited to attend, and reservations had to be in to Edie by Friday, 9 December 2011.

"For the Good of the Order": CWO4 **Al Drenkhahn, USAF (Ret)** and LTC **Bill Kroger, USAR (Ret)** both told jokes. Then, **CAPT Larry Roberts, USNR (Ret)** selected two winners of the scholarship raffle; **MAJ John Sampson, USA (Ret)** and the John Bennett Trio led all in a Christmas carol sing-a-long; two more scholarship winners were selected; **MAJ John Sampson, USA (Ret)** (after strong encouragement by all) played a song on his saxophone, accompanied by the John Bennett Trio; and the final three scholarship raffle ticket winners were selected.



Major John Sampson, USA (Ret) plays a Christmas Song on his saxophone, accompanied by The John Bennett Trio at the December Dinner Meeting at the Gray Gables Estate

In her closing remarks, **President Mayer** thanked all who came out to support the chapter that evening; the Army JROTC Cadets from Oregon City High School; the John Bennett Trio and **MAJ John Sampson, USA (Ret)**; LTC **Bill Kroger, USAR (Ret)** and **CAPT**

Jim Main, USNR (Ret); **Boyd Yaden, Larry Roberts, Jim Patrick, Gary Brink, John Sampson, Jim Main,** and **Mary Mayer** for bringing the raffle baskets; and the staff of the Gray Gables Estate for the wonderful meal and service! She reminded the membership that there would be **no Brass Bulletin Newsletter or chapter meeting in January 2012**. The next meeting will be on Saturday, 4 February 2012 at a new location, Hayden's Lakefront Grill in Tualatin, OR. The guest speaker will be **Mr. Jim Willis**, Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) who will give the members an "Update on Veterans' Issues." The next chapter newsletter will be the February 2012 issue, and inputs for this newsletter are due to her by 7 January 2012. In closing, **President Mayer** then wished all a Happy Hanukkah, a very Merry Christmas, and a happy New Year! And she asked, as each member celebrates this holiday season with family and friends, to remember our comrades-in-arms who are serving abroad in harm's way and say a prayer for their safe return. The meeting was adjourned at **2100**. All were encouraged to stay and dance until 2100.



Attendees check in with Treasurer, **CAPT Jim Main, USNR (Ret)**, and First Vice President and Membership Chair, **MAJ John Sampson, USA (Ret)** and his wife **Judy** at the December Dinner Meeting

"Thanks to all those chapter members who generously contributed to the Portland Police Sunshine Division at the December Meeting: we collected \$70 in checks and 96 pounds of food."
- CWO4 Al Drenkhahn, USAF (Ret)

MEMBERSHIP CORNER**By MAJ John Sampson, USA (Ret)**

The Portland Chapter would like to welcome the following new members:

**MAJ Doug Thomas, USA (Ret)
and his wife Pamela**

Mrs. Betty Ehleringer - Auxiliary

2012 MOAA "Give Me 10!" Membership Drive: For every new complimentary member our chapter signs up between 1 Jan - 31 Dec 2012, the chapter will receive \$10. For each new paid membership or Life Member conversion, our chapter will earn \$20 plus a \$100 bonus for every 10 new paid members. Additionally, top recruiting chapters in our size category can win a \$1000 prize for recruiting the most paid members (10 paid minimum). New members will be entered in a sweepstakes worth \$500 and a Life Membership, and the name of one chapter recruiter will be drawn at random to win a \$1,000 prize.

Gold Bar Program: Our chapter is looking forward to participating in our third year with the University of Portland Air Force and Army ROTC programs.

And finally, the Membership Committee is looking for new members to join our committee and to assist in contacting potential new members. Finally, I would like to challenge all of our members to consider **bringing at least one guest to our 4 February brunch meeting!**

AUXILIARY CORNER by Mrs. Edie Rieken, Liaison to the Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee

After the Holiday and January break, it's already time to make your reservation for the Auxiliary luncheon at Albertina's

on **21 February 2012 at 1:00 pm.** by calling **Edie at (503) 254-5029.** After the enjoyable time we had there in December, you won't want to miss it. We had fourteen reservations, although two ladies couldn't come at the last minute. However, there were three ladies who joined us for the first time, including new member **Betty Ehleringer.** Several members added to the mound of diaper packages we'd collected at the December Chapter dinner meeting. A lady from "Operation Homefront" drove all the way from their Albany headquarters to pick them up at my house that same week; she sends their deepest thanks to all who contributed to this need!

A reminder: Should you move or even change your phone number, be sure to contact the MOAA Chapter Affairs Specialist by calling **1-800-234-6622.**

Something to Think About: After losing a beloved spouse, the survivor has a natural urge to do something to honor his or her memory. Wanting the world to remember the strength, courage, integrity, and special nature of the person they loved, they often buy memorial bricks or benches, plant trees, or fund building additions. Why not consider creating a legacy that will support military families in perpetuity? The **MOAA Scholarship Fund** provides a meaningful way to honor a lifetime of service, patriotism, and commitment. Our Chapter is working toward establishing a full \$25,000 MOAA Portland Chapter Scholarship Fund; we have already had two designated scholarship recipients. Three other students in the Portland area are being provided funds through the broader MOAA Scholarship Fund—which are primarily \$5,000 interest-free loans and some grants. To learn more, contact our own **CAPT Larry Roberts, USNR (Ret)** at **(503) 722-1897.**

May the New Year bring you good health and happiness and be fulfilling and rewarding!

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**By CAPT Larry Roberts, USNR (Ret)**

Beware the Calm before the Storm-The Good News: Congress kicked the reduction in Medicare and TRICARE provider reimbursement rates of almost 30%--scheduled to take effect January 1, 2012--down the calendar for all of 2 whole months. Note that this extends only through the end of February, and Congress

is not scheduled to reconvene until January 23rd. Simple question: Why is this issue not resolved once and for all? I suggest you ask your Congressmen and Senators.

The Department of Defense fiscal year 2012 Appropriations Bill was passed by both houses of Congress and signed by the President. This is the only such bill passed so far for the entire government, although, before adjourning for the Christmas break, an Omnibus spending bill was passed and signed into law.

A 3.6% COLA adjustment for retirement pay and Social Security payments kicked in the beginning of the year. Actually, the first payments on the new level were distributed on December 30th, which reflects a change in the law enacted in 2011 and results in 13 payments in 2011, raising reported income by 1 payment. This is the first COLA increase in three years, and reported inflation for the first two months of fiscal 2012 has been nonexistent. We will keep you informed as CPI is reported throughout the year.

Scary Headlines – Benefits at Risk: If you have not reviewed the “Benefits at Risk” article on page 31 of the January 2012 *MOAA Military Officer Magazine*, I strongly recommend it. Colonel Warren Lacy, USA (Ret) notes that “MOAA’s most important message for the coming year: military health care, retirement, and other people programs are under attack....Take action to ensure sacrifices service members make for our country are recognized. Urge our nation’s leaders to treat troops and their families fairly.” MOAA Chairman Admiral Steve Abbot, USN (Ret) writes that “...fitful efforts to bring the \$15 trillion national debt under control have spawned a variety of poorly conceived assaults on the interests of currently serving and retired military personnel. MOAA has gone to general quarters to thwart the most ill-conceived,

but we will need all of our members to stay fully engaged as events play themselves out.”

MOAA Chief Lobbyist Colonel Steve Strobridge, USAF (Ret) writes a monthly column, “As I See It.” He headlined the December 2011 column “Consider Yourself Warned.” In it, he noted while the military seemed to dodge a lot of incoming rounds in 2011, it really was a precursor for an all out assault in 2012, the beginning salvo of which occurred January 4th when the President announced his plan for a “leaner, more nimble” force. That is easy code for downsizing. Such downsizing will become more visible through early 2012.

Strobridge points out that the first salvo pointed at the military was the \$460 billion defense budget cut contained in the August 2011 budget agreement. The Pentagon has made up a plan to implement that cut, it is on the President’s desk, and about to be outlined. Next up, if no progress on the budget deficit is forthcoming from the current Congress, there is a sequestering of another \$500 billion from the broad defense budget, taking initial effect in calendar 2013 for 10 years. As we now know, the “super committee” failed in its efforts--so the spending issue remains to be solved. Strobridge warns that what is at stake as we move forward is COLAs for all federal annuities, TRICARE, Tricare for Life, major force and compensation cuts, commissaries, exchanges, family-support programs, and “just about every military program you and your family use.”

OK, So What Do We Do As Individuals to Respond to the Threat? As I have repeatedly stated over the past year, the answer is to actively communicate with our elected representatives--from the President on down to Congress and even to the State level. In 2011, MOAA members collectively sent 1.3 million messages to elected officials, as best as MOAA can count. That number is surely understated, as even I have sent messages independent of MOAA-suggested actions. Some 820,000 messages were sent through the MOAA website, compared with 499,000 in 2010. However, only 67,000 MOAA members generated those messages, *only 20%* of the national membership. I know that messages to our legislators have an impact, because I often get direct responses. Think of what we could do as an organization if we were to enlist 60% of the membership to communicate with our Congressmen and Senators, not to mention the Administration. That

1.3 million plus messages could grow to almost 4 million, at a time of great need! Remember, there are legions of lobbyists seeking to retain their client access to the pie. We need to protect our interests with, as MOAA notes, "One Powerful Voice."

As always, the most time efficient way to communicate is by logging on MOAA.org, then:
 -Click on "Take Action" at top left of home page
 -Click on "Contact Congress"
 -Click on "Find your officials" and enter your zip code

You will have access to information on the President, both Senators and your Representative:

-To email directly, click on email, create your own message and send
 -To get contact information, click on "Info"

This will get you contact, committee and staff information. It will also list bills where the legislator has or has not co-sponsored bills of interest to MOAA members

If any Chapter member does not have web access, please call me at **503-722-1897**, and I will supply you with whatever information you desire.

The MOAA site also allows one to get contact information and email directly to legislators that do not represent us in Oregon. For instance, I accessed and sent a message to Senate Minority Leader and fraternity brother Mitch McConnell of Kentucky. The MOAA system is very easy to use. Let's make this the year of the Communicating with our Elected Representatives!

MOAA PORTLAND CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE

By CAPT Larry Roberts, USNR (Ret)

For those who missed the outstanding Christmas Chapter meeting, we were pleased to announce that Chapter contributions to the Scholarship Fund exceeded **\$7,500**, including the **\$575** contributed through the very successful raffle that evening.

We will have a year end figure for the next March *Brass Bulletin Newsletter*, but suffice it to say that we are getting close to our target of \$25,000, and it looks as though we will fully fund the first Chapter Scholarship within the allotted 5 year period. My best estimate is that we have about **\$18,000** contributed to date, and this has been accomplished in slightly over 2.5 years. MOAA National is to update us shortly. ***Thanks to all individual contributors and to the chapter membership for participating in our raffles!***

Special thanks to the following, who created and provided gift baskets and wine that were exceedingly well-received and coveted at the December meeting:

Mary J. Mayer, John and Judy Sampson, Jim and Carol Patrick, Gary and Jan Brink, Larry and Ann Roberts, Boyd and Karon Yaden, and Jim and Midge Main. Also, continuing thanks goes to ***Edie Rieken*** and the Auxiliary Members who contribute on a regular basis.

Why Give: Over the last 63 years, the MOAA Scholarship Fund has provided funds for undergraduate education to over 11,000 children of officers who have served in the seven Uniformed Services, and to children of enlisted personnel who are serving or are retired. The funds are provided to students through a combination of zero interest loans that are repaid to the Fund after an individual graduates, and grants. The default rate on the scholarship loans is under 1%, which is phenomenal. Through this methodology, the Fund is a revolving account, in which funds repaid are loaned out again.

In the short time the Chapter Scholarship Fund has been in existence, we have had two designated scholarship recipients, and three other students in the Portland area that are being provided funds through the broader MOAA Scholarship Fund. Our first recipient has graduated from college and is now in medical school locally. Our second recipient is in school at Southern Oregon University in Ashland. In a very brief period of time, we have made a direct impact on the local community through this effort.

Why the Fund: There are several reasons: (1) All donations go to the children of officer and enlisted military personnel, regardless if they are on Active Duty, Guard, Reserves or Retired; (2) 100% of donations go to students; all overhead expense is absorbed by MOAA; (3) Your contribution is tax deductible, and individual donations will be provided with proper documentation of such gifts by MOAA; and (4) Personal information is never given or sold to other charities.

There are numerous ways to contribute to the fund, including: (1) credit card on MOAA.org, (2) Checks mailed to MOAA or given to Larry Roberts, (3) Charitable Gift Annuities, (4) Bequests, and (5) Planned Giving. We will highlight the more unusual giving methods over the next several months. If you have any questions, please call **Larry Roberts** at **503-722-1897**, and I will either get the information or put you in touch with MOAA personnel.

CHAPTER DUES FOR 2012

Now is the time for regular chapter members to pay your annual dues of **\$25** for calendar year **2012**. They were due on the 1st of January! (**Note:** Auxiliary members may elect to pay the \$25 dues as well--although it is on a voluntary basis only.)

You can pay the Treasurer at the **4 February brunch meeting** or mail a check (made out to: "PDX-MOAA") and send it to the Portland Chapter/MOAA, P.O. Box 68959, Portland, OR 97268.

Remember, dues are *our only source of income*, and we encourage you to pay them in a timely manner so we can continue to fund our programs and newsletter.

Still have a question? Just call the Treasurer, **CAPT Jim Main, USNR**

(Ret), at **503-793-8499** or send him an email at jimmain@comcast.net
Portland Chapter Officers

President

Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret): 1-310-897-1902

First Vice President

MAJ John Sampson, USA (Ret): 503-632-5265

Second Vice President

CAPT Lawrence Roberts, USNR (Ret): 503-722-1897

Secretary

Lt Col Boyd C. Yaden, USAF (Ret): 503-702-3812

Treasurer

CAPT James H. Main, USNR (Ret): 503-793-8499

Immediate Past President

LTC Gary S. Brink, USA (Ret): 503-659-3347

Portland Chapter Board of Directors

Army Reps

MG Curtis A. Loop: 503-579-6297

LTC William G. Kroger: 971-645-6889

Navy Reps

Vacant

Vacant

Air Force Reps

Col Michael T. Bieniewicz: 503-335-4021/4020

Col Duncan G. Koller: 503-693-2483

Marine Corps Rep

Maj James F. Simpson: 503-233-9341

Coast Guard Rep

CDR Ron Youngman: 503-439-3014

Women in Service Rep

Vacant

Liaison, Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee

Mrs. Edie Rieken: 503-254-5029

Directors-at-Large

LTC David E. Hill, USA (Ret): 503-579-9684

Lt Col Richard G. Lightfoot, USAF(Ret):
503-476-4891

RETURN ADDRESS:

**PORTLAND CHAPTER
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OF AMERICA (MOAA)
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PORTLAND, OR 97268**

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MOAA PORTLAND CHAPTER UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars!

February 4, 2012	Brunch Meeting with Guest Speaker (Location: Hayden's Lakefront Grill)
<i>February 10, 2012</i>	<i>Board of Directors Meeting</i>
March 6, 2012	Dinner Meeting with Guest Speaker (Location: The Monarch Hotel)
April 3, 2012	Dinner Meeting with Guest Speaker (Location: Gray Gables Estate)
May 1, 2012	Dinner Meeting with Guest Speaker (Location: The Monarch Hotel)
<i>May 11, 2012</i>	<i>Board of Directors Meeting</i>
June 5, 2012	Dinner Meeting with Guest Speaker (Location: Gray Gables Estate)
<i>August 3, 2012</i>	<i>Board of Directors Meeting</i>

NOTE 1: All monthly chapter meetings are held at the locations indicated.

NOTE 2: All Board of Directors Meetings are held at **0930**—usually at the **Colwood Bar & Grill** at the **Colwood National Golf Course**--and **are open to all members!** Alternate locations will be indicated.

NOTE 3: All articles for the **March 2012 Brass Bulletin Newsletter** must be submitted to the editor, **Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)**, at **maryjmayer@yahoo.com** by **4 February 2012**.