



# Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)

## *Brass Bulletin Newsletter*

“One Powerful Voice”

Portland, Oregon  
Chapter

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P.O. Box 68959  
Portland, OR 97268

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[www.MOAAPortland.org](http://www.MOAAPortland.org)

December 2009

### *The President's Forum*

by LTC Gary S. Brink, USA (Ret)

As we begin to get ready for the Holiday Season, it is a time to reflect on this year as it comes to a close. I would like to review the progress your chapter has made and to propose some thoughts about how we could improve. First, without growth in membership, the chapter will only shrivel up and lose its ability to work to the benefit of our members. The chapter has grown to a level that we have not seen in several years. I want to thank all of you in being a part of this effort. Yet, I really want to recognize our Membership Committee Chair, **John Sampson**, for his continued calls, emails, letters, and meetings. Our growth can be directly attributed to his efforts. Our auxiliary, led by **Edie Rieken**, continued to come up with projects to support deployed troops from the northwest. Edie has informed me that the Auxiliary is about ready to embark on a new project. I am looking forward to hearing what this could be as their projects have always been great for the total membership. Our program schedule has had some great speakers with a variation of topics. The attempt has been to appeal to all our members. The establishment of a MOAA Portland Chapter-designated Scholarship has been a highlight as it will memorialize our values and ability to do something for our community on a permanent basis. For the ground work, implementation, and continued follow-up, I truly have to thank one of our own, **Larry Roberts**. Finally, Thanks to your board for getting behind this program. Your support and efforts were the reason the chapter won

*(continued on page 2)*

***The Chapter Board of Directors  
Wishes All Chapter Members  
And Their Families  
A Happy and Safe  
Holiday Season!***

### NEXT MEETING:

**Tuesday, 1 December 2009**

Social: 1700, Dinner: 1830

Gray Gables Estate

3009 SE Chestnut Street

Milwaukie, Oregon 97267

Phone: 503-654-0470

### PROGRAM:

The **John Bennett Trio** will once again play for our listening and dancing pleasure after dinner!

**Raffle tickets** are available for wine and food baskets!

Bring your **canned goods, toys, and donations** for the **Portland Police Sunshine Division!**

**DRESS:** We encourage all to wear your *uniform!*

### MENU:

Wine Poached Salmon

Northwest Salad

Sautéed Seasonal Vegetables

Wild Rice Pilaf

Cascading Fresh Fruit Basket

Cheese on Granite

Assorted Desserts

Coffee, Tea, or Punch

### COST:

**\$23.50 per person (includes 20% gratuity)**

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

### RESERVATIONS:

To make your reservations, please contact **LTC Gary Brink** or **Jan Brink** at **503-659-3347** or **igbrink@comcast.net** **NLT 1200 on 25 November 2009**. **No late reservations**, and please call if you must cancel as we have to pay for no-shows.

***PRESIDENT'S FORUM (continued)***

the 5-star Award of Excellence for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time in the past 3 years.

Now what can we do better? Involving more of **you** in setting the course of the chapter and its goals. The Chapter cannot grow without new ideas and push from its membership. So, please consider "What can I do? How could I make this a better Chapter?" The more we all do, the more we can do.

Here is one thought: for those of you who live on the west side of Portland, please **check out a dinner location** for a chapter meeting and suggest it. I really want alternate meeting locations and would like to have several choices. We need your help!! I still need a **Chapter Historian**. I believe it is essential to capture some of the military experiences and thoughts of our members. I am sure you all understand what I am asking of all of you. Do a little soul searching and considering stepping forward with your ideas and support.

So as I sign off, I highly encourage as many of you as possible to attend our December Christmas Dinner at the Gray Gables Estate. The **Oregon City Junior ROTC Color Guard** will post the colors. The program includes dinner, Christmas songs, John Sampson playing his sax, and then dancing to the tunes of the John Bennett Trio. This Christmas party will be special. **DON'T FORGET TO BRING CANNED GOODS AND NEW GIFTS FOR THE PORTLAND POLICE SUNSHINE DIVISION CHARITY**. Also, there will be our wine and food baskets to be raffled off. Finally, stop for a few moments and just think how blessed we are to be able to live in the USA.

Happy Holidays and a Great New Year!!!

***MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER DINNER MEETING by Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)***

On November 3, there were **58** members and guests who came out for dinner at the Monarch Hotel in Clackamas, Oregon. After the social hour, **President Gary Brink** called the meeting to order at 1830—followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, the singing of our National Anthem (led by **Mrs. Jan Brink** and **Mrs. Jan Youngman**), and an invocation by First Vice President **MAJ John Sampson, USA (Ret)**, since the chaplain was not in attendance.

**President Brink** introduced new member **Colonel Brian Brown, USAF (Ret)** who served in Desert Storm and who currently runs the JROTC at the Battleground High School. His sister, **Brigadier General Heidi Brown, USA**, is a West Point graduate and is currently serving as the Deputy Commanding General for Sustainment with the Multi-National Forces in Baghdad, Iraq. We also have a new Auxiliary Member, **Mrs. Vergie Meyer**.

**President Brink** attended the MOAA Annual Meeting from 22-24 October 2009 at the Coronado Island Marriott Resort in California and said it was very worthwhile. Our Association has grown, and MOAA is a powerful influence on Capitol Hill. And, the good news is that MOAA has been granted a federal charter. The Portland Chapter was recognized at the annual meeting for receiving the 5-star Levels of Excellence Award.

**President Brink** then asked Chapter Secretary, **Colonel Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)**, to stand and be recognized for receiving the MOAA Oregon State Council of Chapters Achievement Award from Council President, **Brigadier General Norm Hoffman, AUS (Ret)**, for all her hard work as the Council's Secretary/Treasurer.

After dinner, **President Brink** announced that the Oregon City High School would like to honor veterans at a Veteran's Assembly on Tuesday, 10 November 2009 from 0900 to 1015 at the Oregon City High School in Oregon City, Oregon. If you would like to be honored, please call Angie Smith at 503-785-8545 to provide her with your information and reserve your seat. **President Brink** pointed out that **COL Mel**

**MINUTES (continued)**

**Garten, USA (Ret)** should be honored for receiving the Medal of Honor for serving in Korea.

**President Brink** then introduced our guest speaker, **Donald G. Malarkey**, who was accompanied by his daughter **Sharon** and her husband, **John Hill**.



**World War II Hero: Donald G. Malarkey**

Donald had been recommended by **Mrs. Rosalind Rockweit**, the nurse in charge of personnel at the Salem Veterans' Clinic and step-daughter of **Mrs. Edie Rieken**. During World War II, this Oregon soldier served more consecutive days in combat than any other member of his company. That's saying something, considering he was an elite paratrooper, one of the first on the ground during the invasion of Normandy. Historian Stephen Ambrose wrote about Malarkey's Easy Company in his book "Band of Brothers," and their story was eventually made into an HBO miniseries of the same name. "Easy Company Soldier: The Endless Combat of a Sergeant from World War II's Band of Brothers" is Malarkey's memoir. Written with Bob Welch, a columnist for the *Eugene Register-Guard*, "Easy Company Soldier" is a dramatic profile of a tough, compassionate man. Malarkey

grew up in Astoria, fought the famous Tillamook Burn when he was 12, and worked his way through school loading cargo ships. While Malarkey was at the University of Oregon, the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. He happened upon an article about paratroopers in *Reader's Digest*. The idea of becoming one of the "hardest, toughest and best-dressed soldiers in the Army" held an irresistible appeal. After volunteering, Malarkey was assigned to the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne, 506<sup>th</sup> Parachute Regiment. In training camp in Georgia, the members of Easy Company drilled together, undergoing exacting physical and mental training. On D-Day, Malarkey jumped out of a plane carrying nearly 200 pounds of gear and landed in the French countryside. For him, that was the start of a war he saw through to the occupation of Germany. Out of 117 men in Easy Company, 35 were killed in action, 61 seriously wounded. For those who weren't hurt, each hit still took a serious toll. "Easy Company Soldier" is the story of battles and friendships, following orders and coming under fire. It is about the psychological and emotional toll of war." A question-and-answer session followed Malarkey's remarks, and his books were sold.



**Chapter Legislative Chair CAPT Larry Roberts, USN (Ret) welcomes Sharon & John Hill**

**President Brink** then recognized **CDR Ben Tabler, USN (Ret)** for all his hard work as chapter treasurer over the years, and announced that Second Vice President **Jimmy Patrick** and his wife were in Japan. MOAA Portland Chapter Scholarship Committee Chair, **Captain Larry Roberts, USNR (Ret)**, then announced that, in fewer than 5 months, the chapter had already raised \$2,750 towards its goal of \$5,000 for this year.

***MINUTES (continued)***

Our first Scholarship Recipient, **Heather Chase** (a Portland Art School student), couldn't attend the meeting as she was in school, but she will attend another meeting in the future. A raffle for several bottles of wine was held; proceeds go to the scholarship fund. As Legislative Committee Chair, Larry also indicated that we were living in unprecedented times with regards to attacks on our veterans' health care and other benefits; he encouraged everyone to speak directly to their legislators. MOAA has good information on health care reform on its website.

In closing, **President Brink** thanked all for coming and encouraged them to attend the 1 December 2009 Christmas Dinner at the Gray Gables Estate; there will be dancing, and John Sampson will play his sax. More wine and gifts will be raffled as well, and members are encouraged to bring donations for the Portland Police Sunshine Division. He also said that **General Richard I. Neal, USMC (Ret)**, the MOAA Chairman of the Board, will be invited to speak at our March 2009 dinner meeting. **John Sampson** also encouraged the members to participate in the Veterans of Oregon Convoy on Sunday; the Oregon State Honorable Service Medals will be awarded in Wilsonville. The business meeting was adjourned at 2030.

***LEGISLATIVE UPDATE***

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

**Widows Win SBP Lawsuit- Really and Finally**

I reported earlier that a group of widows had won their suit to retain both their VA Survivor Benefits and their SBP annuity payments. This ruling was handed down by the U.S. Court of Appeals in a strong rejection of the Defense Department

position. Now, after over two years of litigation, DoD has been beaten, announcing in late October that it will not appeal the decision. Three widows beat the Pentagon! Amazing!

While the number of affected survivors is relatively small, the decision gives MOAA and other military organizations an additional argument in their pursuit of changing the law for all remaining SBP-DIC widows. MOAA states "It simply doesn't make sense to have two separate standards in the law, one that allows payment of full benefits for survivors who remarry after age 57 and another that forces a dollar-for-dollar offset between the two benefits for all others."

**Medicare/TRICARE Fix Defeated in the Senate--For Now**

I reported in mid-October that there was an imminent vote pending in the Senate to "permanently" repeal a statutory requirement that would result in a reduction in Medicare payments of 21% in January 2010. Despite strong MOAA efforts supported by over 16,000 emails from MOAA members, it was defeated over "concerns" by several senators regarding the \$250 billion multi-year cost. (Of course, they do not have concerns regarding a \$867 billion "stimulus" spending package.) Nevertheless, this is all flim-flam surrounding the Health Care legislation currently under consideration. It would have reduced the stated cost of Health Care legislation by taking it off budget—purely an accounting gimmick to trick the country. Indeed, after the vote, Senate leadership pledged to approve and fund a one year fix, in essence kicking the can down the road. You just know that they are not going to reduce payments by 21%!

**Health Care Legislation and VA and TRICARE Coverage**

HR 3962, the Pelosi extravaganza currently under consideration in the House has certain provisions that seemingly protect VA and TRICARE programs. Of course, who knows what might emerge if a bill ever gets to Conference Committee. To wit:

\*Section 311 states explicitly: Nothing in this subtitle shall be construed as affecting any authority under the United State Code sections that cover VA health care or military funded health benefits, including TRICARE.

**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE (cont.)**

\*A provision in the bill imposes a 2.5% surtax on individuals who do not obtain "acceptable coverage," but Section 302 expressly includes TRICARE, VA, and Medicare as "acceptable coverage."

**Agent Orange Benefits Extended to More Veterans**

The Department of Veterans Affairs has just extended Agent Orange benefits to individuals who served in Vietnam and suffer from an additional three types of disease: Parkinson's, ischemic heart disease and B cell leukemia, such as hairy cell leukemia. This means that veterans who served in Vietnam and have one of these diseases do not need to prove an association between the disease and military service. The association will be "presumed."

**Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs "Benefits Checkup"**

ODVA maintains Veterans' Service Officers who can do a comprehensive review of benefits due each veteran. If you think that would be potentially helpful, here are three county contacts:

Clackamas: Janice Harlan-Raisi  
503-650-5631

Multnomah: Katie Pereault  
503-988-3620, ext. 26123

Washington: Doug MacEllven  
503-846-3060

**Retroactive Stop-Loss Payments**

More than 185,000 individuals that were held in active service after 9/11 through stop-loss programs are now eligible for \$500 per month retroactive payments for each month they were held over in stop-loss. Each service is responsible to establish its own payment

program. The Army should have a web-based application process up and running currently, while the other services are in the process of establishing their programs. If you, or someone you know, were affected by stop-loss between 9/11/01 and 9/30/09, have them get in contact with their branch of service.

**Health Care Legislation**

There seems to be more erroneous, disingenuous, or deliberately misleading information on the current health care in the public domain than there is accurate and informative information. MOAA is a source of useful, nonpartisan information--including two blogs. I previously mentioned: moaablogs.org/healthcare and moaablogs.org/battleofthebilge. Get real information, not that filtered by talking heads or legislators.

**MEMBERSHIP CORNER**

*by MAJ John Sampson, USA (Ret)*

The Portland Chapter would like to welcome the following new auxiliary member:

**Mrs. Versie Meyer**

Also, the **Membership Committee** will meet on **November 20<sup>th</sup>** at **1100 hours** at the **Olive Garden**, located at 6355 S.W. Meadows Road, Lake Oswego, Oregon. Please call me if at **(503) 684-3160** if you plan to attend or have any questions.

**BRING DONATIONS TO SUPPORT THE PORTLAND POLICE SUNSHINE DIVISION!**

Over the years, it has been an annual project of this chapter to support the Portland Police Sunshine Division in their program to help the less fortunate (especially needy children) in our community during the Holiday Season.

Please bring your donations of food, toys, and cash to the 1 December 2009 MOAA-PDX dinner meeting. Make checks payable to: *Portland Police Sunshine Division*.

For more information, please call **CWO Al Drenkhahn, USAF (Ret)** at **503-289-7834**.

**MOAA PORTLAND CHAPTER  
SCHOLARSHIP FUND UPDATE**  
*by CAPT Larry Roberts, USNR (Ret)*

Assets contributed and on the way to MOAA exceed **\$2,800**, meaning we are **more than half way** to the first year contribution goal of \$5,000. This is outstanding support, especially in light of the economy and the stock market. Thanks to all who have contributed to date--and encouragement to those of us who plan to contribute but have not yet done so. All contributions, whatever the amount, are deeply appreciated!

**Scholarship Committee:**

The Committee currently includes John Hill, Nanci Visser, Mary Mayer, and Jimmy Patrick. Anyone else who would like to participate in this effort, please let me know. Committee member duties will not be onerous, and will be very important in leading us in this endeavor.

**Charitable IRA Contribution:**

Through the remainder of this year, individuals 70.5 years of age and older are eligible to make charitable contributions from an IRA WITH NO FEDERAL TAX CONSEQUENCES. If this is of interest, there is more information on the MOAA web site, or contact me at 503-722-1897 or Larry@RocketVentures.com

One thought is to prepay a 5 year commitment with pretax dollars in this one year, really 1.5 month opportunity. That is my personal plan. Thanks for your commitment to the education of the future leaders of our country and to children of our nation's defenders.

**CONGRESS APPROVES MOAA FEDERAL  
CHARTER**

On October 27, the U.S. House of Representatives approved legislation granting a federal charter for MOAA. The Senate passed an identical bill September 24. It now will be sent to the president, who is expected to sign it into law.

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

Please continue to save your old cell phones for the "Cell Phones for Soldiers" program. Col. Mary Mayer will again collect them at the next luncheon at Albertina's on **December 15, 1:00 p.m. seating**. Call Edie to make your reservation: (503) 254-5029.

Following suggestions made by the (national) Auxiliary Advisory Committee to help "take care of our own," those who attended the October luncheon, concurred that we should contribute to the Oregon National Guard Emergency Relief Fund. When the families of our soldiers serving in Iraq or Afghanistan have financial emergencies, this fund, held by the Oregon Military Department in Salem, provides assistance. The fund takes about 15 requests a week for help. Please bring your donation to the December luncheon, or send a check to: Oregon National Guard Emergency Relief Fund, Attn: DCSPER, P.O. Box 14350, Salem OR 97309-5047.

We also decided to bring non-perishable food items for the Portland Police Sunshine Division to the December luncheon, which are also being collected at the Chapter's dinner meeting on 1 December.

Those who have attended the luncheons -- five this year -- have really enjoyed being together in the lovely surroundings at Albertina's (the food is always outstanding), and we've accomplished a lot. I hope more of you Auxiliary members (and wives of Chapter members) will be able to join us next year, starting in February.

## ***HELP BRING THE USS RANGER TO PORTLAND!***

by LCDR George H. Bickford, Sr.,  
USN (Ret)

Help bring the *USS Ranger* to Portland as a floating museum, veteran's memorial, and a cultural and education center. Without your help, this great ship will be lost forever. Please see below for information on how you can help save her!

The **USS Ranger Foundation** is a privately funded project, with individual and corporate support; and therefore will not be utilizing public funding as a revenue base. This project will generate revenue and jobs. It just makes good sense! The project is in Phase Two of the four phase process. This phase has a 12 month timeline, during which the exact location of the museum complex will be finalized; environmental, marketing, business, **neighborhood support**, and other studies will be completed and updated. Now is the time for you to support the USS Ranger Foundation and help bring Ranger to Portland. Please do your part to ensure this magnificent ship and the history she represents will be preserved on behalf of her super-carrier sisters, some of which are or will be sunk or scrapped. We won't succeed without **your support**. Letters expressing support for the project are needed from individuals, organizations, businesses and corporations that want to see this historic ship saved and see the substantial economic benefits it will bring to our area. Please send your letters of support to the Foundation Office (1505 SE Gideon St. Suite 650 Portland, OR 97202) or e-mail them to [rangerinfo@ussranger.org](mailto:rangerinfo@ussranger.org). These letters are extremely important to show that the Ranger Foundation has the overwhelming support of the community in bringing the USS Ranger CV-61 to our metropolitan area. Please visit the web site: [www.ussranger.org](http://www.ussranger.org), and see the

economic benefits that come with this project!

## ***CHAPTER DUES FOR 2010***

Another reminder on Chapter dues. Now is the time to pay your \$25 dues for 2010. They are due no later than 1 January!

You can pay at the December dinner meeting or mail a check (made out to: *PDX/MOAA*) to Portland Chapter/MOAA, P.O. Box 68959, Portland, OR 97268. If you receive the *Brass Bulletin* by mail, the upper right corner shows the date your current dues expire. If delivery is by e-mail, just ask the Treasurer, Ben Tabler, at [betabler@comcast.net](mailto:betabler@comcast.net) or 503-698-2974.

Remember also, dues are our *only source of income*, and just mailing the newsletter to less than half the chapter membership this past year cost \$1,279, about 20% of the total budget. So, if at all possible, sign up for e-mail as the way to get your bulletin.

## ***SUPPORT THE CELL PHONES FOR SOLDIERS PROGRAM***

*If you have any used cell phones (and chargers), please bring them with you to our Chapter meetings!* Our secretary, Colonel Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret), will ensure the phones are sent through the proper channels so our deployed service men and women receive *prepaid calling cards* in exchange for these used cell phones. What a wonderful gift we can give to these warriors—helping them keep in touch with their families!

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### ***Portland Chapter Officers***

#### **President**

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

#### **First Vice President**

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

#### **Second Vice President**

Capt Jimmy L. Patrick, USMC (Ret): 503-654-1511

#### **Secretary**

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

#### **Treasurer**

CDR Ben Tabler, USN (Ret): 503-698-2974

#### **Immediate Past President**

COL John Hill, USA (Ret): 503-653-9524

**RETURN ADDRESS:**

**PORTLAND CHAPTER  
MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION  
OF AMERICA (MOAA)  
P.O. BOX 68959  
PORTLAND, OR 97268**

**FIRST  
CLASS  
POSTAGE  
REQUIRED**

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

**MOAA PORTLAND CHAPTER UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Mark your calendars!**

December 1, 2009	Dinner Meeting w/Entertainment (Location: Gray Gables Estate)
<i>January 2010</i>	<i>No Dinner Meeting Scheduled</i>
February 6, 2010	Brunch Meeting w/Guest Speaker (Location: TBD)
<i>February 12, 2010</i>	<i>Board of Directors Meeting</i>
March 2, 2010	Dinner Meeting w/Guest Speaker (Location: Monarch)
April 6, 2010	Dinner Meeting w/Guest Speaker (Location: Gray Gables Estate)
May 4, 2010	Dinner Meeting w/Guest Speaker & Election of Chapter Officers (Location: Monarch)
<i>May 7, 2010</i>	<i>Board of Directors Meeting</i>
June 1, 2010	Dinner Meeting w/Guest Speaker & Installation of Chapter Officers (Location: Gray Gables)
<i>July &amp; August 2010</i>	<i>No Dinner Meetings Scheduled</i>
<i>August 6, 2010</i>	<i>Board of Directors Meeting</i>

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

**NOTE 2:** All Board of Directors Meetings are held at 0930 at the **Colwood Bar & Grill** at the **Colwood National Golf Course** and ***are open to all members!***

**NOTE 3:** The ***Brass Bulletin Newsletter*** will take a hiatus in January 2010. All articles for the ***February 2010 Brass Bulletin Newsletter*** must be submitted to the editor, **Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)**, at [maryjmayer@yahoo.com](mailto:maryjmayer@yahoo.com) by **9 January 2010**.