



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

Volume XXVI, Number 8

www.MOAAPortland.org

May 2010

The President's Forum

by LTC Gary S. Brink, USA (Ret)

I have to tell you all that I have just spent a week in southern Texas with my family on a Brink Reunion. Wow, now I know where the growth is going on in the USA. There was more construction going on than I could have imagined. The economy there is certainly growing very well. I think we in the NW feel the effects of a downturn in the economy later than the rest of the nation. Then again, we don't pull out of the downturn until a little later than the rest of the nation. I really believe the difficulties of the last 18 months are finally coming at an end.

I want to announce to you, the membership, that our newsletter prepared by **Mary J. Mayer** and our website managed by **Bill Kroger** have been selected as the **BEST in our category as awarded by MOAA National**. This is the result of your Board, with Mary and Bill, putting together a great program. The two of them have always been open to suggestions and are willing to make changes as suggested by the Board. We are so thankful to have them representing our chapter.

I want to thank **1LT Sabrina Vasquez** for her presentation at our April Meeting. She truly laid out the action in Iraq and confirmed lower Iraq casualty rates for US military. Our May meeting will be at the Monarch and our speaker will discuss his experiences in the submarine career field.

(Continued on page 2)

Reminder:

**Board of Directors' Meeting
on Friday, 14 May 2010
at 0930 Hours at the
Colwood Bar & Grill
at the Colwood National Golf Course**

NEXT MEETING:

Tuesday, 4 May 2010

Social: 1700, Dinner: 1830

The Monarch Hotel

12566 SE 93rd Avenue

Clackamas, Oregon 97015-9760

Phone: 503-652-1515

PROGRAM:

Guest Speaker: CAPT Rick Williams, USN (Ret) will speak on “Multi-Task Submarine Career (1975-2000)”

MENU:

Chicken Monarch with Rice Pilaf or

Roasted Pork Loin with Garlic Mashed Potatoes

Seasonal Vegetables

Rolls and Butter

Assorted Desserts

Coffee/Tea

COST:

\$24.50 (Chicken or Pork) **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 30 April 2010**. **No late reservations**, and **please call** if you must cancel as we have to pay for no-shows.

DIRECTIONS: From **I-205N**, take Sunnyside Exit, left on Sunnyside, left on 93rd Avenue (2nd traffic light), and left at Monarch Hotel. From **I-205S**, take Sunnyside Exit, right on Sunnyside, left on 93rd Avenue (1st traffic light), and left at Monarch Hotel.

A **No-Host Bar** is available from 1700-1930 in the room. An **elevator** is available.

PRESIDENT'S FORUM (continued)

At our June meeting we will be installing new officers. In addition, we will be co-hosting the meeting with the Vancouver Chapter. You may be saying, "We do that every year." Well, this year we are co-hosting the meeting but also hosting **Gen "Butch" Neal, USMC (Ret)**, Chairman of the MOAA National Board of Directors. I really want all of you to contact your fellow officers and give them a hardy invitation. I guarantee a great presentation by Gen Neal.

While you are going to hear more about the slate of new officers in this newsletter on page 4, I really would like to have all of you give **Mary J. Mayer** and **Bill Kroger** a real thanks for bringing this MOAA Communication Award to your chapter. This is one hell of a Chapter!!! (I am not partial.)

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

On **April 6**, there were **54** members and guests who came out for dinner at the Gray Gables Estate in Milwaukie, Oregon. Since **President Gary Brink** had a family emergency, **First Vice President John Sampson** called the meeting to order at 1830 after the social hour. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited, the National Anthem was sung [led by **CAPT Larry Roberts, USNR (Ret)** and his wife **Ann**], and, since no chaplain was in attendance, **First Vice President Sampson** gave the invocation.

First Vice President Sampson then asked that guests be introduced. **Col Geff McCarthy, USAF (Ret)** introduced **Lt Col Rick Swanson, USAF (Ret)** and his wife, **Doris**—while **John Sampson** introduced **CDR Michael Stewart, USNR (Ret)** and his wife **Marsha** (who go to his church).



Pictured (left to right): Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret), Chapter Secretary; guest speaker, 1LT Sabrina Vasquez, ORANG; COL John Hill, USA (Ret), Chapter Immediate Past President; and MAJ Geoff Vallee, ORANG, Commander of Charlie Company, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment enjoy networking at the April dinner meeting at Gray Gables Estate.

After dinner, **First Vice President Sampson** introduced the guest speaker, **1LT Sabrina F. Vasquez, USA**, an Oregon Army National Guard Dust-off MEDEVAC Helicopter Pilot, in Salem, Oregon. Sabrina went to Oregon City High School and the University of Oregon. She has wanted to be a pilot since third grade; since she couldn't become an astronaut or jet pilot, she is now happy to fly Blackhawk helicopters. She was the only female in her flight training class. Sabrina spoke on "Iraq and Back: The Journey with Charlie Company, 7th Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment." She then chronicled her journey to Iraq and back; it started at Ft. Sill where her unit trained in convoy and flight operations with the active duty force; her unit then proceeded to Kuwait where they practiced range operations and shot some rounds for two weeks in over 100 degree heat. They finally arrived in Balad, Iraq where they were stationed at the hospital; they watched MEDEVACs get soldiers on and off the aircraft and into the hospital in searing heat. She mentioned that she learned the mission quickly in the time she was there and had taken a MEDEVAC class and tour of the hospital in Baghdad. Her unit had 12 aircraft assigned, covered 4 different sites, at times performed several missions a day, was on-call 24/7, and had the call sign "Pusher." She was shot at several times, but no damage was done. There were numerous dust storms, and, the hotter it got, the worse the storms became. The dust even came through the ventilation

MINUTES (continued)

systems, and the dust storms often grounded the aircraft. To combat the heat (from 120 to 140 degrees), she wore a vest through which cool water flowed. During her time in Iraq, they never had a fatality in her unit. After nine months, her unit was relieved by an active duty unit and spent two weeks out processing in Kuwait. Once arriving in the United States, members of her unit were put on a bus and arrived in Salem, Oregon; chapter members **Lt Cols Boyd Yaden** and **Jim Dixon**, both retired from the Air Force, met the unit when it returned. Sabrina introduced her commander, **MAJ Geoff Vallee, USA**, and parents, **Coy** and **Paul Vasquez** to the dinner meeting attendees.

Before and during the meeting, raffle tickets were sold for two bottles of wine; proceeds went to the MOAA Portland Chapter Scholarship Fund. **First Vice President Sampson** called on **CAPT Larry Roberts, USNR (Ret)** to select the winners of the wine; they were **Lt Col Boyd Yaden, USAF (Ret)** and **MAJ Geoff Vallee, ORANG**. Larry Roberts then announced that the scholarship fund already had over \$6,000 in it, and we were on track for endowing the \$25,000 scholarship in five years. MOAA is now in the process of selecting our second scholarship recipient, and Larry thanked all those who had contributed thus far.

First Vice President Sampson then announced that the MOAA Portland Chapter had won the MOAA Communication Award (Category III) for the Best Printed Newsletter and Website. He publicly recognized and congratulated **Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)**, our newsletter editor, and **LTC Bill Kroger, USA (Ret)**, our website guru, for their achievements! He then mentioned the next dinner meeting will be on 4 May 2010 at the Monarch Hotel; our guest speaker will be **CAPT Rick Williams, USN (Ret)** on “Multi-Task Submarine

Career (1975-2000) and encouraged all to come. On 1 June 2010, our guest speaker will be **General Richard I. Neal, USMC**, MOAA Chairman of the Board, who will speak on “Status of MOAA Initiatives” and install the new chapter officers. **CDR George Bickford, USN (Ret)** then encouraged each of us to write or call the governor, mayor, and commissioners asking them to support bringing the USS Ranger to Portland. The MOAA Portland Chapter president has already written a letter of support. **COL John Hill, USA (Ret)**, Chair of the Nominating Committee, announced the proposed 2010-2011 Slate of Officers on page 4. We will elect officers at the May dinner meeting and install them at the June dinner meeting.

First Vice President Sampson asked all members who had received the Veterans of Oregon Honorable Service Medals to wear them to all our chapter dinner meetings. For those who would like to receive the medal, John had applications with him at the meeting; all they needed to do was fill out the form and give it back to John. On 22 March 2010 John Sampson helped give out 375 medals at the VA Hospital in Portland, Oregon.

First Vice President Sampson indicated that he had received a listing from MOAA of some 1,250 national members who were eligible to join our chapter; we will be sending out a letter to each of them. He then asked those in attendance if they would like to see our organization grow, and asked for volunteers to call 3 names to invite them to one of our dinner meetings.

In the “**For the Good of the Order**” portion of the program, **LTC Bill Kroger, USA (Ret)** said it was a “big deal” to win the MOAA Communication Award for Best Printed Newsletter and Website. He also indicated that for the May 2010 dinner meeting, we would be able to register on-line. He finished with a joke!

In closing, **Vice President Sampson** presented **1LT Sabrina F. Vasquez, USA** with a small memento from the chapter. He then thanked everyone for coming, told them to drive safely, and encouraged them to come to the May dinner meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 2020.

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

The membership committee met to discuss our upcoming membership drive. We received approximately 1,250 potential member names from national MOAA. The committee will purge through all the names and will ask the board and other members to assist in contacting at least three to four potential members each. It would be great if we could recruit at least 10% (125 new members). We would like to complete this project by the end of August 2010.

I would like to thank **CDR Michael Stewart, USNR (Ret)** and his wife **Marsha** for accepting our invitation to join us for the April dinner meeting.

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

Ladies, you still have time to let me know if you plan to attend the April 20 luncheon at Albertina's. Members' wives are welcome to join us. I can guarantee you'll enjoy the ambiance and the food, besides sharing experiences with other Auxiliary members. Remember to bring one or more items for our troops, i.e. dried fruit, batteries, paperbacks, packets of coffee and creamer, shaving cream, body wash, baby wipes, razors, cookies, and zippered plastic bags--to name a few ideas. Please call **Edie (503) 254-5029** by Friday, April 16, if you can come. And don't forget to bring those unusable cell phones and chargers with you as well!

ALL CHAPTER MEMBERS NOTE: We'll still be collecting **Gifts for Troops** at the May 4 dinner meeting at The Monarch. Many thanks to those who brought items in April.

Did you know that MOAA Auxiliary members will be represented at the annual

"Storming the Hill" in Washington, D.C.? They're a recent addition to the Association's storming team, just because one auxiliary member mailed a letter to the editor of *Military Officer* magazine suggesting this, pointing out that military surviving spouses would add an unique dimension to the message to members of Congress. Watch for the whole delegation's report in a forthcoming issue.

NOMINATIONS FOR 2010-2011 CHAPTER OFFICERS

The Nomination Committee nominates the following candidates for election by the general membership at the **4 May 2010** meeting:

President: Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)
1st Vice President: MAJ John Sampson, USA (Ret)
2nd Vice President: Col Rick Gano, USAF (Ret)
Secretary: Lt Col Boyd Yaden, USAF (Ret)
Treasurer: Capt Jim Cole, USAF (Ret)
Immediate Past President: LTC Gary Brink, USA (Ret)

This election is very important to our chapter, and we encourage all members to come out to vote! Officers will be installed at the June meeting.

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

WE ARE ON THE WAY!!!

We are making headway on bringing in another \$5,000 for the scholarship fund in 2010, with contributions being made each month. As noted previously, 100 contributions of \$50 each brings us to the annual goal, and larger contributions get us to our goal earlier.

This Scholarship Program is more important than ever, with ever diminishing state support for our institutions of higher learning and the adverse impact of the 2008 financial meltdown on the ability of schools to provide support to their students through endowment funds. This is exacerbated by the imminent takeover of college student loan programs by the government, which will lead to both delays and uncertainties as

SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE (cont.)

bureaucrats gear up, taking over from private loan sources.

Our decision to institute a Chapter Scholarship, therefore, was both timely and important to our community. Many of us had previously given to the general MOAA Scholarship Fund, which was great but did not directly benefit local students. Now we have our first scholarship recipient, **Heather Chase**, from the Portland area. Later this year, we will know the second recipient, also from our area. Thus, our funds are going directly to assist Oregon students, most likely Portland area students. We can take pride as a chapter and as donors in directly supporting local individuals and their families. Hopefully, our initiative and impact will lead other Northwest MOAA Chapters to sponsor their own Scholarship Programs.

The Scholarship Fund provides interest free loans and grants for up to five years of undergraduate study at an accredited 2 or 4 year college or university. The MOAA Fund has assisted more than 10,000 students over the years.

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

Thanks for your commitment to the education of the future leaders of our country and to children of our nation's defenders.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By CAPT Larry Roberts, USNR (Ret)

Thanks: First, many thanks to Bill Kroger for writing the legislative update for the last *Brass Bulletin*. My wife and I were floating around the Far East nine time zones and thousands of miles away from the Congressional melodrama that continues to surround us, and Bill did his normal excellent job of keeping the chapter informed.

The More Things Change: I am amazed at how little has changed with the passage of almost two months during which I spent as little time as possible listening to US talking heads and legislators. Of course, what has changed is the passage of ObamaCare, which is huge and hugely negative for the economy once the burden of taxes, fees, and the like is figured out. Note the "unintended consequence" of enormous corporate write-downs in the \$100 million to \$1 billion category that started rolling in almost instantaneously once the bill was signed into law.

But, in my last column, it appeared that there would be a Medicare "fix" simply to repeal the 21% reimbursement rate cuts that were law. By day and by week, the "fix" slipped until finally the Congress left for the Easter recess, and the cuts were actually implemented! See below for more.

Medicare/TRICARE Reimbursement Rate Cuts: After more than three months of jawboning, dithering, and otherwise showing a lack of seriousness, the Senate was unable to even take a vote on whether or not to rescind/delay or otherwise fix the 21% reimbursement reduction scheduled to take effect 1 April. They were blocked from voting by a single Senator, Tom Coburn of Oklahoma. Thus, without regard to the adverse consequences to Medicare and TRICARE beneficiaries, Congress went off on a two week recess, while the reductions actually occurred! Now what? Well, because Medicare and TRICARE hold claims for up to 10 and 30 days, respectively, the Senate supposedly will deal with the issue retroactively once it returns 12 April. However, the Coburn issue has not yet been dealt with, AND the deal on the table only delays implementation until 1 May, which means this entire issue raises its bloody head in slightly over a month. MOAA believes that the mess will eventually get resolved, but the crass process to date lays bare the bankrupt nature of the current legislative process.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE (cont.)

Remember that this 21% figure does not even take into consideration the \$500 billion in Medicare spending reductions included in the Health Care bill.

26 Year Old TRICARE Dependents:

As part of the Health Care bill, one's children can be classified and carried as dependents up through age 26. This apparently is true even if the individual in question is employed with health care coverage; he or she can elect to be covered under YOUR insurance. Who is obligated to pay for such coverage is unclear.

While TRICARE is a program with its own legislation, it appears that the intent is to broaden this provision to include TRICARE. MOAA indicates that the process to implement such a change would require authorization in the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2011. This typically is signed into law in October or November, possibly even December. A lot could ride on mid-term elections. Once the provision is signed into law, it would take the bureaucrats a year or longer to implement the program. Whether or not there would be an additional premium for such dependents has not been clarified. Anybody want to guess as to whether there will be a premium?

Federal "Debt Commission": In my last report, I noted that the Senate had killed a Presidential proposal to establish a "bipartisan" Commission that would review fiscal income and spending and then submit a series of recommendations to Congress, which would be bound to give the recommendations solely an up or down vote. Clearly, Congress does not want to reduce its power of the purse.

In response, the President created by Presidential Order a National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform

(there is that word "reform", again. It really means a Power Grab). The Commission is to be led by former Senator Alan Simpson of Wyoming and Erskin Bowles, Clinton's Chief of Staff. Bowles is a respected individual with a lot of private business experience, investment banking experience, and higher education leadership.

Simpson, on the other hand, is viewed with caution by MOAA. When he participated in but did not lead a similar commission in the 1990s, he proposed severe limitations on COLAs and similar constraints that would adversely affect Social Security recipients and military retirees.

A Commission member, Senator Gregg of New Hampshire, while on that same commission proposed significant reductions in military retirement compensation.

Regarding the Commission, MOAA comments, "Hold on to your hats."

MOAA has been suspicious of the Commission approach ever since it was first broached, with some good reason. Witnessing the abrogation of established process and the arrogation of legislative power during the health care debate, one can only wonder what dirty tricks are being planned.

Health Care Legislation: Rather than regurgitating what MOAA has compiled, let me refer everyone to the MOAA web site, MOAA.org, where you will find an excellent FAQ on the bill. If you have a specific question, send it to me by email at Larry@RocketVentures.com, and I will inquire of MOAA and other sources. I find that MOAA has been an excellent source of information and thoughtful positions during the debate of the last year. They certainly were strong advocates for protecting TRICARE and were a major part of the lobbying process that went on.

Remember:
Please Bring your Items for Residents
of the Oregon Veterans' Home
to the
May and June Dinner Meetings

***COMPREHENSIVE STUDY OF
WOMEN VETERANS FROM
VIETNAM WAR ERA LAUNCHED!***

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is launching a comprehensive study of women veterans who served in the military during the Vietnam War to explore the effects of their military service upon their mental and physical health. VA realizes that women veterans require specialized programs, and this study will help VA provide high-quality care for women Veterans of the Vietnam era." The study, which begins in November and lasts more than four years, will contact approximately 10,000 women in a mailed survey, telephone interview, and a review of their medical records.

As women Vietnam Veterans approach their mid-sixties, it is important to understand the impact of wartime deployment on health and mental outcomes nearly 40 years later. The study will assess the prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and other mental and physical health conditions for women Vietnam Veterans, and explore the relationship between PTSD and other conditions.

VA will study women Vietnam Veterans who may have had direct exposure to traumatic events, and for the first time, study those who served in facilities near Vietnam and in the United States. These women may have had similar, but less direct exposures. Both women Veterans who receive their health care from VA and those who receive health care from other providers will be contacted to determine the prevalence of a variety of health conditions.

About 250,000 women Veterans served in the military during the Vietnam War and about 7,000 were in or near Vietnam. Those who were in Vietnam, those who

served elsewhere in Southeast Asia, and those who served in the United States are potential study participants.

The study represents to date the most comprehensive examination of women Veterans, and will be used to shape future research on women Veterans in future wars. Such an understanding will lay the groundwork for planning and providing appropriate services for women Veterans, as well as for the aging veteran population today. The study, to be managed by VA's Cooperative Studies Program, is projected to cost \$5.6 million. For information on how to participate in the study, please call **1-888-831-3325**.

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

Portland Chapter Board of Directors

Army Reps

MG Curtis A. Loop: 503-579-6297

LTC David E. Hill: 503-579-9684

Navy Reps

CAPT James H. Main: 503-793-8499

CAPT Larry Roberts: 503-722-1897

Air Force Reps

Col Richard A. Gano: 503-651-2044

Lt Col Boyd Yaden: 503-702-3812

Marine Corps Reps

Maj James F. Simpson: 503-233-9341

LtCol Nanci L. Visser: 503-614-8463

Coast Guard Rep

CDR Ron Youngman: 503-439-3014

Women in Service Rep

1LT Sabrina F. Vasquez, USA: 503-312-8505

Liaison, Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee

Mrs. Edie Rieken: 503-254-5029

RETURN ADDRESS:

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

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MOAA PORTLAND CHAPTER UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars!

May 4, 2010	Dinner Meeting w/Guest Speaker & Election of Chapter Officers (Location: Monarch Hotel)
<i>May 14, 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 & August 2010</i>	<i>No Dinner Meetings Scheduled</i>
<i>August 6, 2010</i>	<i>Board of Directors Meeting</i>
September 7, 2010	Dinner Meeting w/Guest Speaker (Location: Monarch Hotel)
October 5, 2010	Dinner Meeting w/Guest Speaker (Location: Gray Gables Estates)
November 2, 2010	Dinner Meeting w/Guest Speaker (Location: Monarch Hotel)
<i>November 12, 2010</i>	<i>Board of Directors Meeting</i>
December 7, 2010	Dinner Meeting w/Entertainment (Location: Gray Gables Estate)
<i>January 2011</i>	<i>No Dinner Meeting Scheduled</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 **June 2010 Brass Bulletin Newsletter** must be submitted to the editor, **Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)**, at **maryjmayer@yahoo.com** by **8 May 2010**.