



**Military Officers Association
of America (MOAA)
Brass Bulletin Newsletter**
“Never Stop Serving”

**Portland, Oregon
Chapter**
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P.O. Box 18206
Portland, OR 97213

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www.MOAAPortland.org

October 2021

PRESIDENT’S FORUM

By Colonel Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)

I am very pleased to tell you that the **MOAA Portland Chapter** has been awarded the **Five Star Level of Excellence Award** for the **14th straight year**. We should be extremely proud of this accomplishment, and I want to congratulate all our hard-working and dedicated chapter leaders and other members who have contributed to making our chapter so successful over the past year!

Because of concerns associated with the pandemic, your chapter leadership has decided to conduct this month’s chapter meeting via Zoom. However, when conditions allow, we will meet again in person. Once again, we will be going to The Monarch Hotel for our dinner meetings and to a new venue, The Aerie at Eagle Landing in Happy Valley, OR, for most of our brunches. Check out The Aerie’s website at www.theaerieateaglelanding.com; it is a beautiful property with reasonable prices and good food.

I am happy to announce that **CAPT Doug Brown, USCGR (Ret)** has volunteered to serve as the Coast Guard Representative on the Chapter Board of Directors! Thanks for stepping up, Doug, and welcome aboard! I am also in discussions with a potential second Air Force Representative for the Board since **Captain Doug MacEllven, USAF (Former)** has resigned from the Board. I want to thank Doug for his outstanding service and dedication in serving as one of two Air Force Reps on the Board and as the Special Events Committee Chair,

(Continued on page 2)

Reminder:

**The Chapter Board of Directors Meeting
will be held at 0900
on Thursday, 4 November 2021
Virtual Meeting via Zoom Video Teleconference**

OCTOBER VIRTUAL CHAPTER MEETING:

Saturday, 2 October 2021

Social Time: 0930, Meeting Starts: 1000

Virtual Meeting: via Zoom Video Teleconference

PROGRAM:

Mr. Darwin G. Goodspeed, FACHE, Director of the Portland VA Medical Center, who will speak on **“Delivering Healthcare to Veterans During a Pandemic.”**

RESERVATIONS: To make your reservations, please contact **CDR Michael Seiwald, USN (Ret)** at **503-381-2620** or mjseiwald@comcast.net **NLT 1100 on Wednesday, 29 September 2021** so he can advise the Zoom Host to allow you access to the virtual meeting. Once you have reservations, join the Zoom Meeting one of two ways (see below).

TO JOIN THE ZOOM MEETING: Please use one of the two following methods:

1. **For video teleconference**, click on the following link (or put the link in your computer’s browser), then add Meeting ID and Password:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86191098857?pwd=cVpyWXF3UjhuQ2NWZ3FRVDZWclNqUT09>

Meeting ID: 861 9109 8857 Passcode: 574708

2. **For audio only**, dial the phone number below, then add Meeting ID and Password:

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

Meeting ID: 861 9109 8857 Passcode: 574708

NOTE: If you have any problems joining the meeting, please call our Zoom Host, **CAPT Tony Sebbio, USN (Ret)**, at **503-410-1843 (cell)**.

PRESIDENT'S FORUM (continued)

working with the ROTC at the University of Portland and the JROTC at Reynolds High School and Oregon City High School! He also represented the MOAA Portland Chapter at numerous Stand-downs throughout Oregon. Doug will be sorely missed, but we wish him well!

Speaking of, I need a volunteer to serve as the **Chair of the Special Events Committee.. Captain Doug MacEllven, USAF (Former)** has written a "how-to" manual for this position, so the transition should be very smooth for the next incumbent! **LTC Gary Battles, USAR (Ret)** and I will assist as Committee members. And, finally, **CAPT Sharon Sebbio, USN (Ret)**, our Decorations Committee Chair, would like someone to assist her with decorations for the chapter meetings when she is on travel and cannot attend..

Program: Turning to the **Program** for the October Virtual Meeting, our guest speaker is **Mr. Darwin G. Goodspeed, FACHE**, who was appointed as Director of the VA Portland Health Care System (VAPORHCS) by the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs on November 25, 2018.

He is responsible for a two-division, Joint Commission accredited 1A facility with 167 acute beds, 35 Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (RRTP) beds and 76 Community Living Center (CLC) beds. The facility offers a full range of primary, emergency, specialty, tertiary, and long-term care to over 100,000 Veterans throughout Oregon and Southwestern Washington. In addition to the two main divisions located in Portland, OR and Vancouver, WA, nine community Based Outpatient/Outreach clinics are operated covering 26 counties and 30,000 square miles.

Prior to joining the VAPORHCS, Mr. Goodspeed was the Director of the Sioux Falls VA Health Care System (SFVAHCS) from December 2013 until November 2018. He was responsible for the Royal C. Johnson Veterans Memorial Medical Center and five Community Based Outpatient Clinics. He was the Associate Director at the Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center from February 2011 to November 2013. Mr. Goodspeed retired from the United States Navy after serving active duty from 1982-2003 as a Medical Service Corp Officer; he achieved the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

He received the Défense Meritorious Service Medal, Joint Service Commendation Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Medical Department Surface Warfare Officer, Navy Commendation Medal, and Navy Achievement Medal.

He graduated from the VA Executive Career Field in 2010 and from the Health Care Leadership Institute (HCLI) in 2009. Professional certifications include Fellow American College of Healthcare Executive (FACHE), VHA Certified Mentor, and Excellence in Government Fellow.



Mr. Darwin G. Goodspeed

So, please plan on attending this meeting! And, hopefully, some of you will "step forward" to volunteer! If so, please contact me at maryjmayer@yahoo.com or **310-897-1902** (cell). Remember: "Never Stop Serving!"

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

**By Major William J. Tidd, USAF
(Ret)**

Last month in the September issue of the *Brass Bulletin*, I outlined what the National MOAA headquarters was doing to enhance its support to the field chapter and their initiatives moving forward. I know that MOAA works tirelessly to provide the incentives and goals to chapters and councils so that they can accomplish their mission(s).

Fulfillment of these missions are a vital contribution to MOAA's national advocacy mission. However, regardless of all the effort provided by the national headquarters, it still is, as they say, "Boots on the Ground" to accomplish their goals and objectives.

New members are essential to the success of any organization, particularly an organization like MOAA. Without a continuous flow of new members, MOAA will stagnate or even cease to exist. New members inject new energy, new enthusiasm, and new ideas that are the life blood of a national organization--as well as a chapter's future growth or sustainability.

New members provide an opportunity for mentorship and an opportunity to pass on the goals and initiatives of our chapter to others. The more people we have in our chapter, the easier it will be to fill our chapter meeting roles and engage in new activities. New members also represent more funds for our chapter. We each learn from each other, so new members represent a tool to help each of us stretch and grow.

I understand that, with the pandemic, it is difficult to reach out and contact potential new members, but, if we don't rejuvenate our membership rolls soon and

add some new members, we will slowly become less and less viable as a chapter.

AN OPINION PIECE:**MY TAKE ON LEGISLATION, REGULATION,
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS**

By CAPT Larry Roberts, USNR (Ret)

Depletion of Social Security and Medicare Assets:

The U.S. Treasury issued a report recently that sounds the alarm, one more time, about the financial stability of Social Security trusts and Medicare. The outlook for both Social Security Trust funds, Old Age and Disability, suffered an adverse impact from COVID in 2020. The Old Age Trust is now projected to run out of assets in 2032, just 11 years from now and a year earlier than the forecast in 2020. The Disability Trust is forecast to have sufficient assets to pay its obligations through 2057, but that forecast is 8 years earlier than the 2020 report.

Of more immediate concern, Medicare assets are expected to be depleted in 2026, when many of us in this chapter will be utilizing Medicare to pay our increasingly expensive medical bills!

Regarding the future, the Social Security law specifies that, with no Congressional action to restore Old Age trust assets, retirement payments will be reduced by 20%. What happens to both Disability payments and Medicare payments is unclear.

How Congress would/could react to the coming crises in these key national programs does not appear to be under discussion. Congress and the Administration are too busy attempting to transform the economy and the country, proposing to ladle out trillions of dollars in new programs without addressing current programs.

Watch for future news--but consider steps you can take to buffer your financial future.

A Call to Arms?: Very recently, Carlos Del Silva was sworn in as the Secretary of the Navy. He is a Naval Academy graduate, Surface Warfare Officer, served as first Commanding Officer of the Arleigh Burke class guided missile destroyer *USS Buckeley (DDG 84)* and headed a defense firm after leaving active duty.

I was concerned after perusing his initial message to the fleet. He listed 4 challenges facing the Navy Department: China, Culture, Climate, and COVID.

Excuse me, but I thought he was heading a major component of the Department of Defense, not the Department of Political Correctness. Of course, as you may have guessed, he was reiterating the same line as the Secretary of Defense.

China is, of course, our most obvious and most aggressive challenge, followed by Russia. The other three challenges are undefined, impossible to measure, and very awake. I would have expected that our challenges would include:

- Acquiring more ships and aircraft while we are being numerically challenged by the Chinese Navy (The Biden defense budget calls for a decline in defense spending after accounting for inflation),
- Improving our weapons to counter hypersonic missiles being fielded by both the Chinese and Russians, and
- Improving our Human Resources training and retention, especially after the recent debacle in Afghanistan.

One can argue about enumerating challenges and goals, but they should be clearly defined, measurable, and directly related to the broad missions of the Department of the Navy. I think we all should monitor the emphasis on goals and objectives set forth by our Defense leaders.

Should Selection Boards be Influenced by Race? I was struck and troubled recently by an Op-ed in the *Wall Street Journal* headlined as “Should Military Officers Be Chosen by Race?” It was written by a retired Naval intelligence officer, one who happens to be black.

After reading the piece, I gave it a new headline, used above. The writer of the

Op-ed was responding to commentary from the Navy Chief of Personnel, a 3-star Vice Admiral. His seemingly innocuous statement was to reintroduce the use of photographs provided to selection boards for use in their decision-making process selecting individuals for, among other things, promotion to the next higher rank.

These decisions shorten or lengthen one’s career and set one on the path to command or retirement. The Admiral continued “We’re very clear with our language to boards that we want them to consider DIVERSITY (my emphasis) across all areas. I think that having a clear picture just makes it easier.” So, he seems to be emphasizing that there are unspoken quotas for various races to be met by selection boards; having photographs of the individuals involved available to the board members makes those decisions easier to accomplish.

I thought that selections were made for professional competence, visible achievements, fitness reports submitted by commanding officers, and the like.

As the writer of the Op-ed noted, the Admiral’s statement “undermines every minority officer who has risen through the ranks on his own merit. It says that people like me are useful to the Navy because we are black, not because we are highly trained professionals....” I have served on a ship where my first CO and XO were more than first flight. The CO eventually was a 4 star, and his XO rose to Rear Admiral and was the first non-aviator to command a carrier strike group. Their successors were not of the same caliber, and the ship’s performance suffered under their leadership. They both were ultimately forced out of the Navy before achieving full retirement age.”

If you go to war, even a Cold War, you want leadership based on proven competence over a career, not because they fit a favored racial profile. At least, I do!

REMINDER:

IF YOU HAVE A CHANGE OF ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, OR EMAIL, PLEASE CONTACT COL MARY J. MAYER, USAF (RET) AT MARYJMAYER@YAHHO.COM OR 310-897-1902 (CELL) WITH YOUR NEW INFORMATION

SURVIVING SPOUSE CORNER

By Mrs. Jean Hillman, Liaison to the Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee

As Fall is starting up, we find ourselves still fighting the battle with COVID-19. A lot of us thought by this time that we would be enjoying a more “normal” existence – but the pandemic is still upon us and looks to be even more lethal than ever before. I hope that all of you have gotten your vaccinations, are wearing your masks, are social distancing, and are washing your hands frequently! And stay tuned as it looks as though a third booster vaccine could be heading our way shortly!

In keeping up with the latest guidance, we are wearing masks indoors again and outdoors when physical distancing is not possible. This use of constant masking can be hard on the skin. This caused me to look through the American Academy of Dermatology Association website (www.aad.org) to see what we can do to help our skin while wearing masks. Here are some suggestions:

- Cleanse and moisturize before and after wearing mask.
- To protect lips, apply petroleum jelly after washing, before masking, and before bed.
- Skip the make up when wearing a mask.
- Avoid trying a new product.
- Use less skin care products if face becomes irritated.
- Wear the right mask: snug but comfortable. The mask should have at least 2 layers and should be made of soft, natural, breathable fabric, such as cotton, next to skin. More info on face masks: CDC.gov/corona virus
- Take a 15 minute ‘mask break’ every 4 hrs.
- Safer places include the outdoors, inside a car, or at home.

- If you get “behind the ear soreness,” buy or make masks with different type of ties/bands.
- Wash masks after each use.

Please continue to make or purchase baby items for **Operation Diaper Bag**. Diapers and wipes for **Operation Homefront**. With family and friends purchasing new cell phones, ask them to keep their old cell phones for our **Cell Phones for Soldiers Program**.



How to Select a Mask to Wear During the Pandemic

When selecting a mask, there are many choices. Here are some dos and don'ts.

DO choose masks that:

- Have two or more layers of washable, breathable fabric
- Completely cover your nose and mouth
- Fit snugly against the sides of your face and don't have gaps
- Have a nose wire to prevent air from leaking out of the top of the mask

DO NOT choose masks that:

- Are made of fabric that makes it hard to breathe (for example, vinyl)
- Have exhalation valves or vents which allow virus particles to escape
- Are prioritized for healthcare workers (e.g., N95 respirators labeled as “surgical” or “medical”)

How to Wear a Mask

- Wear a mask **correctly** and **consistently** for the best protection.
- Be sure to wash your hands or use hand sanitizer before putting on a mask.
- **Do NOT touch the mask** when wearing it. If you must often touch/adjust your mask, it doesn't fit you properly, and you may need to find a different mask or make adjustments.

How To Remove a Mask

- Carefully, untie the strings behind your head or stretch the ear loops
- Handle only by the ear loops or ties
- Fold the outside corners together
- Be careful not to touch your eyes, nose, and mouth when removing and wash hands immediately after removing

AN OPINION PIECE:***COVID-19 CONVERSATIONS******By CAPT Sharon Sebbio, USN (Ret)***

I know, we're all tired of hearing about COVID-19 and of masking, maintaining physical distance, and washing our hands. I honestly get it. But this Delta variant really and truly is different and not to be taken lightly. As a largely retired community/public health nurse, I've read and listened to a lot on the subject. On 1 September 2021, I listened to yet another webinar and wanted to share some of the highlights with you.

It was the 21st installation of the **COVID-19 Conversations Webinar Series** sponsored by the American Public Health Association and the National Academy of Sciences on behalf of the National Academy of Medicine; the speakers were Doctors George Rutherford (University of California, San Francisco),

Charlene Wong (Duke University School of Medicine), Peter Hotez (Baylor College of Medicine and Texas Children's Hospital), and Mitchell Katz (NYC Health + Hospitals).

Here are the highlights. The Delta variant's mutations make it much more transmissible and disease producing than the original Alpha version in three ways: it's 'stickier' so it attaches to our own cells more easily, it is more efficient at entering the target cells, and it is less readily recognized by our antibodies. Because of this, to get to the much talked about herd immunity will probably require vaccination levels in the 85 to 90% range. Whereas vaccination prevented a person with a breakthrough infection by the Alpha variant from transmitting COVID, that is no longer the case with the Delta variant even if the infected person has no symptoms.

Dr. Hotez stated that scientists in Israel, the Mayo Clinic, and elsewhere in the U.S. are seeing waning immunity with the mRNA vaccines—in some cases down to 40-50% for the Pfizer vaccine. On a positive note, for the vast majority of the breakthrough cases, the person initially has no or only mild symptoms, and hospitalization is not required. This finding is what led to vigorous discussion within the medical community about the potential need for a booster. Some physicians are concerned that the increase in the number of mild cases, although not now requiring hospitalization, might be an early warning sign of worsening breakthrough infections requiring hospitalization to come. There is also emerging evidence that long COVID is affecting 20% of people who experience breakthrough infections. Oxford University neurologists are seeing significant grey matter degeneration in people with long COVID--much like is seen with the cognitive decline associated with aging or with Alzheimer's Disease. And long COVID is being seen in patients of all ages—including children.

So, what can you do? If you or your loved ones haven't been vaccinated, please get vaccinated now and encourage them to do so, too. Wear your mask and wear it properly. Ensure your mask fits well and fully covers your nose and mouth. If you haven't already, you may want to consider upgrading your mask from a simple procedure mask to one that's more protective. With that said, go out and enjoy the waning days of summer—just do so safely!

2021-2022 PORTLAND CHAPTER OFFICERS**President**

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

First Vice President

LTC Gary D. Battles, USAR (Ret): 503-739-3334

Second Vice President

Major William J. Tidd, USAF (Ret): 1-443-996-1011

Recording Secretary

CDR Doug J. Sheehan, USCGR (Ret): 503-653-6058

Reservations Secretary

CDR Michael J. Seiwald, USN (Ret): 503-381-2620

Treasurer

LTC Myrna K. Trull, USA (Ret): 971-226-7103

Senior Director (in lieu of Immediate Past President):

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

2021-2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**Army Reps**

MG Curtis A. Loop: 503-579-6297
MAJ Shaun Benson, USA (Ret): 503-309-7458

Navy Reps

CAPT Tony Sebbio: 503-936-5896
CDR Dave Bredemann: 503-974-9335

Air Force Reps

Colonel Rick Gano: 503-651-2044
Vacant

Marine Corps Rep

LtCol Herb Richardson: 503-691-6711

Coast Guard Rep: CAPT Doug Brown: 503-631-7769

USPHS

CDR (Dr.) Robert Steelman: 503-333-4565

Women in Service Rep

CAPT Sharon Sebbio, USN (Ret): 503-936-5896

Liaison, Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee

Mrs. Jean Hillman: 503-692-5571

Director-at-Large (in lieu of NOAA)

MajGen Christopher Owens, USMC (Ret): 503-951-1805

2021-2022 CHAPTER COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Program: CAPT Tony Sebbio, USN (Ret)
CAPT Lawrence W. Roberts, USNR (Ret)

Membership: Major William J. Tidd, USAF (Ret)

Legislative: LTC Gary D. Battles, USAR (Ret)
CAPT Lawrence W. Roberts, USNR (Ret)

Personal Affairs: Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)

Communications: CDR Dave Bredemann, USN (Ret)

Surviving Spouse: Mrs. Genevieve (Jean) Hillman
Vacant

Decorations: CAPT Sharon Sebbio, USN (Ret)
Vacant

Fundraising and Scholarship: CAPT Lawrence W. Roberts, USNR (Ret)

Special Events: *Vacant*

ESGR Outreach: COL Herbert L. Hirst, USA (Ret)
COL Robert L. Windus, USA (Ret)

Chaplains: LTC Grant McAllister, USA (Ret)
Reverend Karyn Dix
Lt Col James Warnock, USAF (Ret)

Note: More contact info on Chapter Officers, Board Members, and Committee Chairs may be found on the chapter website, www.moaaportland.org

RETURN ADDRESS:

**PORTLAND CHAPTER
MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION
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P.O. BOX 18206
PORTLAND, OR 97213**

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MOAA PORTLAND CHAPTER UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendars!

(NOTE: These meetings may be held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic!)

November 4, 2021	Board of Directors Meeting (Location: Colwood Golf Course)
November 6, 2021	Brunch Meeting with Guest Speaker (Location: The Aerie at Eagle Landing)
December 7, 2021	Dinner Meeting with Entertainment (Location: The Monarch Hotel)
January 2022	No scheduled chapter brunch or dinner meeting
February 3, 2022	Board of Directors Meeting (Location: Colwood Golf Center)
February 5, 2022	Brunch Meeting with Guest Speaker (Location: The Aerie at Eagle Landing)
March 5, 2022	Brunch Meeting with Guest Speaker (Location: The Aerie at Eagle Landing)

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

NOTE 2: All Board of Directors Meetings are held at **0945**—and **are open to all members!** Location is indicated.

NOTE 3: All articles for the **November 2021 Brass Bulletin Newsletter** must be submitted to the editor, **Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)**, at **maryjmayer@yahoo.com** by **5 October 2021**.