



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

**Portland, Oregon
Chapter**
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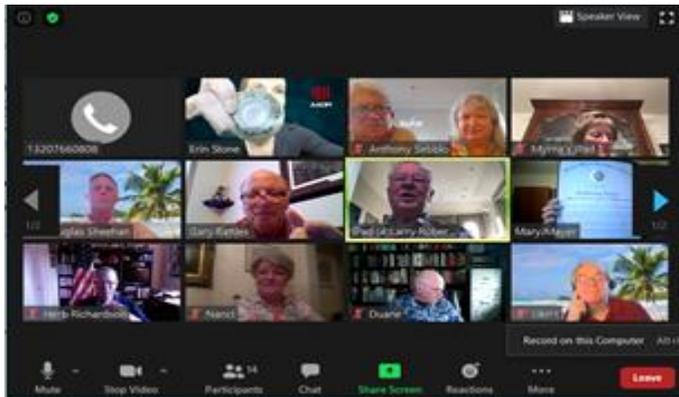
www.MOAAPortland.org

October 2020

PRESIDENT'S FORUM

By Colonel Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)

The 1 September 2020 MOAA Portland Chapter Meeting was unique in that it was the first time that the **MOAA Leadership Award** had ever been presented virtually by a member of the MOAA staff. On that date, our guest speaker, **CAPT Erin E. Stone, JAGC, USN (Ret)**, presented this prestigious award to our Former First Vice President and current Senior Director, **CAPT Lawrence W. (Larry) Roberts, USNR (Ret)** for his outstanding dedication and support of the chapter over a number of years in a myriad of leadership positions.



We are deeply indebted to Larry and grateful that he plans on continuing to serve as Chair, Fundraising and Scholarship Committees and as Co-Chair, Program and Legislative Committees. Larry is an excellent example of "Never Stop Serving." I need more volunteers like Larry to step up and serve as: **Air Force Rep & Coast Guard Rep** on the Chapter Board of Directors & **Co-Chair, Special Events Committee** to work with the ROTC at the University of Portland & JROTC at Reynolds & Oregon City High Schools! *(Cont. on page 2)*

***IN MEMORIAM:
May He Rest in Peace!***

Colonel Ivan J. Jones, USAF (Ret)

OCTOBER VIRTUAL CHAPTER MEETING:

Saturday, 3 October 2020

Starting Time: 0930

Virtual Meeting: via Zoom Video Teleconference

PROGRAM:

CAPT James Estramonte, USCG, Former Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Cutter *Munro* and Chief of Staff, PACAREA, who will speak on **"Mission and Accomplishments of the *Munro*."**

RESERVATIONS: To make your reservations, please contact **CDR Michael Seiwald, USN (Ret)** at **503-381-2620** or **mjseiwald@comcast.net** **NLT 1100 on Wednesday, 30 September 2020** so he can advise the Zoom Host to allow you access to the virtual meeting. *If Michael has not confirmed your reservation in two days, please follow up with him.* 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/87229060862?pwd=SjgvVjFLVjlKb2RFcGFYRVNBZDd5Zz09>

Meeting ID: 872 2906 0862 Passcode: 147794

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

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 872 2906 0862 Passcode: 147794

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)

PROGRAM: Turning to the **Program** for the October virtual dinner meeting, our guest speaker is **CAPT James Estramonte, USCG**, the former Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Cutter *Munro* and Chief of Staff to the Commander, Pacific Area. (See photo below.)



Captain Estramonte assumed the duties of Chief of Staff to the Commander, Pacific Area in May 2020. He is originally from Greenwich, NY and graduated from the Coast Guard Academy in 1993 with a Bachelor of Science in Management.

Following graduation, he was assigned aboard CGC *RUSH* in Honolulu, HI, as a Deck Watch Officer and Law Enforcement Boarding Officer. From there, he was assigned to the Seventh District Maritime Intelligence Center, in Miami, FL, where he worked as Watch Officer and Post-Seizure Collections Officer. In 1999, he served as Executive Officer of Tactical Law Enforcement Team South, Miami, FL, where he supervised 9 Law Enforcement Detachments and 2 Deployable Pursuit Boat teams.

CAPT Estramonte returned to sea as Operations Officer aboard CGC *CHASE*, San Diego, CA, where he was in charge of tactical and strategic deployment of the cutter and led a 60-person department. From there, he was selected to the Coast Guard's Financial Management Program and attended George Mason's School of Management, Fairfax, VA. Upon completion of his Master's in Business Administration, he was assigned to Coast Guard Headquarters, CG-832, the Financial Analysis division of the Assistant Commandant for Resources.

In 2009, CAPT Estramonte once again returned to sea, and once again returned to serve aboard CGC *RUSH*, this time as Executive Officer. In 2011, he was selected to serve as Commanding Officer of CGC *VIGILANT*, Cape Canaveral, FL.

In 2013, CAPT Estramonte returned to Washington, DC as the Military Assistant to the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Honorable Jeh C. Johnson. In 2015, he served a year as a Senior Military Fellow at the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) in Washington, DC. His next assignment, from 2016-2018, was at Coast Guard Headquarters as CG-83, the Chief of Office of Resource Management, where he oversaw the current year execution of the Coast Guard's budget.

CAPT Estramonte recently commanded Coast Guard Cutter *MUNRO*, Alameda, CA, from 2018-2020. He patrolled throughout the Pacific Area AOR, including Oceania, where *MUNRO* visited Guadalcanal, where Signalman 1/C Douglas Munro gave his life saving a group of Marines. *MUNRO* also patrolled off the coast of Central and South America, combatting illegal drug flow, notably making the Coast Guard's largest bust in 5 years aboard a Self-Propelled Semi-Submersible where Go-Pro video went viral. The seizure netted almost 8 tons of cocaine.

CAPT Estramonte's personal awards include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medals (five), the Coast Guard Commendation Medal (four), the 9-11 Medal and various service and unit awards.

CAPT Estramonte has been married to his wife, Luz, for 22 years and has two children, Marissa (16) and Bella (15). They reside in Bay Farm, Alameda, CA.

MEMBERSHIP CORNER

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

If you read my September *Brass Bulletin* article, you read of the potential virtual opportunities that are available as a resource to invite new potential members to join our chapter! Zoom, Adobe, and GoToMeetings are not just a temporary fix to our communications issue, but I believe they are the future. It is unlikely that our MOAA Portland Chapter will ever go back to the days of all in-person meetings or mass conventions. Therefore, it is important that we embrace this technology and make every effort in using it to gain new members.

The Membership Committee is preparing to implement this new idea as of the first of September in an attempt to recruit new members. We will be taking the MOAA National monthly national members listing and inviting them to our regularly scheduled meetings. We will offer them the standard chapter membership application and provide them with the “elevator speech” information, hoping that this will entice them to join.

Quite often, I am informed by potential new members that they are not ready to join at the present, so now we are going to provide potential members the interim opportunity to attend chapter meetings of their choice for the small donation of \$10 which will cover the expenses of pre-registration and system access. They will have a copy of our yearly meeting calendar with scheduled presentations from which to choose.

I would like every member to use this new incentive as an interim effort when permanent membership appears to be unattainable during your conversations.

One last topic I would like to address is the definite lack of participation in our

scheduled meetings. The old adage, “Out of sight, out of mind,” seems to be infecting our total membership. The new Zoom virtual platform being used at each meeting is easy to use and provides all of us the capability of keeping in touch. Out of the 114 current regular members, we are averaging less than 20 members per meeting. I have consistently heard the excuses of “The meeting is on the other side of town, and I don’t feel like traveling that far” or “I don’t like the food, and it is too expensive.”

Now, you no longer have an excuse! You can sit back in your favorite easy chair, eat whatever you wish and when, and wear sweatpants or knock-about clothes, if that is what you desire.

Using this pandemic as an excuse for not attending meetings or attempting to reach out for new potential members is not the attitude that I would expect from career military officers. I know times are tough trying to recruit members and promote the benefits of chapter membership, but I believe, if we give it our best effort, we can succeed! To paraphrase our MOAA tag line: “Never stop trying!”

TREASURER’S REPORT

By LTC Myrna Trull, USA (Ret)

As of **4 September 2020**, the MOAA Portland Chapter had overall assets of **\$26,391.98** and a total of **170** members. 114 regular members have paid dues through 2020, 8 Surviving Spouse members have paid dues for 2020. There are 44 Surviving Spouses who have not paid (but are not required). And, finally, we have four Honorary Members who are not required to pay dues. We have had a recent notification of the death of one member, **Colonel Ivan J. Jones, USAF (Ret)**. So, we are now at **169** members.

Reminder:

**The Chapter Board of Directors Meeting
will be held at 0900
on Thursday, 5 November 2020
Virtual Meeting via Zoom Video Teleconference**

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

By CAPT Larry Roberts, USNR (Ret)

Metro Transportation Payroll Tax Ballot Measure: In this one-Party state, it is seldom that we have the opportunity to vote on a new tax as individuals, especially a metro wide tax.

This November we have an opportunity to either stifle or enable a new, 0.75% payroll tax estimated to raise \$250 million annually in incremental tax dollars to be spent by Metro. The tax is positioned as a way to fund \$7 billion, yes billion, in transportation projects. However, the tax does not expire when the projects currently envisioned are completed. No, it continues forever. And who would bet that the 0.75% remains at that level forever? And the Metro definition of “transportation” is very broad.

The payroll tax is positioned as one that affects area businesses with 26 or more employees, supposedly large firms. But many, many restaurants, medical practices, law practices, retail stores, and so on have over 25 employees. This tax is going to be a hit, not only to Nike and Intel but to your favorite restaurant, start-up business with venture funding, and a broad assortment of other employers. How does this assist in luring business to the area?

Next, consider how the funds will be spent. The largest portion, \$3 billion and almost certainly more, is to build an 11-mile light rail line from downtown Portland to the Bridgeport Shopping Center.

Metro has a long history of overestimating ridership on its lines, over promising performance of those lines, and incurring overruns on the cost of building

them. Case in point, as outlined by the Cascade Policy Institute, is the Green line from downtown to Clackamas Town Center. It cost \$70 million or 14% more to build than had been estimated. Once built, it missed its early ridership target by 20% or 6,000 daily weekday rides, and ridership continued to decline from the initial 24,000 rides to 16,000 in August 2019. Additionally, the line planned to have departures every 10 minutes during peak periods, but currently operates at 15-minute intervals. Non-peak departures are now every 35 minutes versus 15 minutes promised. No wonder ridership is down.

By the way, both the Yellow line and WES have stories similar to the Green line. Why would we continue funding a long history of overspending, underperformance, and low ridership?

Another \$1 billion is budgeted to provide for subsidized transit passes for high school students and to accelerate replacing diesel and natural gas buses with battery powered units. Why is Metro undertaking to spend our money for subsidies that, if needed, could be handled by individual communities or counties? Also, a recent study concluded that the bus transformation is a very expensive solution, at least now.

The Oregonian in an August 23rd article predicted that Multnomah County would vote in favor of the proposal, that Clackamas would vote no, and that Washington County is in play. ***Do your homework and vote!***

“China Has Troubles Too:” The above headline preceded an August Op Ed in the *Wall Street Journal* written by George Shultz. A Distinguished Fellow at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, Shultz is one of only two individuals to hold four Cabinet posts. These included Labor Secretary, Director of the Office of Management & Budget, Treasury Secretary, and Secretary of State. He also chaired the Council of Economic Advisors. While age 99, Shultz remains active at the Hoover Institute and brings a wealth of relevant background and knowledge to bear on international relations subjects.

China has changed dramatically since Shultz was actively involved in geopolitical events. The abrogation of their commitment to carry out the mandates of the treaty enabling the turnover of Hong Kong to China, the claims of ownership of the pseudo-islands in the South

China Sea, the “divide and conquer” strategy with regard to their neighbors, the growth and modernization of their Armed Forces, the theft of intellectual property, and more, all create major issues for the United States and our allies.

However, Shultz postulates that China is a country that faces “significant emerging internal structural problems.” He concludes that “China’s next 20 years are unlikely to repeat its past 20.”

He notes that the past 20 years featured a rapid growth in China’s working age population. Going forward, however, the labor force is projected to lose some 174 million workers by mid-century. Economist Nicholas Eberstat holds that this dynamic will “bound the realm of the possible.”

Moreover, the population age 65 and older will at least double by 2050, comprising some 29% of the total. Many older citizens will need housing and/or other public assistance, necessitated by the reduction of extended families brought about by the one child policy.

Mr. Shultz notes that “a heretofore young, risk-taking China budgets for essentially no social safety net.” That likely will change over time, adding to budgetary constraints.

In contrast to China, Mr. Shultz expects continued population growth in the United States, driven largely by immigration, offsetting the aging population, and adding to our productivity

So much for demographics. As economic growth is constrained by a declining labor force, China has been loading up on debt, “often off-book.” For instance, State-owned China Railway took on nearly \$1 trillion in debt. Its interest payments alone exceed operating revenues, and only a few lines are profitable.

Overall, he recommends that leaders in both countries take steps to develop “specific off-ramps from conflict” and differentiate visions of the future from the those of the past.

WINE RAFFLE ADAPTS TO ZOOM!
By CAPT Larry Roberts, USNR (Ret)

To accommodate the Virtual Chapter meetings and keep up our tradition of charitable giving, we instituted a modified wine raffle—starting with the September meeting--and will continue and adapt our process until we resume face-to-face meetings, whenever that may be.

To make the raffle work more easily, we reduced the number of purchase options from three to one, a \$20 raffle ticket. This reduces the number of tickets sold, making the probability of success higher per participant. Indeed, if one combines the price of a meal plus just one \$5 ticket at a regular meeting, this is a cheaper alternative for all players.

We also expanded the reward of winning. Each winner (and there are three winners per meeting—except for the Christmas Party) will receive ***TWO*** bottles of wine. Additionally, a winner can specify whether red, white, or mixed wines—and can even request specific varietals such as Pinot Noir, Cabernet, Syrah et. all in reds and alternatives in whites. So, the return for dollar contributed is higher, and the selection is your choice, not mine (within limits).

Wines can be picked up at the next chapter in-person meeting or will be delivered before the end of 2020.

Any suggestions are solicited. We are open to change and want to do well for both our charitable giving and our members. Send suggestions or questions to **rocketlarry@icloud.com**.

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

SURVIVING SPOUSE CORNER

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

The **MOAA Portland Chapter Surviving Spouse luncheons** are still on hold until the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. We do hope that will be soon, and we will be able to meet in person. The date of our next luncheon would be is Tuesday, October 20, 2020. It is possible that would be enough time for a major improvement. Keep good thoughts!

Our Surviving Spouses and other chapter members and their spouses have demonstrated their caring and generosity over the years by donating to the Albertina Kerr Charities, Operation Homefront, and the Cell Phones for Soldiers Program. Now, we would like to bring to your attention a “new to us” program, suggested by Chapter Board member, **MAJ Shaun Benson, USAR (Ret)**. The program, **Operation Diaper Bag**, was started in 2009 by the Portland VA Health Care System Women’s Committee, to recognize women Veterans for their service. to our country. This was extended beyond VA healthcare to participate in the veteran’s celebration of the birth of a new family member.

Operation Diaper Bag care packages celebrate the birth of a new baby and are made possible through donations from Service Organizations, community organizations, and individual donors. These care packages are put together by the Portland VA Health Care Women’s voluntary Service staff and volunteers, then sent to the Veteran by mail or given in person when a birth notification is received from VA medical or social work staff.

Handmade items such as baby blankets, clothing, burping cloths, and the diaper bags themselves add an extra special

touch. In addition to handmade items, purchased items are added to the packages. Only new purchased items are given to Veterans and their families.

Operation Diaper Bag was started to recognize women Veterans; however, because of the positive impact the program has had, as well as the support from the community, Operation Diaper Bag has expanded to include our male Veterans and their families. Operation Diaper Bag provides a much-needed delivery of vital supplies for their newborns. For more information and instructions to donate, check out the following website: www.portland.va.gov or call Operation Diaper Bag Voluntary Services at **503-273-5042**.

For now, keep saving baby diapers and wipes for **Operation Homefront** and old cell phones for the **Cell Phones for Soldiers Program**. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact me at: budjean@aol.com

A MUST READ DURING THESE CHALLENGING TIMES!

By CAPT Tony Sebbio, MSC, USN (Ret)

With COVID-19 spreading through the world, John M. Barry’s book, [The Great Influenza](#), is a must read. Few remain alive to recall the terror of 24 weeks in 1918– 1919, when a particularly aggressive strain of influenza A virus killed anywhere from 50–100 million people globally. Out of a United States population of only 105 million, approximately 675,000 people died. In his account, Mr. Barry revisits what should be an unforgettable lesson from history. In a masterful compilation of events, letters, articles, and narratives past and present, he not only describes the advent and course of the pandemic, but more important, wraps these events in the context of societal and cultural factors which both facilitated the pandemic’s emergence, and ultimately led to discovery of its causative agent. Mr. Barry presents the concept of two wars being waged in 1918: The Great War between nations, and the war between the scientists of the day and this virus. The wars are inextricably linked. His description of events is compiled as a caution to today’s public health practitioners and policy-makers, certainly in terms of rising to meet an infectious disease challenge of unprecedented proportions, but also in terms of emphasizing the responsibilities of our public health leadership in education and communication. To

put the scientific war on the virus in context, Mr. Barry begins by describing the changes in medicine in the U.S. from the turn of the 20th century, which by today's standards was still in the Dark Ages. Treatments for illness often caused greater morbidity and mortality than the illness itself. Impetus for change in the U.S. arrived with the trust left by Johns Hopkins in 1873 for the purpose of founding a new university and hospital. In his opinion, the ultimate effect of "the Hopkins," as it was then called, was to spur the medical sciences in the U.S. to new heights with the revolutionary training of its students and by creating scientific competition. As science in America was finally making strides, the threat of World War I loomed and eventually exploded into American life. The author cites the war as an integral part of the spread of influenza, describing two significant effects of the war in support of his theory. First, it directly facilitated the spread of the 1918 influenza. In January of 1918 in Haskell County, Kansas, the county physician noted an unusual outbreak of a severe and lethal influenza which struck the young and healthy more than the typical influenza victims. He notified public health officials about this outbreak, but as the population of this region was sparse, the epidemic eventually waned. There were just a handful of soldiers on leave in Haskell County from their training facility of Camp Funston, home to 56,000 recruits. During the record-cold winter of 1918, soldiers were being crowded into barracks for warmth. The high attack rate of this particular influenza strain, combined with the poor conditions at camp, would have easily facilitated the spread of influenza from just one or two soldiers. Mr. Barry convincingly describes the movement of influenza, which can be tracked from this rural area of Kansas to Camp Funston, to other military camps as the movement of troops ensued, to France and the rest of Europe. Indeed, one could argue, as he suggests,

that had it not been for the war, the epidemic may have ended in Haskell County. The war's second effect, which Barry highlights, was that by the spring of 1918, President Woodrow Wilson would stop at virtually nothing to achieve victory, including limiting vital information to the public—again facilitating continuation of the epidemic. As the virus spread from military camps to civilians, even as America's largest cities fell paralyzed by fear and death, President Wilson remained unmoved from his need to uphold his war plans, continuing to move newly trained soldiers to the fronts and recruiting and training young men. The press was censored, as were free speech and "un-American activities." The government's need to preserve morale, to maintain support and funding for the war, depended on keeping the public ignorant of the epidemic's impact within the military. Censorship was so pervasive that even local newspapers minimized the reports of morbidity and mortality. The full potential of this influenza outbreak was not fully recognized until it hit Camp Devens, near Boston, where soldiers, nurses, and doctors fell ill, were cyanotic hours later, and began dying at rates upwards of 100 per day. By this time, despite intense and ferocious efforts of America's best scientific and medical minds, the epidemic would be unstoppable. Panic was inevitable. Armed with the ammunition of new scientific discovery, virologists, bacteriologists, epidemiologists, and clinicians used the scientific method to the best of their abilities. They isolated bacteria associated with influenza and developed a vaccine against pneumococcus.

Mr. Barry ends his account of the epidemic on a final note of caution: the devastation in 1918–1919 was due to public terror and ignorance as much as the unpredictable nature of the virus and the wartime environment. *"The leadership of public health officials lies not only in managing health and disease, but in managing society's perceptions and understanding of health and disease. So, the final lesson of 1918, a simple one, yet one most difficult to execute, is that those who occupy positions of authority must lessen the panic that can alienate society. Society cannot function if it is every man for himself. By definition, civilization cannot survive that. Those in authority must retain the public trust. The way to do that is to distort nothing, to put the best face on nothing, to try and manipulate no one. Lincoln said that first, and best. A leader must make whatever horror exist concrete. Only then will people be able to break it apart."*

RETURN ADDRESS:

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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 5, 2020	Board of Directors Meeting (Location: Colwood Golf Course)
November 7, 2020	Brunch Meeting with Guest Speaker (Location: Hayden's Lakefront Grill)
December 1, 2020	Dinner Meeting with Entertainment (Location: The Monarch Hotel)
January 2021	No scheduled chapter brunch or dinner meeting
February 4, 2021	Board of Directors Meeting (Location: Colwood Golf Center)
February 6, 2021	Brunch Meeting with Guest Speaker (Location: Hayden's Lakefront Grill)
March 6, 2021	Brunch Meeting with Guest Speaker (Location: Hayden's Lakefront Grill)

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 2020 Brass Bulletin Newsletter** must be submitted to the editor, **Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)**, at **maryjmayer@yahoo.com** by **5 October 2020**.