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UPPER POTOMAC CHAPTER

Recipient of the 2018 MOAA 5 Star Level of Excellence Award

October 3, 2020

Chapter Officers

President

LtCol Hugh M. McIlroy, Jr, USMC, Ret.

1st Vice President

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 CPT Wilmer K. Benson, USA, Ret.
 Col Lawra Lee, USAF, Ret
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MD-CAPT Guy F. Everhart, USN, Ret.

WV-Vacant

Personal Affairs Officer

Mrs. Barbara L. Bodie

Program Chair

Vacant

Surviving Spouse Liaison

Mrs. Jayne Bongard

Newsletter Editor

COL Gerard Schumeyer, USA, Ret.

...from the President



I sincerely hope you are all well and staying safe. I am concerned that the

approaching Flu season will greatly exacerbate our risk of a COVID-19 infection. Please make sure you get your flu vaccine, wear a mask, wash your hands often, avoid crowds and indoor gatherings and always use social distancing. Also, please review the research that indicates the COVID-19 virus may linger in the air as an aerosol. Please stay safe.

The chapter conducted our first Military Trivia Happy Hour with Zoom on 18 September. Jayne Bongard and John Derr did a wonderful job preparing the military trivia questions. Attendees had fun, enjoyed the social interaction, and learned a lot. Four winners were awarded gift cards worth

\$25 from Starbucks, Dunkin Donuts, Lowe's, and

Walmart. We are planning another Zoom Happy Hour in early November.

As you know we have cancelled the 17 October luncheon because of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we will conduct a web-based meeting using ZoomPro at 1430 on 21 October and conduct elections of our 2021-2022 Officer/Director slate using mail-in ballots. Please see the information on page 9 about this meeting and mail-in voting in this Newsletter.

I take pleasure in publicly applauding our Nominating Committee for their efforts to find candidates for our 2021-2022 Officer/Director slate. Col Denis Garcia chaired the committee that included LCDR John Aulls, LTC Dennis Brekhus, CWO3 Derek Lane and LT Keith Midberry. We deeply appreciate the efforts of the Committee.

We are still planning to hold our annual Holiday Luncheon in December at Musket Ridge Golf Club, but

we are still not sure how the COVID-19 pandemic will affect our plans. We will continue to monitor the situation through the fall and take whatever steps are necessary to protect the membership from unnecessary risk.

Never Stop Serving and STAY SAFE

HMcl

October In-Person Annual Meeting/Luncheon Cancelled

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the extreme risk that the virus presents to our age group, we have cancelled our **in-person** Annual Business Meeting. This year our Annual Business Meeting is an especially important one because we must conduct elections for our officers and directors for the 2021-2022 term. Therefore, we will conduct a **web-based meeting using ZoomPro at 1430 on 21 October and conduct elections of our 2021-2022 Officer/Director slate using mail-in ballots.** Please see the information on this meeting and mail-in voting on page 9 of the newsletter.

TAPS



Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Robert Treece, USA, Ret, 78, of Frederick, MD passed away on August 26, 2020 after a long battle with Parkinson's Disease. He and his wife, Bobbie, were loyal members of the Chapter since February 2011.



Colonel Peter "Pete" Mekkelson, USA, Ret, 81, of Falling Waters, WV passed away on August 24, 2020. He had a 28-year career in the Army Medical Service Corps, He and his wife, Sue, were loyal members of the Chapter since December 2012. Sue recently joined our Chapter as a Surviving Spouse member.



October

- 1- Mary Lee Schumeyer
- 5-Denis Garcia
- 10-Tom Conlon
- 14-Jayne Bongard
- 15-Nettie Arm
- 19-Sandra Reynold
- 26-John Aulls
- 30-Jane Hildebrandt

November

- 3-Gerald Bass
- 5-Diane Derr
- 8-Chip Chipley
- 9-June Wagner
- 10- Barbara Bodie
- 18-Paul Hildebrandt
- 23-Fred Thornton
- 27-Clyde Tate
- 29-Timothy Guck
- 30-Bob Fenimore



**NOAA
October 3, 1970**



October

17

Hugh & Gerry McIlroy

19

Bill & Barbara Prescott

Dave & Marguerite Kaye

November

21

Bob & Lynne Sarvaideo

28

Jim & Joanne Spiller

MOAA Legislative Action Center

Make sure you visit the MOAA Legislative Action Center at the MOAA web site (www.moaa.org) to keep abreast of important issues. Contact your representative or send an email from the Take Action Center to have your voice heard.



STAY HEALTHY

New Members

Welcome to LtCol Tom Sorokas, USAF, Ret from Frederick, MD, and Sue Mekkelson (Widow of COL Pete Mekkelson, USA, Ret) from Falling Waters, WV.

Departments of Veterans Affairs Links

Here are the links to the State Veterans Affairs Departments. If interested, you can sign up for their newsletters and announcements. This is especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic to make sure you are kept current on critical news.

<https://veterans.maryland.gov/>

<https://www.dmva.pa.gov>

<https://veterans.wv.gov/>

Save the Date!!!

Saturday, 26 June, 2021 will be the date for the Chapter's 50th Anniversary Celebration. Guy Everhart will Chair the Event Committee. If you wish to help Guy, contact him at 301-471-4962 or gfeverhart@gmail.com.

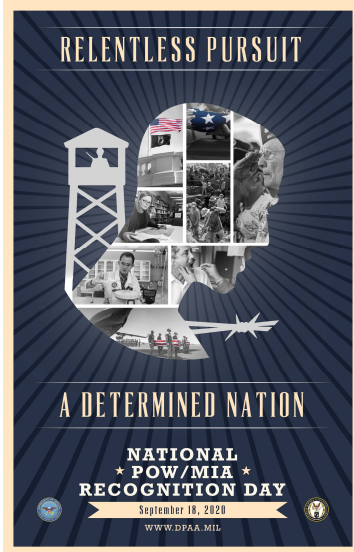
Donations to the Chapter's COVID-19 Support Initiative are Tax Deductible

The CARES Act allows taxpayers to deduct \$300 in contributions to nonprofits on the 2020 tax return if the standard deduction is used. Because the Chapter donated to MOAA's COVID-19 Relief Fund, those members who donated to the Chapter's COVID-19 Support initiative may claim this charitable deduction. If a member wants to claim their contribution please send a request to Hugh McIlroy. Hugh has a record of all donations and will submit the required information to MOAA. MOAA will then provide an acknowledgement letter as a receipt for the donation. Donations of less than \$250 can use the cancelled check as proof. For donations of \$250 or more requires a statement from the charity (MOAA).



**US Navy,
October 13, 1775**

**National POW/MIA
Recognition Day was Held
on
September 18, 2020**



National POW/MIA Recognition Day was established in 1979 through a proclamation signed by President Jimmy Carter. Since then, each subsequent president has issued an annual proclamation commemorating the third Friday in September as National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

**Jane Freeland Moving to
Florida**

I received a letter from Jane Freeland's daughter, Joan, that Jane moved to Florida in early September to live with her other daughter, Jean Hawkins. Jane is the widow of Col John Freeland, USAF, Ret. John and Jane

were long time active members of our Chapter. Jane had been living at Homewood, and with the COVID-19 restrictions, her quality of life had not been the best. According to her family, this move to Florida will provide her with the care she deserves and needs in this season of her life. Here is Jane's contact information. I am sure she would love to hear from our members.

Mrs. Jane Beaver-Freeland
c/o Jean Hawkins
15992 Cutters Court
Fort Myers, FL 33908
Cell: 301-606-5250

Directory Changes

ADD:

LTC Thomas P. Sorokas, USAF,
Ret

Mrs. Sue Mekkelson

MOAA Action Center

These important issues require your immediate attention. Visit the MOAA Action Center <https://takeaction.moaa.org/moaa> to send your elected officials a MOAA-suggested message or call your elected representatives.

-Urge Your Elected Officials to Support Legislation to Stop Cuts to Military Medicine

-Pass a Budget, on Time, to Avoid Damage Caused By Continuing Resolutions

-Ask Your Lawmaker to Help Expand Benefits for Tens of Thousands of Vietnam Veterans

COLA Watch

The August 2020 CPI is 253.597, 1.4 percent above the FY 2020 COLA baseline.

The Consumer Price Index for September is scheduled to be released Oct. 13. The CPI baseline for FY 2020 is 250.200.

The calculation is made by comparing the average CPI from July through September of the current fiscal year to the average for the same months of the year prior. Remember, active duty pay raises are calculated differently.

2020 Events/Program Schedule

October 21- Chapter Annual Meeting/Election of Board and Officers for 2021-2022, Web-based via Zoom, 2:30 pm

November 21- UPC Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m., via Zoom (Time subject to change)

December 19- Holiday luncheon, Musket Ridge Golf Club, Myersville, MD

Now and Always
We'll be There.

★

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For 1st Time in 3 Decades, Military Families and Retirees Are Getting Revamped IDs

The military is ditching flimsy laminated paper-based ID cards for military retirees and dependents for an all-new card system: The Next Generation Uniform Services Identification Card.

According to a Defense Department announcement, the cards, which represent the first ID update for these military communities since 1993, will be more durable and more closely resemble the Common Access Cards, or CACs, used by active-duty troops and DoD civilians. The new USID cards are enhanced with an updated design and security features to deter counterfeiting and fraud.

The new IDs are already in circulation: the military quietly began issuing them to retirees, reservists and dependent military family members July 31 at a few ID card facilities. Typically, cards must be applied for, issued and updated in person up to 30 days before the expiration date at one of the ID card offices on military facilities worldwide. Cards that do not expire, such as those held by retirees over 65, do not need to be renewed. But in an effort to reduce crowds at ID card facilities during the pandemic, officials in April issued guidance allowing dependents and retirees to continue to use cards that expired this year to access both military bases and benefits through the end of September.

New guidelines issued this month bump that expiration extension into next year. Now, holders of those cards will be able to use them for benefits such as medical care through June 30, 2021, and for base access through March 2021.

To date, only about 20 Real-Time Automated Personnel Identification Card System (RAPIDS) sites now offer the new cards; other sites await equipment upgrades in order to make them. All DoD USID card facilities are set to offer the IDs by December 2020, according to the release. The complete transition to new USID cards is targeted for January 2026.

DoD is further developing the ID card process, Sorrento said in the release, and eyeing changes such as a mail-in ID process with online vetting, eliminating the requirement to apply in person at a RAPIDS site.

MOAA Guidance on Partisan Political Activities

Partisan Political Activities

As organizations exempt from federal taxation under Sec. 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code, MOAA and its affiliates must take care to avoid engaging in partisan political activities. Under IRS rules, we are prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

Candidates for Public Office

A candidate for public office is an individual who offers himself or herself, or is proposed by others, as a contestant for an elective public office, whether such office is national, state, or local, and includes incumbent candidates. The prohibition also extends beyond declared candidates and may apply to efforts to recruit an individual to run for office or advance exploratory activities. The prohibition also applies to advocating for the platform of one political party over another.

Prohibited Activities

Activities which constitute participation or intervention in a political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate include, but are not limited to, the publication or distribution of written or printed statements or the making of oral statements on behalf of or in opposition to such a candidate. It is clear that the prohibition on partisan political activity prohibits such outright actions such as posting a “Vote for Biden” or “Vote for Trump” on the organization’s website, or “Support Republican Candidates” or “Vote Democratic.” In addition to these obvious examples, the prohibition goes well beyond direct expressions of support. In determining whether an organization is engaged in unlawful partisan political activities, the IRS applies a “facts and circumstances” test. The IRS looks not only to the expressed language, but to external factors, such as the communication’s timing, its targeted audience, and how the message relates to public policy positions that distinguish a candidate in a campaign.

Consequences for Violations

The consequences to an organization that violates the prohibition on partisan political activity can be severe including the loss of its tax exempt status and the imposition of certain excise taxes. For public charities, like The MOAA Foundation and the MOAA Scholarship Fund, the IRS can disallow tax deductions for charitable contributions. In addition, for an organization whose mission involves advocacy on key military community issues, MOAA must seek support from elected representatives from both parties. Engaging in partisan political activities on behalf of one party or candidate would seriously undermine MOAA’s ability to achieve the bipartisan consensus on key issues essential to achieving its legislative objectives.

Personal Opinions

As individuals, members and leaders of MOAA and MOAA’s affiliates are not prohibited from engaging in partisan political activities so long as they do so in way that makes it clear they are acting for themselves and do not appear to be speaking on behalf of MOAA or its affiliates. For example, it is permissible for an individual to express his or her personal preference in support of or in opposition to a candidate or political party. And they may do so publicly. However, when expressing their personal opinions or preferences, they may not make reference to their MOAA position, use MOAA communications channels, use MOAA letterhead or newsletters, identify themselves as MOAA leaders, or imply that MOAA or its members share their beliefs.

Leadership Responsibilities

Those in leadership positions have a special responsibility to separate their personal political opinions from statements that are or can be attributed to MOAA or its affiliates. For example, it is improper for a chapter leader to use the chapter’s newsletter to advance the leader’s personal political beliefs. This goes beyond statements expressly advocating for a specific candidate or party by name. Statements that incorporate campaign messaging, campaign slogans, and political positions identified with a particular candidate or party are also prohibited. No MOAA leader is authorized to use MOAA’s or an affiliate’s resources to communicate their personal political beliefs. This is an outright violation of the leader’s fiduciary duty to the organization and a serious leadership and ethical failure.

Divisive Social Issues

We are all aware of the divisive nature of the debate over today’s leading social issues – protesting during the national anthem at sporting events, racial justice, public protests, and the conduct of law enforcement officers. These are issues over which many Americans have deeply held, but differing, personal beliefs. This is also true within the military community among the ranks of active duty and retired officers and within MOAA itself. MOAA leaders have an obligation to keep this in mind when communicating on behalf of MOAA or its affiliates. Suggesting that MOAA only supports one side of a deeply divisive issue sends a message to those with a different belief that MOAA is not for them. Officers today have grown up in a military culture that is very different than the past. Many are accepting of

attitudes and views that were not mainstream when many of us were in uniform. If MOAA is going to connect with the newest generation of uniformed officers, it needs to be clear that those with strong views on racial and social justice imperatives are just as welcome as those who adhere to more traditional expressions of patriotism and officership.
@MOAA, 2020

Expanded Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers

To support those who support our Veterans, VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers is expanding in October to include: eligible WWII, Korean, and Vietnam Veterans, eligible Veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 70% or higher, and access to financial planning and legal services. And all Caregivers have access to many supportive resources, such as workshops, a Support Line, and Peer Support Mentoring. Apply after the official launch of the expanded Program. Stay tuned for a VA announcement in mid-September.

What to Expect from a Contact tracing Call

If you've been in close contact with someone who tested positive for COVID-19, you may be contacted by a contact tracer or public health worker from your state or local health department in an effort to help slow the spread of the disease. Here is what to know if you get a call:

- **A contact tracer may call** to let you know you may have been exposed to someone with COVID-19. All information you share with a contact tracer, like who you've been in contact with and your recent whereabouts, is confidential.
- **You may be asked to self-quarantine for 14 days.** This means staying home, monitoring your health, and maintaining social distance from others always.
- **You may be asked to monitor your health and watch for symptoms of COVID-19.** Notify your doctor if you develop symptoms and seek medical care if your symptoms worsen or become severe.

Be aware of scammers pretending to be COVID-19 contact tracers. Legitimate contact tracers will never ask for your Medicare Number or financial information. If someone calls and asks for personal information, like your Medicare Number, **hang up and report it to us at 1-800-MEDICARE.**

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resources

- **Coronavirus.gov** <https://www.coronavirus.gov>
- **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus Website** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus2019-ncov//index.html>
- **CDC Advice for Higher-Risk Individuals** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/>
- **VA Coronavirus Website** <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/n-coronavirus/>
- **TRICARE Coronavirus Information** <https://www.tricare.mil/coronavirus>
- **DoD Coronavirus Response Website** <https://www.defense.gov/Explore/Spotlight/Coronavirus/>
- **Health.mil Coronavirus Information** <https://health.mil/Military-Health-Topics/Combat-Support/Public-Health/Coronavirus>

Chapter Annual Business Meeting and Mail-in Voting

The chapter must conduct elections for the Officer/Director slate for the 2021-2022 term. We normally do this during our Annual Business Meeting/Luncheon in October. However, COVID-19 precautions prevent us from meeting in this fashion. The Board of Directors has decided to conduct the Annual Business Meeting via the internet using ZoomPro software and conduct the election using mail-in ballots similar to the mail-in ballots we probably all get from places like USAA. The chapter secretary will send out mail-in ballots by email and by letter mail through the Postal Service for those without an email address. The only requirement for a member to vote would be to return the mail-in ballot or letter and

- 1) Concur with the slate in its entirety; or
- 2) Concur with exceptions.

This process will provide every regular member an opportunity to vote and significantly reinforce the legitimacy of our election.

The Officer/Director slate for the 2021-2022 term is as follows:

For President:	CAPT Guy Everhart, USN, Ret.
For 1 st Vice President:	LTC John Bongard, USA, Ret.
For 2 nd Vice President	MAJ John Derr, USA, Ret.
For Secretary	CDR Regie Barbour, USN, Ret.
For Treasurer	LtCol Hugh McIlroy, USMC, Ret.
For Past President/Director	COL Doug Reichard, USA, Ret.
For Director	CPT Bill Benson, USA, Ret.
For Director	CDR Jeff Bodie, USN, Ret.
For Director	LtCol Robert Fenimore, USAF, Ret.
For Director	CAPT Ralph France, USN, Ret.
For Director	Col Lawra Lee, USAF, Ret.

Please watch for the email or letter with the ballot for this election and return your ballot to Gerry McIlroy by 17 October. Gerry's email is germac@gmail.com. Her telephone is 717 785-1059.

Arlington Announces Limited Reopening to General Public for Gravesite Visits

Members of the general public are allowed to visit graves at Arlington National Cemetery from 8 a.m. to noon as of Sept. 9, part of a relaxing of coronavirus-related regulations that had limited access to family pass holders. Face coverings are mandatory for all visitors and social distancing is "expected," per a news release announcing the new rules. Sites such as the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Arlington House, and the Welcome Center remain closed to visitors. Family pass holders can continue to access the grounds from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to visit a loved one's grave. Restrictions on funeral attendance remain in place, with less than 50 gatherers permitted. Full, updated funeral guidance is available at the cemetery's website.

VA-operated national cemeteries remain open to the public and resumed conducting committal services in June. Ceremony rules, including limits on attendees, vary by location; families and funeral home personnel are encouraged to contact local cemeteries for guidance.

Facebook pages for both Arlington National Cemetery and the VA's National Cemetery Administration provide detailed updates, links, and contact information.