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UPPER POTOMAC CHAPTER

Recipient of the 2018 MOAA 5 Star Level of Excellence Award

January 13, 2020

Chapter Officers

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Surviving Spouse Liaison

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Newsletter Editor

COL Gerard Schumeyer, USA, Ret.

...from the President



Our annual Holiday Luncheon at the Holly Hills Country Club was **OUTSTANDING**. Holly Hills provided a

wonderful setting, the food and service were superb, and we all enjoyed the Clustered Spires Chorus, especially how they made us a part of the "Twelve Days of Christmas". I had the honor of presenting our 5 Star Level of Excellence Award to the Chapter and with the assistance of Board members to pin the award to our colors.

As we start a new year and a new decade, I am committed to working hard to meet every challenge and continue our chapter's outstanding support of the active force, veterans, retirees and surviving spouses. I am very proud of what we have accomplished, and I am convinced we can do even more. We must make our

collective voice heard and increase the intensity of that voice by increasing our numbers. We will continue to actively advocate for the goals set forth by MOAA and the Maryland Council and enjoy the camaraderie, fellowship and friendship of our members and pride in what we and MOAA have helped to accomplish. We were instrumental in finally eliminating the Widow's Tax and making significant progress towards the subtraction of military retired pay from Maryland state income taxes. These are tremendous achievements for which we should be justly proud.

We are a great team. We can do even more by increasing our numbers, recruiting new members to help our voice be heard and continue the work we have started. I encourage everyone to recruit at least one new member this year. That alone will be of great benefit to our chapter, MOAA and the terrific people we support.

Stay safe, respect the weather and I hope to see you at our 15 February luncheon at Nick's Airport Inn.

Never Stop Serving

HMCI

February Meeting and Luncheon

Join us on **Saturday, February 15, 11:30 a.m.** at Nick's Airport Inn, Hagerstown, MD for our first business meeting of the New Year. Hugh McIlroy will bring you up-to-date on our plans for 2020. CAPT Ralph France, II, USN, Ret., Chapter Board member, will be our guest speaker and he will talk to us about the U.S. Naval Academy admissions process.

Reservations are due NLT Saturday, February 8, 2020.

A reservation form is provided at the end of the newsletter.

New Member

Welcome to COL Stephanie Vaughn, USA, Ret. and her husband James from Frederick, MD

2020 Annual Dues

This is the Last Call for 2020

dues. If you have not done so, you **must** pay your annual dues NLT January 31 or you will be dropped from the rolls. Dues are \$20/year. Our Lifetime Membership option is \$150. If you are a new member who joined after July 2019, you will be credited with 2020 dues. Also, any member who recruited a new member for 2019 will receive a credit for 2020. **Please send your dues payment to Hugh McIlroy, 13121 Redbud Court, Waynesboro, PA 17268.**

Make out your check to the Upper Potomac Chapter. If you have any questions about your due's status, contact Jerry Schumeyer, 301-696-1191, theschumeyers@comcast.net

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Happy Valentine's Day
February 14



February

- 2-Jimmie Spiller
- 2-Carol Baker
- 9-Dave Richards
- 11-Sue Mekkelson
- 12-Jerry Schumeyer
- 14-Luke Brennecke
- 15-Norma Bishop
- 16-Doug Reichard
- 21-Pete Mekkelson
- 27-Derek Lane
- 28-Joan Malloy

March

- 2-Duane Spurrier
- 3-Kathleen Brekhus
- 3-Joanne Spiller
- 4-Harriet Click
- 4-Don Quail
- 8-Loretta Mulcahey
- 12-Barbara Brennecke
- 12-Charlene Denton
- 13-Darlene Aulls
- 19-Roger Bennett
- 21-Joan Muniz
- 23-Dennis Brekhus
- 24-Peggy Remsberg
- 25-Lawra Lee
- 27-Dick King

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

March

4

Guy & Suzanne Everhart

26

Bob & Sandra Reynold

31

Terry & Diane McCune

In Memoriam



Kathryn W. "Kathy" Fenimore, 72, of Walkersville, passed away on Thursday, November 21, 2019. She was the wife of Bob Fenimore.



Ruth Esther (Wiles) Chipley, 83, of Frederick, Maryland, passed away on December 28, 2019, at Homewood at Frederick. She was the wife of Chip Chipley Jr.



Doug Reichard presents a MOAA Certificate of Appreciation to members of the Will Group, a Merrill Lynch Wealth Management firm, for their sponsorship of the UPC Golf Scramble.



Doug Reichard presents the Golf Scramble proceeds of \$5,500 to Mr. Tyler Davis, Fisher House Bethesda.

MOAA Levels of Excellence Award

The submission deadline for the CY 2019 MOAA Chapter Excellence Award nomination package is NLT 1 May 2020. The Chapter will submit a

nomination package again this year. Jerry Schumeyer will draft the input and he will need your help in capturing information about your involvement as a member of MOAA or the Upper Potomac Chapter in **CY 2019** events or activities that demonstrate support of our nation, our military and the local community. While we are looking specifically for a connection to MOAA or the Chapter, we would also like to know your involvement in volunteer and community activities, particularly those supporting military and veterans and their families. In previous submissions, we included: Veterans Day presentations at local high schools or ceremonies; hospital visits to our wounded warriors; veteran center visits; liaison with elected representatives; volunteer activities in the communities. If you have input, please provide the information to Jerry Schumeyer, **NLT 1 March 2020** so he can consider your participation in the submission.

Cell Phones for Soldiers

Don't forget about our Cell Phones for Soldiers project. You can provide your old phones to Jerry Schumeyer and he will take care of them for you. If you are attending our February

function you can give your old phone to Jerry, there.

2019 Donations to the MOAA Heritage Society & the MOAA Scholarship Fund

Thanks to your generosity, the Chapter donated \$125 to the MOAA Heritage Society as part of our multi-year support of MOAA Foundation-supported programs; for example, the MOAA Military Family Initiative. The MOAA Military Family Initiative is the MOAA program that provides grants to chapters for community outreach programs. The IRS Tax Assistance Program that Bob Fenimore led is an example of the outreach programs the MOAA Military Family Initiative supports.

We also donated \$400 to the MOAA Scholarship Fund. We collected \$200 from the membership so the chapter matched that donation with \$200. The MOAA Scholarship Fund provides educational assistance benefits to children of military families.

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.

Departments of Veterans Affairs Links

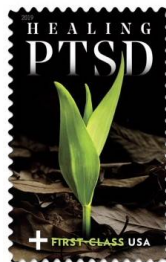
Here are the links to the State Veterans Affairs Departments. If interested, you can sign up for their newsletters and announcements.

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

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

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

Special USPS Postage Stamp



A new United States Postal Service stamp was issued early in December to raise awareness of

PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) as well as raise funds for research and education at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The PTSD Center is based in White River Junction, VT, at the local VA Medical Center; it includes seven locations around the country that have the goal of studying and treating PTSD. The new first class "semipostal" stamp costs 65

cents (instead of 55 cents), with 10 cents going directly to research and education. It features a green plant sprouting from ground covered with fallen leaves. According to the U.S. Postal Service, "it is intended to symbolize the PTSD healing process." Stamps are available at local Post Offices.

Directory Change

ADD:

COL Stephanie Vaughn,
USA, Ret
James
MOAA# 01821898 Life

**Ground Hog Day
February 2, 2020**



**April Membership Meeting/
Luncheon
April 18, 2020**

Following our February function our next event will be held on April 18 at a venue to be determined. Details and venue will be in the March newsletter

**Recruit a new member in
2020**

2020 Events/Program Schedule

February 15- Membership meeting/luncheon, 1130 am (Nick's Airport Inn, Hagerstown, MD)

March 14- Maryland Council of Chapters Meeting, O'Laughlin's, Arnold, MD

March 21- UPC Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m., Ft. Detrick Chapel, Rm 5, Bldg. 1776 Ditto Road, Ft. Detrick

April 18- Membership meeting/luncheon, 1130 am, (Venue to be determined)

May 23- UPC Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m., Ft. Detrick Chapel, Rm 5, Bldg. 1776 Ditto Road, Ft. Detrick

June 13 - Maryland Council of Chapters Meeting, O'Laughlin's, Arnold, MD

June 27- Membership meeting/luncheon (Venue to be determined)

July 25- UPC Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m., Ft. Detrick Chapel, Rm 5, Bldg. 1776 Ditto Road, Ft. Detrick

August 15-Annual Picnic, Bert & Emma Thornton's Shoot Proof Farm, Jefferson, MD

September 26- UPC Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m., Ft. Detrick Chapel, Rm 5, Bldg. 1776 Ditto Road, Ft. Detrick

October 17- Membership meeting/luncheon (Venue to be determined)

November 21- UPC Board Meeting, 9:30 a.m., Ft. Detrick Chapel, Rm 5, Bldg. 1776 Ditto Road, Ft. Detrick

December 19- Holiday luncheon (Venue to be determined)

Now and Always
We'll be There.

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erin@dawnlong.com

Holiday Luncheon 2019



Chapter President and Board members presenting the MOAA Excellence Award to the membership



Bill Benson pins the MOAA Excellence Award medallion on the UPC flag.



Dave & Lori Burch and Chip Chipley



Clustered Spires Chorus entertains



Joe Shader shares recollections of Pearl Harbor



Denis & Wendy Garcia

UPDATE FOR SPOUSES AND SURVIVING SPOUSES

(Naomi M. Kaplan, Spouse and Surviving Spouse Liaison, MOAA Maryland Council of Chapters)

November/December 2019

1. Update on the SBP-DIC Offset (Widows Tax). The bipartisan 2020 NDAA, as approved, will phase out the so-called Widows Tax over a period of three years. The new law will have a positive effect on about 65,000 surviving spouses, ending an inequitable law that has been in existence for 40 years. In three scheduled steps through January of 2023, surviving spouses will regain the up to \$12,000 per year that they have been forfeiting all these years! In essence, this is a three-year rollout with a delayed start. The first change will occur in January of 2021, when recipients of SBP (Survivor Benefit Plan) payments will commence receiving one-third of the total offset amount. In 2022 the amount will be raised to two-thirds. Finally, on January 1, 2023, survivors will start receiving their full SBP monthly payments in addition to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC).

2. Update on DoD Plan to Repurpose 18,000 Military Medical Positions. The NDAA requires that the Department of Defense study and evaluate the impact of cutting so many medical spaces (i.e., 20% of the force structure) before taking action on this. We'll have to wait to see if DoD is able to justify (through its mandatory study) anything close to such a drastic cut in medical personnel. The NDAA has no direct impact on another earlier Administration proposal to cut 2,600 Commissioned Corps spaces in the U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS), approximately 1/3 of the Commissioned Corps.

3. The Military Pay Raise for CY 2020. There will be a 3.1% pay raise for currently serving personnel. That was what the Administration had proposed, and the Congress now concurs.

4. Continuing to Fight for Other Federal Issues. The 2020 NDAA accomplishes quite a lot, but some important matters remain unresolved for future efforts. The NDAA addressed the Widows Tax, medical billets, standardizing active duty records and AD credits toward retirement for Guard and Reserve members, a National Guard suicide prevention pilot program, a "robust tenant bill of rights and responsibilities" (according to MOAA) to correct serious deficiencies in military housing (in particular, poorly maintained housing at or near military installations that is operated by contractors), an increase in reimbursement for licenses for military spouses (to \$1,000), a closer look at childcare centers on installations, and matters related for the redress of medical malpractice with the involvement of military judges. Here's a partial list of what we'll all need to work on (at the Federal level) in 2020:

a. Obtaining approval by Congress for the concurrent payment of retirement and disability benefits to medical retirees with less than 20 years of service.

b. Holding the line on increases in the costs of medical benefits already earned through many years of Uniformed Service participation.

c. Monitoring the erosion of benefits for those who have served and for their family members and surviving spouses.

d. Maintaining comparability of Uniformed Service pay and benefits with those of the private sector, especially in today's all-volunteer force environment. [We must not allow the gap between the two to grow wider. The pool of eligible and available volunteers needs to be nurtured.]

The MOAA Board of Directors will deliberate and decide on approximately three high priority Federal issues for the national organization during 2020. I expect that we will be "Storming the Hill" on those matters during the week of 23 March of 2020.

Expanded, Commissary, Exchange, MWR Access for Veterans (VA Vet Resources, January 2020)

The Defense Department recently announced expanded commissary, military service exchange and MWR access January 1 and established a standard for physical access to military installations.

Newly eligible Veterans must meet at least one of the following conditions:

- Purple Heart recipient
- Former prisoner of war
- Service-connected disability rating (between 0-90 percent)

Veterans with a 100 percent disability or unemployability rating and Veterans who are Medal of Honor recipients already have DoD privileges, so they are not newly eligible. Veterans include former members of any of the uniformed services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, U.S. Public Health Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration). Newly eligible caregivers must be the individual assessed, approved, and designated as the Primary Family Caregiver for an eligible Veteran under the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. In addition to meeting one of the above conditions, newly eligible Veterans and caregivers must possess the specific documentation that DoD will accept as proof of identity and eligibility for access:

For more information on expanded access, call Military One Source at 1-800-342-9647.

Download the *Expanded Access at Commissaries, Exchanges and Recreation Facilities* fact sheet at <https://download.militaryonesource.mil/12038/MOS/Factsheets/expanding-access-fact-sheet.pdf>

The Braille and Talking Book Program offers Veterans who have difficulty with regular print materials the return of the gift of reading. (VA Vet Resources, January 2020)

Whether escaping into a great novel or staying current with popular magazines, the freedom and independence of reading are only a few steps away. This program, from the National Library Service (NLS) and the Library of Congress, provides talking books, audio magazines, and digital talking-book players free of charge.

Any honorably discharged Veteran who is blind, has low vision, or a disability preventing the reading of traditional materials is eligible. Participants choose whether their selected reading materials are delivered by mail, downloaded from the web-based service BARD (Braille and Audio Reading Download) or through the BARD mobile app for smartphones and tablets. NLS maintains a vast catalog of titles and publications from the latest best-sellers to timeless classics. Plus, Veterans have preferential status in the lending of materials and equipment.

The Braille and Talking Books Program is accomplished through a nationwide network of libraries to serve citizens and Veterans living inside the U.S. or abroad. Applying for this service is easy.



Call the National Library Service at 1-888-NLS-READ (1-888-657-7323) or visit them on the web at www.loc.gov/ThatAllMayRead



**Upper Potomac Chapter
 Membership Meeting/Luncheon
 Saturday, February 15, 2020
 11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
 Nicks Airport Inn
 14548 Pennsylvania Avenue
 Hagerstown, MD 21742**

301-733-8560; <http://www.nicksairportinn.com/>

Join us on **Saturday, February 15, 11:30 a.m.** at Nicks Airport Inn, Hagerstown, MD for our first business meeting and luncheon of the New year. Hugh McIlroy will bring you up to date on our plans for 2020. CAPT Ralph France, II, USN, Ret., Chapter Board member will be our guest speaker and he will talk to us about the U.S. Naval Academy admissions process.

Buffet Menu

Grilled Herb Chicken Breast w/Lemon Butter Sauce; Sliced Top Round of Beef au Jus; Roasted Red Potatoes; Green Beans Almandine; Mixed Green Salad; Assorted Mini-Desserts, Rolls; Coffee, Tea, Soda; Cash Bar

Directions

Visit the web site at **www.nicksairportinn.com**

If anyone requires assistance with transportation to the luncheon, please contact one of the Board members and they will help coordinate.

REFUNDS WILL BE PROVIDED ONLY IF CANCELLATIONS ARE MADE BEFORE COB FEBRUARY 8.

-----Detach and Return-----

Name: _____ Name(s) of Guest (s): _____

___ Number of Reservations@ \$29/person _____

TOTAL Remittance _____

Make checks payable to: Upper Potomac Chapter, MOAA
 Return **NLT Saturday, February 8, 2020** to:

Hugh McIlroy, 13121 Redbud Court, Waynesboro, PA 17268
 717-785-1059; germac03@gmail.com

SEE YOU THERE AND BRING A GUEST OR PROSPECTIVE MEMBER