

The Patriot

Richmond Area Chapter - Military Officers Association of America - May 2021



The President's Corner by COL Mark Rich

Spring is here and summer beckons. Although this is our second year in the pandemic, there are signs of returning to some normalcy by year's end. Vaccinations are available to all 16 and over so hopefully you have yours or are scheduled. The McGuire VA Medical Center now provides vaccinations to registered veterans, their caregivers, and spouses.

On March 31st RAC-MOAA members were treated to an outstanding webinar on the U.S. Army Women's Museum at Fort Lee. Curator Tracy Bradford was the presenter for this our second webinar. We are excited to announce our third webinar scheduled for June 2nd. Details are provided elsewhere in this newsletter.

In our efforts to stay safe with the COVID-19 coronavirus, we have not yet scheduled any in person events. We still have a deposit with the Meadowbrook Country Club for our Winter Gala this December in case it is safe to hold this popular event. Also, it looks like we can relatively safely attend the July 31st Military Appreciation Day at a Richmond Squirrels' baseball game. Details will be provided as soon as this event is approved.

In addition to your RAC-MOAA newsletter, members also receive a monthly issue of MOAA's Military Officer magazine with many interesting and relevant articles. The March issue also contained letters for you to send to our representatives in Washington, DC. I highly recommend using these letters to get your voice heard supporting veterans' issues.

Again, join the June webinar, renew your membership (if you have not already), contribute to RAC-MOAA's scholarship and veteran assistance programs, consider volunteering, and stay safe.

EXTENSION OF THE TERM ON THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Normally we have elections for officers followed by appointments for other board positions every two years. New elections are scheduled this year for the 2022-2023 term. But these are not normal times. Because of the ongoing COVID restrictions, and challenges of recruiting, selecting and voting for a new slate of directors, the RAC-MOAA board of directors unanimously voted to extend the existing board of directors' terms for an additional year under the guidelines of the Code of Virginia, Chapter 10, Virginia Nonstock Corporation Act §13.1-857.

SAVE THE DATE

**Military Appreciation Night
With the Richmond Flying
Squirrels—First Pitch 6:05 pm
gates opening at 5 pm**

NOTE OUR NEW MAILING ADDRESS

**Richmond Area Chapter—MOAA
P. O. Box 985
Chesterfield, VA 23832-9998**

RAC-MOAA

**Dinner Meetings
CANCELLED in 2021
DUE TO COVID-19.**

We have a virtual meeting on 2 June 2021. See page 2 for details.

The Holiday Gala is tentatively scheduled for 10 December 2021.

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Read this newsletter on our webpage at: <http://www.racmoaa.org/Newsletter>

Virtual Meeting on 2 June 2021 – Presented by Dr. Michael A. Balazs



Join Us June 2nd for a Unique View of “Generation AI – Preparing the Workforce for the AI Economy of the Future”

The field of artificial intelligence (AI) moves so fast and impacts everyday life in more ways than most of us realize. Please join your RAC-MOAA colleagues for an enlightening Zoom Presentation on Wednesday, June 2nd, from 7 to 8 pm. Our guest speaker, Dr. Michael A. Balazs, will explore “Generation AI – preparing the workforce for the AI economy of the future”.

Dr. Balazs serves as Chief Futurist for Autonomy for the services and Head of Charlottesville Operations at the MITRE Corporation. He is responsible for furthering autonomy’s impact on the mission by advancing autonomous technology, adoption, and trust within the services and combatant commands. He identifies and executes opportunities uniquely suited to MITRE’s role and strengths as a federally funded research and development center. These opportunities result in the consummation of both high-risk big bets, and subtle pressure points that drive mission impact.

He also serves as one of MITRE’s small Unmanned Aerial System (sUAS)/C-sUAS strategists managing a portfolio of sUAS Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) programs in support of the intelligence, special operations, and service communities. This work includes the development and deployment of the Nibbler, a customizable 3D printable drone, and the MITRE Challenge for Countering Unmanned Aerial Systems. Finally, he leads MITRE’s Generation AI program which aims to bring about the AI economy through exposure of all students, independent of their field of study, to AI before they enter the workforce.

Dr. Balazs’s contributions have resulted in numerous awards and have been featured in the Economist, WIRED Magazine, Fortune, National Geographic’s Breakthroughs, SPIE Defense, Sensing, and Security Conference and the AUVSI Xponential conference.

This event is being hosted on Zoom. [Click here to Join Zoom Meeting](#)

OR - Dial in at 301-715-8592 Meeting ID: 844 5302 1717 Passcode: 090526
Pre-registration is not required. On June 2nd, you may begin signing into the event at 6:45 pm and it will begin at 7 pm. Members and guests are welcome.

Treasurer’s Report

Beginning Balance 17 Mar 2021:	\$ 28,270
Receipts:	2,438
Expenditures:	653
Ending Balance 20 Apr 2021:	\$ 30,055
Encumbered Funds	12,255

Unencumbered Balance

\$ 17,800

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January, March, May, September and November

Send articles or comments to:

Richmond Area Chapter - MOAA

ATTN: Newsletter Editor

P. O. Box 985, Chesterfield, VA 23832-9998

Email: editor@racmoaa.org

(Editor: COL Alan Cunningham, Retired)

UPCOMING VIRGINIA WAR MEMORIAL EVENTS

Salute to Service: National Guard

The next installment of the *Salute to Service* series is a celebratory discussion on the Virginia National Guard's 414th birthday! There will be discussions on the Guard's important and complex history, and you will discover what it is like to serve as one of the Commonwealth's citizen-soldiers.

Date: May 14, 2021 10:30 am – 11:30 am

Virginia's Annual Memorial Day Ceremony

The War Memorial will be hosting the Commonwealth of Virginia's 65th Annual Memorial Day Ceremony VIRTUALLY on Monday, May 31st. Nearly 12,000 Virginia's men and women who have made the ultimate sacrifice defending our freedom and who served in the United States Armed Forces will be honored with guest speakers, patriotic music, and recognition of the four names added to the Shrine of Memory in the past year. **Date: May 31, 2021 11:00 am – noon**

For further information or to register for upcoming events go to: <https://vawarmemorial.org/events/>

Legislative Update – MOAA National Agenda & Advocacy in Action

Due to continued virus precautions, the Virginia Council of Chapters' (VCOC) Annual Congressional Luncheon will not be held this Spring in Washington, D.C. However, MOAA National has rolled out the 2021 "Advocacy in Action" Program focusing on the following three key issues for the 2021 Legislative Agenda.

Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Reform: Service Members are experiencing illnesses and cancers as a result of their exposure to toxins while performing their missions – DoD and the VA already know this. However, when the service members seek healthcare or benefits the burden of proof is put on the member or their survivor. The process of determining these illnesses is based on science – and when a claim is supported by science the VA Secretary should act on those findings.

TRICARE Young Adult Parity: TRICARE has a coverage gap for young adults. Commercial plans cover child dependents up to age 26 while military kids lose TRICARE coverage at age 21 (or 23 if a full-time college student.) Military kids face extraordinary challenges throughout their childhoods – as they transition to adulthood, we must ensure they have the same health care protections as their civilian peers.

Basic Needs Allowance: Many junior enlisted military families with two or three dependents face food insecurity, rely on food banks, and fear the stigma of seeking help. H.R. 2339, the Military Hunger Prevention Act, will solve this unsettling situation by establishing a Basic Needs Allowance (BNA) based on family income and the poverty line, providing much-needed support to over 10,000 service members.

Position papers and talking points for each of these three issues have been developed by MOAA and shared with chapter leaders. Our chapter, along with others in the VCOC, will be scheduling "virtual meetings" over the next few weeks with national legislators representing our constituent members. If you are interested in helping with these advocacy efforts, please contact LTC Craig Pinsker at vp2@racmoaa.org or CAPT Mary Lou Wassel at membership@racmoaa.org.

MOAA Seminar: Maximize Your Overall Compensation Package

Want to learn more to maximize your overall compensation package? Join MOAA's financial and benefits expert Capt. Paul J. Frost, AFC®, USN (Ret), and MOAA's senior director for transition services, Col. Brian Anderson, USAF (Ret), for a live and interactive virtual classroom on Thursday, June 24, from 1-4 pm. Limited number of slots are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Price is a nominal \$20 for basic members, \$10 for MOAA Premium members, and \$5 for Life members.

This and more at <https://www.moaa.org/>

Chapter News

BELLWOOD WOMEN'S CLUB NEWS

The Bellwood Women's Club has survived the pandemic so far and is cautiously optimistic that we will meet in person by the fall of 2021. This 70-year-old club is looking to attract new members to attend our luncheons the second Wednesday of every month. The BWC membership eligibility requirements are military spouse or adult child of an honorably discharged or active-duty member; an active-duty military member; a federal employee; the spouse of a federal employee, active or retired. We meet at Building 70 on the DSCR base. Aside from being a great social club, our main mission is to raise money for veteran needs. Some of our beneficiaries are Hunter Holmes McGuire VAMC, Homes for our Troops, Reboot, and the Fisher House. We hold yard sales or other fund raisers, and all the proceeds go to the organizations we support. If you would like more information, please contact Mary Bailey (MAJ Ryland Bailey's Daughter-in-Law) at bwcnnewsletter@baileyva.com.

Chapter Contacts - 2021

Elected Officers & Directors

President	COL Mark Rich	804-706-6650
1st Vice-President	COL Vincent Cammarata	804-338-8975
2nd Vice-president	LTC Craig Pinsker	804-301-1222
Past President	CAPT Mary Lou Wassel	804-551-1878
Secretary	LTC Terry Moore	804-739-8112
Treasurer	LTC Owen Waltman	804-796-1113
Director-at-Large	COL Ken Childers	804-739-5581
Director-at-Large	LTC Clay Mountcastle	804-786-2060
Director-at-Large	MAJ Mariah White	804-350-0189
Director-at-Large	MAJ Paul Willard	540-793-0153

Appointed Directors

Member Services	CAPT Mary Lou Wassel	804-551-1878
Legislative Affairs	MAJ Mariah White	804-350-0189
Youth Programs	COL Ken Childers	804-739-5581
Personal Affairs	Vacant	
Transition Services	CAPT Hardy Josephson	804-883-5955
Publicity	Vacant	
Auxiliary Affairs	Mrs Rosemary Salcedo	804-938-9945
Hospitality	LTC Terry Moore	804-739-8112
Special Programs	LTC Owen Waltman	804-796-1113
Chaplain	LTC Ken Ruppard	804-639-0179
Webmaster	COL Alan Cunningham	804-796-7818

Membership Report

	Regular	Surviving Spouse	Honorary	Total
21 Apr 2021:	271	41	8	320

NOTE NEW ADDRESS FOR MAIL

Richmond Area Chapter—MOAA
P. O. Box 985
Chesterfield, VA 23832-9998

Changes and contributions can be made online.

Chapter Database or E-mail Address Corrections

Please make the following changes to the RAC-MOAA Membership Database and/or my e-mail address or make changes on our website:

Request you add Zip Code Plus 4. The Plus 4 gives you faster mail



Drisko award ceremony in 2018 for Cadet Bethany Daniel shown with her parents and then president, CAPT Mary Lou Wassel (Ret).

COL Mel Drisko Leader-Scholar Awards Contribution

I wish to contribute \$ _____ to support the *Drisko Memorial Leader-Scholar Awards Fund*. This fund provides monetary awards for senior-year JROTC cadets who have demonstrated the leadership and scholastic ability to pursue collegiate careers as military officers. *All contributions are tax-deductible.* Enclose check payable to RAC-MOAA & put Leader-Scholar Award in comments.

Printed Name and Rank: _____

Military Community Assistance Program (MCAP) Contribution

I wish to contribute \$ _____ to support the Military Community Assistance Program (MCAP). This fund provides money to support one or more of the following initiatives: Wounded warriors and their families; The Fisher House at McGuire VAMC, Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Center, The Spinal Cord Injury Unit Recreation Services, USO, and other means of worthwhile support for the military and veterans' communities of Virginia. *All contributions are tax-deductible.*

Enclosed check payable to RAC-MOAA & put MCAP in comments.

Printed Name and Rank: _____