

***Minutes from the February 6, 2016 Brunch Meeting
By LTC Roy Raat, USA (Ret), Recording Secretary***

- 47 members and guests attended the brunch at Hayden's Lakefront Grill on 6 February 2016. Chapter President Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret) called the meeting to order at 1001. She welcomed those attending and the guest speaker, Mr. Cameron Smith, the Director of the Oregon Department of Veteran's Affairs. The Pledge of Allegiance and the singing of the National Anthem lead by Lt Col James Warnock, USAF (Ret) and wife, June, followed. Chaplain LTC Grant McAllister, USA (Ret) gave the invocation.
- President Mayer reported that, at the 5 November 2015 Chapter Board of Directors' Meeting, the members unanimously committed to dedicating the raffle proceeds for calendar year 2016 to the local Operation Homefront for two purposes: (1) \$2,250 for the purchase of 450 backpacks (at \$5.50 each) for Portland Metropolitan Area school children served by Operation Homefront for the 2016 back-to-school period; and (2) remainder of funds raised dedicated to utilization in the Operation Homefront Emergency Assistance Program.
- President Mayer provided Chapter Budget feedback from the February 4th Chapter Board of Directors' Meeting. Halfway through the program year, budget items were on track, except one. Out of 143 regular members, only 75 had paid their 2016 annual dues of \$25 for the period 1 January-31 December 2016. Members are supposed to pay the annual dues to the Treasurer by 1 January 2016.
- **Action Taken:** As is required by the Chapter Bylaws, the Treasurer will send **reminder invoices** to all those who have not paid their dues after 30 days in February and after 60 days in March--asking them to pay. All those in arrears are to pay their dues soon after receiving the first invoice. If the Treasurer has to send out invoices in early March to those who have still not paid their dues, the Chapter Board authorized the Treasurer to charge an additional \$5.00 in late fees. Surviving spouse members are not required to pay annual dues but are strongly encouraged to do so.
- **Bringing in New Members:** The Membership Committee members cannot recruit on their own; help from the chapter members is needed. The Chapter seeks its members' help to educate their eligible friends and colleagues about the benefits of being a MOAA Portland Chapter member and to bring potential members to our meetings. Utilize our award-winning website and newsletter as recruiting tools in the efforts. New members bring-in more dollars for our veterans support, military community, fund raising projects, and accomplishing MOAA's goals and commitments .The **challenge** for our Chapter members is to bring at least one guest to the next brunch meeting on Saturday, 5 March 2016.
- President Mayer reported the MOAA Portland Chapter has been awarded the **Five Star Levels of Excellence Award** from MOAA National for the last 8 consecutive years. To continue this tradition, our Chapter needs to have a healthy membership base and balanced budget. Currently, there is a change in date for nomination package submission which was **moved from 1 June to 1 March 2016**. Members were asked to submit to her, by February 12th, their inputs of activities that they supported in the community so that those can be included in the submission write-up.
- President Mayer provided "Save the Date" info for members' participation: **VA Partners with New MyVA Cascadia Board for Veterans' Town Hall** scheduled on Thursday, 25 February 2016, 1800-2000, at Montavilla Baptist Church, 9204 SE Hawthorne Blvd, Portland, OR. Veterans, their families, and community leaders who attend will brainstorm new strategies to existing veteran issues. Meeting will be a working event, participants will be asked to provide their priorities and ideas to solve those issues using all the resources within the community in partnership with the VA. Issues such as access to benefits and health care, mental health, women veterans, transportation, education, homeless vets, education, employment, veteran suicide, reintegration, incarcerated veterans, tribal veterans, aging veterans, and other topics will be discussed.
- MyVA Cascadia plans to hold regular public town hall meetings throughout the VA Portland Health Care System (VAPORHCS) catchment area which includes 26 counties across Southwest Washington, the Portland Metro area, the coast from Astoria to Newport, south to Corvallis/Philomath, and east to Central Oregon. **MyVA Cascadia Co-Chairs** are Tom Mann and Kim Douthit. Joanne M. Krumberger, Director of the Portland VA Health Care System, is a member of the board.
- **Advisory Committee to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) Meeting** scheduled for Wednesday, 2 March 2016, 0930 at Shiloh Inn in Newport, OR. There is a **Public Comment** portion of the meeting where individuals may present any issues to the Advisory Committee. After the business meeting, there is a **Town Hall** conducted by the ODVA Director and his staff. It is encouraged for Chapter's officers/board members and others to attend.
- **New Fairview Clinic Ribbon Cutting/Open House** of new 26,000 square foot clinic, replacing the East Portland CBOC on NE Glisan. Scheduled for Thursday, 3 March 2016, 1030 at 21600 NE Halsey Street, Fairview, OR 97024.
- **Oregon Women Veterans Conference 2016 on Friday and Saturday**, 18-19 March 2016, 0800-1600 on both days at Camp Withycombe, Clackamas, OR. There is no cost for participation which includes free lunch. Registration can be made at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2016WVCRegistration>, or go to the ODVA Website and click on "Women Veterans" (right hand column).
- **New Women Veterans' Coordinator at ODVA:** Elizabeth Estabrooks served in U.S. Army from 1977-1980, left banking and insurance in 1993, transitioned to social justice work, began her own consulting firm in 1998. As a consultant, she created and delivered curriculum on the topics of violence against women, diversity, peer support services, recovery, and gender and culturally responsive services. In 2012, she was asked to serve on the Department of Veterans' Affairs National Domestic Violence Task Force, and in 2013 she was selected as a Fisher-Cummings Washington DC Fellow, which included a six-month fellowship at the U.S. Department of Veterans' Affairs Central Office in Washington, DC.

- **VA Portland Health System Fisher House Ribbon Cutting Ceremony** to be held on Wednesday, 23 March 2016, 1300 at VAPORHCS Vancouver Campus, 1601 E Fourth Plain Boulevard, Vancouver, WA 98661.
- **Next MOAA Oregon State Council of Chapters Meeting** scheduled for Thursday, 24 March 2016, 0930-1400 at Oregon Veterans' Home in Lebanon, OR. Officers and Board Members are encouraged to attend.
- **Membership Committee Report** by Lt Col Boyd Yaden, USAF (Ret). Introduced new member **Col George VanHoomissen, USMC (Ret)**. "Membership Appreciation Drawing" to be conducted next month (March Brunch).
- After brunch was served, **President Mayer** introduced the guest speaker, **Mr. Cameron Smith**, the Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, a position he has held since March 2013 when he was appointed by Governor John Kitzhaber. Previously, he was the Senior Policy Advisor to Governor Kitzhaber where his portfolio of issues included Military, Veterans' Affairs, and Emergency Management. He also served Governor Ted Kulongoski as a Senior Policy Advisor for Public Safety. Prior to joining the governor's staff, Captain Smith served as an officer in the United States Marine Corps. He completed three tours of duty in Iraq in 2004, 2006, and 2009. He is a new Chapter member. A graduate of Carleton College (Minnesota), Cameron holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in History. He is originally from Boston (Massachusetts) and now happily lives in Portland with his wife, daughter Frankie, and son Romy; and yes he continues to root for the Red Sox.
- **Mr. Smith** stated that ODVA has been in existence for 70 years and fully supports veterans' needs such as VA home loans, the new Veterans' Home in Lebanon and the existing home in The Dalles. Only 3 out of 10 veterans in the State have applied for VA benefits.
- An initiative working toward achieving needed funding for vets is headed by State Representatives Julie Parrish who is collecting signatures to get a measure on the November 2016 state ballot to require 5% of the lottery net proceeds to be distributed to finance services for Oregon veterans, their spouses and their dependents. The services include assistance with reintegration, employment, education benefits and tuition, housing, healthcare, mental healthcare and addiction treatment programs. Under the banner of "Keeping Our Promise," signatures are being gathered by Parrish from Oregon voters; a one-page petition was passed out to each Chapter member asking each to sign and mail the petition back to Ms. Parrish.
- **Mr. Smith** presented **President Mayer** a **Letter from Governor Kate Brown** and framed coins for her 4-year service on the Advisory Committee to ODVA (September 2011-2015).
- **Special Events Committee:** MAJ John Sampson, USA (Ret) reported MOAA Portland Chapter will again participate in the **Gold Bar Program for 2016**, giving second lieutenant's bars to **13 AFROTC** and **24 AROTC** commissioning cadets at the University of Portland. The **50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Veterans Pins**. These will be awarded to all Chapter Vietnam veterans at the March brunch meeting.
- **Legislative Committee:** President Mayer reported for CAPT Larry Roberts. At the national level, members were reminded to send in the four letters (found in the February MOAA *Military Officer Magazine*) to the Chairs and Ranking members of both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees – subject is "Reform of the Military Health Care System." The Chapter members were also reminded to read Larry Roberts' column in the Feb/Mar *Brass Bulletin Chapter Newsletter*.
- At the local level, Oregon voters in our Chapter were asked to support Julie Parrish's initiative by signing, stamping, and mailing her "Keeping Our Promise" mailer back to her. If members know of others who would like to support this initiative, pass the mailers to them; if more copies are needed, inform **President Mayer**.
- **President Mayer** also learned at the 9 January 2016 UVGO Meeting that Representative Paul Evans was sponsoring a similar bill this Legislative Session that would devote 3% of the State's lottery earnings towards veterans' support programs.
- **Surviving Spouse (former Auxiliary). Mrs. Jean Hillman** mentioned the next Surviving Spouse Luncheon will be on **Tuesday, 16 February 2016** at **1200 noon** at **Albertina's**; cost is \$24 per person and includes gratuity. Spouses are cordially invited to attend. Jean encouraged all to continue to bring in diapers, wipes, and cell phones to the chapter meetings.
- **Personal Affairs Committee. President Mayer** noted that **Col Richard E. Nichol, AUS (Ret)**, former Chapter member from Tigard, OR, passed away on January 17, 2016. Funeral services for former Chapter board member, **Major James F. ("Jim") Simpson, USMC (Ret)**, in January were attended by many Chapter members and spouses. **President Mayer** asked that members inform her of any deaths or medical issues among the Chapter's members, spouses, and/or surviving spouses.
- **Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR)**: Col Herb Hirst, USA (Ret) and Col Bob Windus, USA (Ret) reported that this Department of Defense program is supported by volunteers. Services provided by ESGR include job search assistance to help hiring veterans, employer support the military member employee, and monitoring of recruitment and retention. At Christmas time ESGR solicits donations for gifts for military, veterans, and their families.
- The morning's raffle collected **\$365**. The Chapter members were thanked for their participation and contributions.
- **Joke: Major William J. Tidd, USAF (Ret)** presented a humorous tale involving trying to find Noah's Ark.
- In her closing remarks, **President Mayer** thanked guest speaker, **Mr. Cameron Smith**; the members that came to support the chapter; **Mrs. Edie Rieken** for bringing the decoration on the tables; and **Ms. Barbara Abalan** and the staff of Hayden's Lakefront Grill for the wonderful meal and service.
- **Next Meeting:** Brunch on **Saturday, 5 March 2016** at **Hayden's Lakefront Grill, Tualatin, OR**. Guest Speaker will be **Ms. Janice Collee**, Director of Programs for Operation Homefront-Pacific Northwest. Janice will talk about the activities that this organization is doing in Oregon to help veterans and their families. Reservations must be made by **1100 on Wednesday, 2 March 2016** to **LCDR Dave Bredemann, USN (Ret)**, our Chapter Reservations Secretary.
- **Next Brass Bulletin Newsletter** will be a combined **April/May 2015 edition**. Inputs for newsletter are due **7 March 2016**.
- The meeting was **adjourned at 1158**.

***Minutes from the March 5, 2016 Brunch Meeting
By LTC Roy Raat, USA (Ret), Recording Secretary***

- **41** members and guests attended the brunch at **Hayden's Lakefront Grill** on **5 March 2016**. Chapter President, **Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)** called the meeting to order at **1000**.
- She remarked that March is Women's History Month. As part of that celebration, we salute female veterans of all branches and all eras. The service of our women in uniform continues to be a source of pride, professionalism, and as a result of their continued service provides benefits to our state and nation. March is also Military Appreciation Month. We salute all military members, veterans, and their families for their selfless and dedicated service to their country. And, remember that the State of Oregon celebrates "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans' Day" on 30 March of every year.
- **President Mayer** welcomed those attending and the guest speaker, **Mrs. Janice Collee**, Program Director of **Operation Homefront – Pacific Northwest**. The Pledge of Allegiance and the singing of the National Anthem--led by **CAPT Larry Roberts, USNR (Ret--)** followed. **Lt Col James Warnock, USAF (Ret)** gave the invocation.
- **President Mayer** reported that, at the 5 November 2015 Chapter Board of Directors' Meeting, the members unanimously committed to dedicating the raffle proceeds for calendar year 2016 to the local Operation Homefront for two purposes: (1) **\$2,250** for the purchase of **450 backpacks** (at \$5.50 each) for Portland Metropolitan Area school children served by Operation Homefront for the 2016 back-to-school period; and (2) remainder of funds raised dedicated to utilization in the Operation Homefront Emergency Assistance Program. Thus far **\$365** has been raised for Operation Homefront via our raffle at February's brunch meeting.
- **Submission of the Levels of Excellence Award for 2015.** **President Mayer** reported the submission date changed from 1 June to 1 March 2016. The Chapter's Nomination Package was submitted 24 February 2016 and received by national MOAA the same day. She thanked all of the members who submitted information about their volunteer activities in the community to incorporate into the award nomination package. The MOAA Portland Chapter has been awarded the **Five Star Levels of Excellence Award** from MOAA National for the last 8 consecutive years; hope to win it again for the 9th consecutive year!
- **Healthy Budget and Bringing in New Members:** To continue to be awarded the Five Star Levels of Excellence Award, need to have a balanced budget and a healthy membership base.
 - **Status of the 2015-2016 Chapter Budget.** We are halfway through the program year, and all items were on track, except Membership Dues for 2016. Out of **143** regular members, only **75** had paid their 2016 dues for the period 1 January-31 December 2016. Members are supposed to have submitted dues to the Treasurer by 1 January 2016. As is required by the Chapter Bylaws, the Treasurer sent out 44 invoices to all those who had not paid their dues as of 1 February - asking them to pay. However, if the Treasurer has to send out invoices in early March to those who have still not paid, the board authorized the Treasurer to charge an additional \$5.00 in late fees. Dues for regular members are \$25 a year; surviving spouse members are not required to pay annual dues but are strongly encouraged to do so
- **Bringing in New Members:** The Membership Committee members cannot recruit on its own; help from the chapter members is needed. The Chapter seeks its members' help to educate their eligible friends and colleagues about the benefits of being a MOAA Portland Chapter member and to bring potential members to our meetings. Utilize our award-winning website and newsletter as recruiting tools in the efforts. New members bring-in more dollars for our veterans support, military community, fund raising projects, and accomplishing MOAA's goals and commitments. The **challenge** for our Chapter members is to bring at least one guest to the next dinner meeting on Tuesday, 5 April 2016.
- **President Mayer** provided "**Save-the-Date**" information for members' participation: **Oregon Women Veterans Conference 2016** scheduled for Friday and Saturday, 18-19 March 2016, 0800-1600 on both days at Camp Withycombe, Clackamas, OR. No cost for participation with free lunch. Registration is now open at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2016WVCRegistration>, or go to the ODVA Website and click on "Women Veterans" (right hand column); other contact address is orwomenvets@odva.state.or.us.
- **VA Portland Health System Fisher House Ribbon Cutting Ceremony** on Wednesday, 23 March 2016, 1300, at VAPORHCS Vancouver Campus, 1601 E Fourth Plain Boulevard, Vancouver, WA 98661.
- **MOAA Oregon State Council of Chapters Board Meeting** on Friday, 24 March 2016, 0930- Coffee Service, 1000-1430 Business Meeting and Lunch at Activities Room at the Oregon Veterans' Home, 600 N. 5th Street, Lebanon, OR. President Mayer will be attending. Officers and Board members are encouraged to attend.
- **United Veterans' Groups of Oregon (UVGO) Meeting** on Saturday, 9 April 2016, 1230, at 50+ Senior Center in Salem, OR. The group has been reinvigorated with Ron Morgan serving as Legislative Representative.
- **MOAA "Storming the Hill"** is scheduled for 11-13 April 2016 in Washington, DC. The President of the MOAA Oregon State Council of Chapters, BG Dennis Merrill, USA (Ret), will be attending to represent Oregon (or send a rep in his stead).
- **Advisory Committee to the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) Meeting** on Wednesday, 1 June 2016, 0930 at Shiloh Inn in Klamath Falls, OR. Any suggestions for agenda items can be emailed to the Advisory Committee at vaac@odva.state.or.us. Include name/organization/contact information, a description of the proposed agenda item, why this item is a concern, and what action would you like to see the Advisory Committee take with regards to this issue. There is a **Public Comment** portion of the meeting where individuals may present their concerns. .
- **Membership Committee Report** by Lt Col Boyd Yaden, USAF (Ret). Introduction of two guests, **Frank Schuchard** (brother-in-law of **Tony Sebbio**), and **Karen Dix** (a friend of **Myrna Trull**).
- After brunch was served, **President Mayer** introduced the guest speaker, **Mrs. Janice Collee**, who spoke on "**The Mission of Operation Homefront– Pacific Northwest,**" an organization supporting the families of our service members and wounded

warriors in our local communities. **Janice Collee**'s experience goes back to serving for 20 years in the United States Army, retiring as a Sergeant First Class in the Quartermaster Corps. She served at 14 different duty stations in the continental United States and 4 bases in Germany. Throughout her military career, she served as a senior advisor for the Army Family Action Plan, Red Cross, Army Family Team Building, and several Military Spouse Clubs and Organizations. After her retirement, she worked with the Oregon National Guard in Salem, and then joined Operation Homefront in 2014.

- As the Director of Programs for Operation Homefront - Pacific Northwest, Janice helps build strong, stable, secure military families by providing emergency and financial assistance to the injured, ill, deployed, and wounded warriors. In addition to her passion for assisting service members, Janice currently volunteers with Eagles Lodge 2081 in Salem, Oregon on the McNary High School JROTC Program. Janice completed her Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration, and she is a licensed cosmetologist where she helps women with cancer through the "Look Good, Feel Better" Program.
- The MOAA Portland Chapter is in good company in supporting Operation Homefront. Major supporters include Walmart, Home Depot, Wells Fargo Bank, Outback Steakhouse, and others. **National MOAA** is a "collaborator" with Operation Homefront, the Semper Fi Organization, Goodwill, and others. The CEO of Operation Homefront is Brig Gen John Pray, USAF (Ret) who served, after retiring from the military, as the Executive Secretary of the National Security Council and spent six years with the USO (including a stint as EVP).
- In her presentation, Janice mentioned that Operation Homefront is a nationwide organization providing a range of services and support with the goal of building strong, stable and sustainable military families, primarily to enlisted personnel and their families in pay grades E1 - E6. With over 2,500 volunteers and some 100 employees, the organization is a very efficient non-profit, spending almost \$49 million in 2014 on programs and only \$4.4 million on overhead.
- National activities: **Emergency Aid** that provides emergency financial assistance of over \$4.8 million last year. In Oregon the program disbursed almost \$200,000 in 2014. It is a unique and powerful program that goes through a process to distinguish it from welfare and ultimately ends with a better family position.
- **Family Support** such as back-to-school programs of about \$5 million in school supplies in 2014 and even more in 2015. Janice **thanked our Chapter** for dedicating raffle proceeds during calendar 2016 to the local Operation Homefront.
- **Housing.** In 2014, 138 mortgage free homes were turned over to veterans of all eras throughout the country. Operation Homefront also provides support for wounded warriors and their families through social media interaction, hospital visitation, and mutual support groups. After Mrs. Collee's presentation, she received a gift from our Chapter.
- **Committee Reports (continued): Special Events Committee,** MAJ John Sampson, USA (Ret) reported no changes or update from last month report. As reminder, at University of Portland, the AFROTC Formal Awards Banquet is on 15 April 2016 and AROTC Formal Awards Banquet is on 1 April 2016. Our Chapter will participate in the **Gold Bar Programs for 2016**.
- **Presentation of 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Veterans Pins** will be presented at April 5th dinner meeting.
- **Legislative Committee**, CAPT Larry Roberts. At **National Level** remember to send in the postcards to your two senators and representative found on the back cover of the *March 2016 MOAA Military Officer Magazine*. At **Local Level**. Our Chapter still needs a volunteer to oversee the Progress of "Adopt-a-Legislator" Program. **President Mayer** provided an update that Oregon's House and Senate voted to devote 1.5% of the State's lottery earnings towards veterans' support programs. This bill will be placed on the November's ballot and voted on by Oregonians.
- **Surviving Spouse.** **Mrs. Jean Hillman** mentioned the next Surviving Spouse Luncheon will be on **Tuesday, 19 April 2016** at **1200 noon at Albertina's**; cost is \$24 that includes gratuity. Wives are cordially invited to attend. Diaper and wipes donations for use by Operation Homefront can be brought to this luncheon or the Chapter's dinner or luncheon meetings. Old cell phones for the Cell Phones for Soldiers Program can also be brought to these meetings; or give them to **President Mayer**.
- **Personal Affairs Committee, Col Mary J. Mayer, USAF (Ret)** reported that, since the last chapter meeting, there was one death: **CAPT Roy E. Dash, USCG (Ret)**, who was the MOAA Portland Chapter President from 1994-1996. We still have several chapter members who are recovering; **Bill Kroger** (hip replacement surgery), **Ann Roberts** (recent surgery), **Terri Dill-Simpson** (recovering from her husband Jim's death), and **Ben Tabler** (experiencing heart issues). Please keep President Mayer advised of any deaths or medical issues involving chapter members.
- The morning's **raffle** for three bottles of wine, conducted by **CAPT Larry Roberts**, collected **\$250**; he thanked the members for their contributions. He also said that the Navy League is involved in trying to get a new ship, the USS Portland (Oregon)—with an expected Navy launch in 2017-- christened here in Portland. He encouraged the Chapter members to contact their Congressional representatives to have the christening here in Portland; members can contact him for more information.
- The **Membership Appreciation Drawing** for the brunch meal was won by **Captain Herb Richardson, USMC (Ret)**.
- **LTC Bill Kroger, USA (Ret)** presented the humorous **Joke**.
- In her closing remarks, **President Mayer** thanked guest speaker, **Mrs. Janice Collee**; the members that came to support the chapter; **Mrs. Edie Rieken** for bringing the decoration on the tables; and the staff of Hayden's Lakefront Grill for the wonderful meal and service.
- **Next Meeting:** Dinner on **Tuesday, 5 April 2016** at **Monarch Hotel in Clackamas, OR**. Guest Speaker will be **Colonel Paul Fitzgerald, USAF**, Commander, 142nd Fighter Wing, Oregon Air National Guard in Portland, OR. He will speak on the "Mission of the 142nd Fighter Wing." Reservations must be made by **1100 on Wednesday, 30 March 2016** to **CDR Dave Bredemann, USN (Ret)**, our Chapter Reservations Secretary.
- **In closing, President Mayer** wished all a happy St. Patrick's Day and a blessed Easter! The meeting was **adjourned at 1150**.