



The Granite Slate

The official newsletter published quarterly for the
New Hampshire Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America
P. O. Box 712, Dover, NH 03821



June, 2020

Spring Edition

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MOAA-NH Chapter's Mission

- To promote the aims of the MOAA stated in the By-Laws of that Association
- To further legislative goals and objectives of MOAA
- To encourage and facilitate camaraderie among our membership
- To provide useful services for and to protect the interests of members, their dependents, and survivors

Get Anytime Access to Mental Health Support With Mobile Apps

VA News <veteransaffairs@public.govdelivery.com>
Posted on Tuesday, May 5, 2020 in Health, Mental
Health, Top Stories by a VA Staff Contributor

As we face physical distancing challenges alongside new anxieties, stresses, or even feelings of depression, accessing mental health resources remotely may be more important than ever before. To make sure Veterans don't miss out on mental health care, VA has a number of ways Veterans can maintain their well-being no matter where they are, including mobile apps, self-help trainings, videos, and websites.

Mental Health Mobile Apps

Access mental health support wherever you are, whenever you need it! VA's mental health apps can help you manage mental health symptoms and stress, learn to practice coping skills, and more. Listed below are descriptions of some of VA's most popular mental health mobile apps.

CBT-i Coach teaches users about sleep, let's them track their sleep and take a sleep assessment, then guides them through the process of developing positive sleep routines.

Mindfulness Coach provides tools to help users practice mindfulness meditation.

Mood Coach for depression provides positive activity scheduling based on the principles of behavioral activation treatment for depression.

Moving Forward teaches problem-solving skills, which can be used alone or in conjunction with problem-solving training.

PTSD Coach provides information about PTSD and options for professional care, a self-assessment,

opportunities to find support, and tools – all designed to help Veterans manage the stresses of daily life with PTSD.

PTSD Family Coach is similar to the PTSD Coach, but it adds guidance for those whose family roles have changed since the onset of PTSD, including tips and information for self-care and for maintaining relationships, as well as ideas for helping a loved one get treatment.

You can explore more mental health mobile apps at www.mobile.va.gov/appstore/mental-health.

Online Self-Help

In addition to its wealth of mobile apps, VA offers many in-depth mental health resources online.

VA's mental health page features self-help tips, guidance for Veterans and loved ones as they start the healing journey, and information about specific mental health topics and conditions.

Make the Connection offers Veterans, their family members, friends, and other supporters with information about issues affecting their lives. On the website, visitors can watch hundreds of Veterans share their stories of strength and recovery, read about a variety of life events and mental health topics, and locate nearby resources. **Make the Connection** also features a series of self-assessments and screenings and self-help strategies that can be used anonymously anytime, anywhere.

Veteran Training is a self-help portal that provides tools for overcoming everyday challenges. The portal has tools to help Veterans work on problem-solving skills, manage

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President's Corner

CWO4 Robert D. Jaffin, USN (Ret)

Stay safe!

That's actually an expression I use quite regularly when I am engaging the first responder community; but today, I find myself using it just as frequently at the supermarket during checkout as well as in many other retail settings.

As I am sure everybody understands, the global pandemic and the government's and private sector's responses to the pandemic have totally upended our chapter activities and plans. MOAA-NH's Annual Clambake scheduled for August 1 and the Bistro Nouveau luncheon scheduled for September 19 are both cancelled. It is possible the Annual Meeting on November 7 may be held; however, a final decision on that will take place at a later date. All of this and more will be discussed at our next Board meeting now scheduled to be online on June 17.

It has also affected MOAA national's plans and programs. On May 27, 2020, Peter Burdett and I participated in a virtual "Storming the Hill" that Kat Cosgrove of Congressman Pappas' office hosted with all the congressional staffs. It was a very productive meeting. We covered three specific issues: revisiting MTF closures, military medical billet reductions, and movement of the commissary to the Pease Trade Port. The commissary movement met with favorable reaction.

Beyond that, I really do not have a lot to contribute this month; but I remind all our members to stay safe, protect their families and themselves, but still find ways to get out and stay engaged. There are many different opinions and variations of social distancing. Historical data seems to indicate that the better job we as individuals do at practicing social distancing, the more we minimize the health system impacts thus reducing the health impact of the pandemic on society. However, this does not necessarily mean staying at home or not interacting with family, friends, or neighbors.

To the MOAA New Hampshire chapter, a more critical issue remains: recruiting new members and finding ways to engage more of the membership in and on the Board of Directors. Regardless of how we end up running the Annual Meeting, I am sure there will be an Annual Meeting, and that means election of officers and Board of Directors members. Now more than ever we could use some new faces as part of our leadership team. I encourage you to think of ways you can help us overcome the additional obstacles this pandemic has placed in our chapter's path. Jim and I have both solicited inputs from the membership. To date, I believe we have received literally no feedback whatsoever other than our discussions with various board members on a fairly routine basis. This is your organization. We would appreciate hearing from you about how to make it better, how we might do our jobs better, or better yet, how we can make *your life* better.

Bob Jaffin

Welcome to Our New 2020 Chapter Member!

CW2 Ronald de los Santos USA — Meredith, NH



"Over the course of time, we have noticed a decline in the number of NH chapter members attending functions. As the chapter ages, demographics may explain most of that decline. However, we are interested in getting more complete information. Request that members provide Jim LeFebvre, Vice President of the Chapter, with information as to what drives you to come to functions, what we could do to enhance turnout, etc. You may send him an e-mail at lefebvrej@att.net, or call him at 603-356-7296. All responses will be used only for statistical purposes."

MOAA-NH Needs Your Help

Please consider volunteering for one of the following positions and being part of MOAA-NH's nationally recognized excellence.

Back-up Recording Secretary: fills in if the regular Recording Secretary is unavailable for a Board meeting. Takes notes/records the conduct of the meeting and prepares written minutes for distribution. Monthly Board meetings are held on the 2nd Thursday at the Red Blazer Restaurant in Concord from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm, with a break for dinner. Chapter membership is not required – spouses are welcome! Contact Michael McLean, at 603-692-4648 or mamclean@comcast.net

Treasurer: The Treasurer's role within the framework of the Board of Directors is to prepare periodic treasury reports to the Board and membership, keep our books, write checks, make deposits, and complete reports external to the organization (e.g. IRS, State of NH, etc.). Your current treasurer, Roby Day, will be retiring from the position in November 2020, and is willing and able to assist a Vice Treasurer be prepared to step into the job as an elected officer of MOAA-NH. If you are interested in being a part of our leadership team, please contact Roby Day at 603-642-7956 (fuzzbutthall@comcast.net) or any member of the Board.

2020 MOAA-NH Luncheons & Annual Meeting

June 20 **CANCELLED**
White Mountains/North Country

August 1 **CANCELLED**
Clambake, PNSY

September 19 **CANCELLED**
Bistro Nouveau, Grantham

November 7
Nashua Country Club (Annual Mtg)
(The Annual Meeting is still five months away. The COVID-19 situation will be closely monitored, and the Board will inform the membership well in advance of any changes to the current schedule.)

Get Anytime Access to Mental Health Support With Mobile Apps

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anonymous environment. The free tools are based on mental health practices that have proven successful with Veterans and their families.

Telephone or Video Appointments

Veterans should maintain their existing mental health appointments — and may receive care at home — using VA Video Connect on their computers, smartphones or tablets. To set up telephone or video appointments, Veterans can send their health care provider a secure message on My HealtheVet by visiting myhealth.va.gov. Learn more about VA Video Connect at mobile.va.gov/app/va-video-connect.

Crisis Support

If you are a Veteran having thoughts of suicide — or if you're concerned about one — free, confidential support is available 24/7. Call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, text to 838255, or chat online.



National MOAA Announces the 2019 Communications Award Winners



For the **fifth** consecutive year, MOAA-NH Chapter's website (www.moaa-nh.org) received a 5-Star Award in the Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Award Contest.

MOAA renamed the award in 2011 after Colonel Marvin J. Harris, USAF (Ret), Director of Public Relations from 1996 until 2011. Colonel Harris delivered effective communications to both military and civilian audiences.

National MOAA seeks to identify councils and chapters that do an outstanding job communicating with their members and community. MOAA affiliates competed in two categories of competition: print and e-newsletters and websites. A panel of judges scored the submissions based on a set of subjective criteria, looking at both design and content. In the websites category, affiliates that communicated with their members via email networks and social media channels received extra credit.

MOAA-NH was one of 104 councils and chapters that received five-star awards for their exemplary communication efforts. Congratulations to our chapter webmaster, CDR Michael McLean, USN (Ret). ■

MOAA-NH Scholarship Program Update

Joseph DiChiaro, Jr., COL, USAF (Ret)
Chairman, Scholarship Program

Scholarships

In light of the COVID-19 impact on schools and colleges, as the Board approved, I have sent applications for the 2020-2021 academic year only to the returning scholarship recipients from this year. Any other requests will be referred to the MOAA National Program. As it is with some colleges and universities undecided about the return to on campus instruction next year as well as being shut down at present, students are facing difficulties obtaining required transcripts and recommendations required.

Both the CA State Universities and UC campuses are not planning on a fall semester. As you will recall either from your own college days or those of your children and grandchildren many classes are year long or only offered in either the Fall or Winter. This chaos caused by the closing this year and delayed start may make class choices a nightmare and actually result in having to extend the time needed to complete a degree. That will further compound the excessive loan debt being incurred.

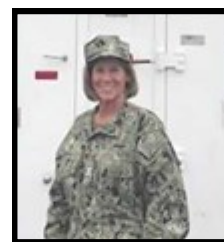
ROTC/JROTC

With the COVID-19 shutdown all award ceremonies were cancelled. Although I had notice of awardees from both UNH ROTC programs and was able to order our plaques for the two Outstanding Seniors, Crown Trophy was locked down the day they were completed and I had to wait 6 weeks to be able to pick them up. I was able to deliver them to the UNH Army and Air Force units along with the MOAA Medals which will be sent to the students by the ROTC offices.

On the JROTC front, seven of the programs did submit names and had ceremonies planned that have now been reduced to various forms of virtual programs. Again the lockdown of Harris Trophy delayed getting the nameplates for the perpetual plaques engraved. I was able to pick those up last Monday and was able to personally deliver two to instructors at Salem HS and Pinkerton Academy. The others had to be mailed primarily to the home address of the Senior JROTC instructor where the school itself was closed. That was done by Priority Mail and were received on Thursday and Friday. Three schools: Alvirne, Nashua, and Winnicunnet did not respond at all so arrangements will be made next year to honor the 2020 Outstanding Senior on their respective plaques. ■

MOAA-NH Comrade Returns from Deployment Aboard the USNS Comfort

Navy Captain Lynne Blankenbeker returned home for the first time after being mobilized in March. The combat nurse with 34-years of experience and several missions overseas, boarded the ship Comfort in Norfolk, VA. She then headed to New York City where she worked in operating rooms.



"You have to float a big ship across ocean with waves and stuff and so, everything gets strapped to the walls or strapped to the floors," Blankenbeker said. "So, as soon as we got there we had to set up our operating rooms, and Comfort has 12 full-service operating rooms."

The former Republican state legislator and Pentagon policy advisor was running for Congress in the 2nd District when she was called to the Comfort.

"I put 100% of the focus on taking care of the people of New York City and making sure I did my part for this mission," Blankenbeker said. "Tomorrow, I will be off of active duty and I will start campaigning."

CREDIT: WMUR News, Jean Mackin, News Anchor/Reporter, 5/27/2020

***Is travelling on your bucket list?
Maybe this list will help . . .***



2020 MOAA Travel Program: (Additional information for our 2020 trips is posted on our website, www.moaa-nh.org under "Group Travel"). I do not expect bookings for the remainder of 2020. However, we do have saved spaces for the following trips:

2020 MOAA-NH Travel Program:

- Heritage of America, October 4-12, 2020, 9 days, (\$3,049 per person with air)
- Mackinac Islands (featuring the Grand Hotel and Chicago), 8 days, August 14-21, 2020 (\$3,599 with air)
- Treasures of Europe (from London to Rome), 12 days, 3-14 September 2020 (\$4,499 with air)

2021 MOAA-NH Travel Program (not fully completed with Collette):

- Painted Canyons of the West, 9 days, 18-26 April 2021 (\$3,599 per person, double occupancy)
- Spotlights on San Antonio Holiday, 5 days, tours begin after 5 March 2021 through September
- Greece Island Hopper, 11 days, late Sept 2021
- **Either** Magnificent Cities of Eastern Europe, Sept 2021 **or** Alaska Discover Land and Cruise, 11 days, after 4 July through August 2021

When dates and prices are finalized with Collette, they will be posted on our website under "Group Travel."

The event of the decade! THE PASSION PLAY FOR 2020 HAS BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL 2022. We are taking bookings now. Book early! Many bookings for 2020 have been guaranteed and transferred to 2022 so bookings will be limited. The following 2022 trips INCLUDE the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany. Call Tony for prices and available dates.

- Classical Danube River Cruise & Land Tours, 10 days
- Exploring the Alpine Countries, 13 days
- Austrian Delight, 10 days
- Discover Switzerland, Austria, and Bavaria, 10 days
- Imperial Cities, 11 days
- Germany's Cultural Cities and the Romantic Roads, 13 days

If you, a family member or friend want a specific trip not listed on our program, contact me; and I will arrange the trip with Collette at MOAA-NH privileges.

Our "Trip of the Month" blast email messages for 2020 have been postponed until the publication of our 2021 travel program. **For reservations or additional information, contact Tony Burdo, 603-391-7106 or email: tonyajjb@gmail.com.**

I am still looking to partner/co-op with a community organization such as the Kiwanis, the Elks, a religious organization, a men's or women's club, social clubs, etc., so we can increase our customer base. Please furnish me with a point of contact, and I will complete the coordination process.



Reflections . . .

***In Service to
My Country***

***My Second Assignment in Vietnam:
544th Construction Support Company on
Nui Soc Lu Vietnam***

R. Kent Whitman, CPT, USA (Ret), Keene, NH
Edited by LTC Geoff Corson, USMC (Ret)

continued from the March 2020 issue of The Granite Slate

I told the driver to put his foot on the accelerator and not stop until we reached the Company. I emptied my M16's full magazine, a second magazine and pumped out some rounds from our M79 grenade launcher before we got through the kill zone. Fortunately, neither of us were hit. But we did hear the whizzing of the AK 47 bullets close to our heads. I was very pissed at my Battalion Commander for sending us out at night, so when I got back to the Company, I got on the radio back to the Battalion in Long Binh and let him know how I felt.

The Battalion wanted to know how long we would be operationally down repairing the conveyor belt. I consulted with my CW4 Engineer and the civilian engineers and we estimated that we would be back up operational by 0700 hours (7:00 am) the next morning. This was reported back up the chain of command to Brigade and Corps Headquarters.

Early in the morning, we were nearing completion of the repairs when we discovered we had measured and cut the belt 20 feet too short. This required us to cut another 20 feet of belt and make a second splice which took us another half hour. At 0700 hours a Huey helicopter arrived with the Corps Commander (one-star general, BG), the Brigade Commander (Colonel, COL) and my Battalion Commander (Lieutenant Colonel, LTC). The General had made several visits to our operation, so he was very familiar with me and our efforts and challenges to make crushed rock and asphalt. He asked me why we were running late from our estimate of being back up and running at 0700 hours. I told him about our mistake of cutting the belt stock 20 feet short and having to add it in with another splice and assured him we would be running in another half hour or so. He was fine with that explanation saying, "Thanks, Whit, see you again for coffee soon." He turned and headed back to his helicopter. The other two, one on each arm of mine, grabbed me and asked why I told the general we screwed up and cut the belt 20 feet short. I jerked my arms loose from the two colonels and said very loudly, "What, did you want me to lie to the general?" They were pissed and followed the general back to his helicopter. We were up and operational shortly after they left. The Brigade Commander later became the Chief of the Corps of Engineers. I feel certain that may have contributed to my not getting promoted beyond captain.

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Reflections . . . In Service to My Country

*Kent Whitman's Second Assignment in Vietnam
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On another occasion, the Deputy Brigade Commander, a full Colonel (O6), was visiting my operation. He had a Signal Corps 2nd Lieutenant (2LT) as his aide. Not sure what that was all about. Typically, colonels do not have aides. The 2LT took one look at our rock dryer and told the colonel we were running the dryer too hot and were melting the firebrick in the orifice of the dryer where the flame entered the dryer's rotating drum. We needed to run the dryer heat at about 600 degrees to completely dry all moisture off and out of the ¾-inch minus rock so the hot liquid asphalt would completely cover the rock pieces. The firebrick does not melt until about 2,100 degrees. The colonel told me to turn the dryer's heat down. I explained that if I did, we would be getting white caps in the asphaltic concrete coming out of the pug mill where the rock is mixed with the hot liquid asphalt. With any moisture on the rock, the asphalt would not stick to it, hence creating "white caps" in the black asphalt material. He refused to accept that explanation and said it was a direct order to turn the flame down. I then ordered my lieutenant, who ran the asphalt plant crew, to turn it down. After objecting explaining we would be making bad asphalt, he did as I ordered. We smiled at each other knowing it was the wrong thing to do.

Shortly after, the colonel and 2LT left the compound. What was really happening was the fine rock dust that accumulated in the orifice of the dryer was melting and running out onto the ground. The firebrick was not melting. This was very normal; and when not producing asphalt, we had to chip this molten rock away from the bricks. As soon as the colonel left the compound, I called my Battalion S3 (Operations Officer) on the radio and told him I would be sending bad asphalt up the road because the Deputy Brigade Commander Colonel had just ordered me to turn the dryer temperature down resulting in white caps in the asphalt. He was pissed and ordered me not to send any bad asphalt up the road and to shut down the asphalt plant for the day. We did as directed and used the bad asphalt to pave our entrance road to the compound. He was very upset at the Deputy Brigade Commander for ordering me to do that. I never heard what happened concerning this incident.

Our compound was located very near a VC/NVA supply route. Often, they would harass us by sending in a few mortar and rocket shells. Just before this would happen the light in the church tower in the village near our compound would go out. This was a signal from the town people that we were about to get attacked. The people in the village were refugees from North Vietnam so were always informed when the VC would be attacking us.

We always kept a guard watching the church light. Thus the village people re-paid our generosity of supplying them with electricity from the bank of many large generators we used to support our living quarters as well as support the many electrical needs of the crushers and asphalt plant by signaling to us (through the church tower light) that enemy attacks were imminent.

Pissing off these engineer senior officers along with another one while serving in the 326th Engineer Battalion, 101st Airborne Division after Vietnam is probably the major resulting factors contributing to why I never got promoted to Major. It seems to me they did not like to deal with problems while they were in command, nothing could be wrong while they were in command. My Dad brought me up telling me to always tell the truth, even if it hurt. ■

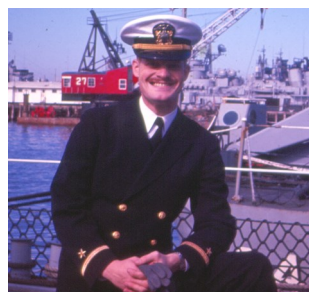
A True Sea Story About Uniform Gloves

CDR James R. Day, Jr., USN (Ret)

Many struggle with the delusion that we have one Navy. *Au contraire*. We have any number of them, depending upon one's perspective. The simplest explanation is that we have two: East Coast and West Coast. The East Coast Navy is traditional and hide-bound. The West Coast Navy might be described as "loosey-goosey."

As an Ensign, I stood bridge watches on a destroyer that deployed to the Atlantic and the Mediterranean. The uniform for standing watch, you ask? Even in the dark? Service Dress Blue, of course. In retrospect, I suspect that the same watch standers on the West Coast were only required to be odor-free so as not to offend other watch standers at night.

On the East Coast, an integral part of the every day Service Dress Blue uniform for officers was a pair of grey suede gloves to be gripped in the left hand so as to free up the right hand for saluting people. In 1964, those gloves were not cheap. Ensigns' salaries were a pittance (\$222.30 per month). For some forgotten reason, I went to a school at Little Creek, VA, from the D&S piers in Norfolk, and walking to class I passed a Commander who noted that I didn't have my gloves clutched in my left hand. He was not pleased... asked what ship I was on, etc. I expected to have an unpleasant chat with my XO upon return, but no one said anything. I figured I would probably just read about it.



My bunkmate was the Weapons Officer, LTJG Magruder, USNA '62, to whom I told the story. He advised me to carry only one glove at a time. That way, a pair would last twice as long. Brilliant! I concluded that those Canoe U. grads were taught something useful at Annapolis after all. Sure enough, my expensive gloves lasted twice as long.

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WHY MOAA?
YouTube video

June 2020

Taps

CW4 Joseph R. Brigham
LTJG Barbara A. Cirincione, USN (Ret)
Col J. Dudley Colcord, USAF (Ret)
Mrs. Frances I. Crawford
LTC Robert W. Heald, USA (Ret)
CDR Stephen M. Levine, USCG (Ret)
Mrs. Maureen E. McGael
Lt Col Nils A. Ohlson, USAF (Ret)
COL William G. Phippen, USA (Ret)
Mrs. Barbara J. Vose



CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK

Did you know that MOAA-NH has a Facebook page? We do . . . at <https://www.facebook.com/MOAA-NH-403462326493407/> Check out all the latest pictures and information about the chapter. While you're there, be sure to "like" us.

Cut and paste or type the link below into your browser. It will take you directly to National MOAA's "Take Action" tab. There you can learn about current legislative issues and voice your opinions about their efforts.

<http://www.moaa.org/takeaction>

FOR LINKED-IN USERS

MOAA-NH members: We have established a group on LinkedIn for the purpose of helping members find employment in the New Hampshire area. If you have a LinkedIn account, please request to join the "New Hampshire Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA-NH)" group. If you are seeking employment or know a prospective member who will be, create a post for the group with a link to the member's profile. We also ask that recruiters and human resource professionals from companies around New Hampshire who are interested in hiring former officers to join the group. If you have suggestions for the LinkedIn Group, please contact Jim Spotts at jim.spotts@hotmail.com.