



Monthly newsletter of the Portsmouth Area Chapter, an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America, serving Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Suffolk, Smithfield, Franklin, and surrounding counties, Virginia, since 1983. Dinner meetings are the Second Thursday of each month except July and August. Although **MOAA** and **PACMOAA** actively lobby legislatures for all US uniformed services members, we are nonpartisan and do not participate in political activities.

VOLUME XXXIX Issue VIII

LEARN MORE AT [PACMOAA.ORG](http://PACMOAA.ORG)

SEPTEMBER 2020

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### PACMOAA EARNS 10TH CONSECUTIVE 5-STAR LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE AWARD !!



I hope you and your families are doing as well as can be expected after so many months of our world changing. Even though we are in phase 3 of reopening, cases in Hampton Roads have finally started leveling off with slight decreasing after increasing significantly in July. Since the vast majority of our members are in the high risk category, please be careful and protect your families. Continue to practice the CDC recommendations per wearing a mask in groups, washing your hands thoroughly, etc. seems prudent to follow as well as following the Phase 3 Guidelines for Virginia.

As you all know, MOAA is nonpartisan as is PACMOAA. As our world seems to be more and more polarized, we all need to remember that politics should not impact our actions in PACMOAA. From current MOAA website article:

*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.*

***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.***

*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.*

*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."*

Note: The MOAA Levels of Excellence criteria encourage chapters to have an elected official present a program each year. PACMOAA has invited speakers from both parties. Last year

Delegate Steve Heretick (D), representing the 79<sup>th</sup> District spoke at our October meeting. This month, Delegate Emily Brewer (R) of the 64<sup>th</sup> District will speak.

In addition to changes in our everyday lives due to COVID 19, ongoing social turmoil, and November elections, we are approaching the height of hurricane season. Most of us remember the devastation from Hurricane Matthew in 2016 in many areas of Hampton Roads even as weather forecasters noted Matthew was moving out to sea and would not impact our area!! Many homes in the Sterling Point area of Portsmouth flooded even though we are not close to any body of water. Knowing your evacuation zone and having a plan in place if you need to evacuate should be done by now and preparing regardless of the weather report is prudent. More information per hurricane preparedness is included later in the newsletter.

As we “**Never Stop Serving**”, please remember our troops currently serving – Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard, and their families; retirees and their families; and all the veterans and wounded warriors in your thoughts and prayers. Please remember our country also during this very difficult time.

### SEPTEMBER SPEAKER

**NOTE: Meeting will be virtual via ZOOM.** You will get an invitation emailed to you the week of Sep 7<sup>th</sup>.



**Emily Brewer** understands the concerns of families in Western Tidewater because she has spent a lifetime in the region.

She has a heart for community service and helping others. Emily spends time across the region as a board member of Suffolk Business Women who work to raise money across the region for various charities and community organizations. As a board member for the Paul D. Camp Community College Foundation Board, Emily has worked across the region to bring better education opportunities to the next generation of leaders.

First elected to the 64<sup>th</sup> District in the House of Delegates in November of 2017, Emily represents parts of Isle of Wight, Franklin City, Southampton, Surry, Sussex, Suffolk City, and Prince George. She currently serves on the House Finance Committee, House Militia Police & Public Safety Committee, and the House Science & Technology Committee.

#### Attracting New Jobs to The Region

As a member of the House, Emily also serves on several state boards and commissions comprised of legislators and citizen members. She was appointed by the Speaker to serve on the Broadband Advisory Council, which recommends broadband projects and funding priorities to the General Assembly. She also serves on the Commission on Youth, Disability Commission, and the Forensic Science Board.

Emily is a small business owner. She started her career training first responders, law enforcement, and public safety officials. Moving on to start her own marketing firm before starting her brick and mortar business. She now owns and operates a small wine and craft beer shop in Suffolk.

Emily serves as a founding member of the Virginia Future Caucus, whose goal it is to craft legislative solutions to the problems facing the next generation in Virginia. She has worked to keep taxes low and voted in her first term to pass the second largest tax cut in Virginia history.

The Virginia Chamber of Commerce named Emily their "2018 Freshman Legislator of the Year" for her work in fostering a pro-business economy across the Commonwealth. Emily will continue to be a strong advocate for our job creators; supporting pro-small business policies and removing government barriers to create high paying jobs.

Emily is committed to advancing policies that reflect the priorities of the Sixty-Fourth District.

## SEPTEMBER VIRTUAL MEETING

The September Meeting will be VIRTUAL on ZOOM, September 10<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. You will get an email ZOOM invitation the week of September 7<sup>th</sup>. **You can use a computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone.** Anyone wishing to get help, please call Ken App at 757-630-0886, or Bill Smith, at 252-333-0871.

We had a VIRTUAL AWARDS MEETING on July 9<sup>th</sup> which went very well.

### SEPTEMBER CALENDAR

- 02 VJ Day 1945
- 10 PACMOAA Dinner Meeting Virtual 1900
- 12 Patriot Day
- 18 POW/MIA Recognition Day
- 18 US AIRFORCE Birthday 1947
- 18 VIRGINIA EARLY VOTING BEGINS
- 19 Rosh Hashanah
- 22 Autumnal Equinox First Day of Fall
- 27 Gold Star Mother's Day
- 27 Yom Kippur

### UPDATE 2020

### MEMBERSHIP

PACMOAA wishes a he  
LTC Boyd Gaines, US

**Remember that membership is important.** Without increased membership and engagement of the current membership, we will not be able to continue being effective in legislative advocacy and involvement with community advocacy.

PACMOAA had 69 paid members, including 7 life members and 8 new members, as of 25 August 2020. Five new members joined since April. Many thanks to **Dolly Cherrington**, Membership Chair, for recruiting these new members!!

**PACMOAA will have a meeting each month of the remainder of the year.** Hopefully, we'll have some in person, but that is still to be determined. When we have an in person meeting, please think about an eligible friend that you can invite as your guest to a dinner or to invite to join PACMOAA. Potential members can attend their first dinner meeting at half price. A selling point could be if someone joins MOAA as a Premium or Life member, they receive 1 or 2 years chapter membership free!

PACMOAA LEADERSHIP

SEE ONLINE PAGE



## SUGGESTED REVISIONS TO PACMOAA BYLAWS

At the PACMOAA Board Meetings on 28 May and 11 June, the board discussed updating the Bylaws and membership categories to correlate more with the MOAA bylaws and membership categories. The Board will be reviewed these suggested revisions again on 27 August and a copy of the Bylaws with suggested revisions highlighted will be sent to all members to review before we vote on them at the October meeting.

Main revisions include:

**1. Adding PACMOAA Mission Statement** – This has been suggested at several MOAA Chapter Leadership Regional Programs and in the workbook on the MOAA website as a MOAA best practice.

**2. Membership categories** – Add Active Duty non-voting membership category. This would be similar to MOAAs Basic membership. They would receive only the email PACMOAA newsletter, could attend all PACMOAA functions, but not vote in elections or for bylaws changes. PACMOAA would receive a small incentive from MOAA for members that joined MOAA at the Basic level.

**3. Bylaws** – Many editorial changes and updated language but also adding another Executive Board Leadership Team position. The Board members felt that having a 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President for

### SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Ken App	Joseph Barreca
Scott Dickinson	Paul Lucas
Blaine Pearsall	Hans Sachse
Bill Smith	Margret Wilshusen
Richard Yesensky	

Happy Birthday and Many More!!!

**Communications/Webmaster** would be most beneficial. Having the Newsletter Editor/Website/Facebook Manager actively involved in board activities should facilitate better communication to the membership overall.

**November 3, 2020 General & Special Elections**

## Schedule & Deadlines

Voter registration deadline:

**Tuesday, October 13, 2020 (close of business)**

Absentee ballot application (BY MAIL) deadline:

**Friday, October 23, 2020 (5pm)**

Absentee ballot (IN-PERSON) deadline:

**Saturday, October 31, 2020 (5pm)**

Voted ballot returned to VDOE office deadline:

**Postmarked on or before**

**Tuesday, November 3, 2020 (7pm)**

or in VDOE office Friday, November 6, 2020 (Noon)

**Anyone can request an Absentee Ballot**

**This year there is a special provision for Covid-19**

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Early “in person” voting begins **Friday September 18, 2020** in Virginia. Information regarding “in person” early voting is available from your [election registrar](#). You may wish to vote early to avoid encountering crowds at your polling place

### Citizen Portal

Register to vote, update your current Virginia voter registration, apply to vote absentee by mail, or view your polling place, election district, absentee ballot status, and voting history.

If you plan to vote in person on election day, please check your local polling places early to ensure they will be open on election day, November 3, 2020. Some locations may have changed due to COVID-19 impacts. Use the [Citizen Portal](#) to verify your polling place.

Due to the unusual circumstances associated with COVID-19, this ballot has been deemed a “no excuse needed” absentee ballot. If you wish to vote by mail, request your ballot as soon as possible. Use the [Citizen Portal](#) to request an absentee ballot.

You can check the status of your request and ballot once it has been mailed by going to your [Registrar’s web site](#). Use the **Track Your Ballot** tool. If you do choose vote by mail, you should follow up by checking the registrar’s site to verify the ballot has been received and counted. If you cannot tell when they mailed your ballot and the estimated arrival date, or that your mailed ballot has been received, you may wish to proceed to the registrar's office and request to vote early in person. The Registrar should mark you off the rolls as having voted and cancel/not allow your mail ballot to be counted should it arrive later due to postal delays.

Please check with your local Registrar for voting information and details.

[Information About Virginia Voting](#)

## **LETTER FROM 2018 PACMOAA SCHOLARSHIP AWARDEE**

18 August 2020

Members and Donors of PACMOAA, My name is Ethan Gilmore and I was one of the awardees for the 2018 PACMOAA scholarship. Your donations helped fund my Rat (Freshman) Year at the

Virginia Military Institute. Currently I am a rising 2<sup>nd</sup> Classman and contracted Army MSIII seeking to branch Armor.



NOTE: Ethan is the cadet on the left in the picture to the left.

My time at VMI has been nothing short of excellent in part because of your funding. Going into my third year at the Institute I have been able to maintain above a 3.1 GPA additionally I was selected to be a Corporal my 3<sup>rd</sup> class year, and this year a Platoon Sergeant. Perhaps the most exciting that I have done was being able to participate in a bilateral military exchange with the Military Academy of Lithuania. I spent the coldest months of the winter in Lithuania 4,500 miles from home. While I was there, I was able to immerse myself in their culture and see firsthand the effects of Soviet occupation and the Cold War on the Baltics. As a history major this trip ignited a new self-interest in Eastern European and Cold War history. Aside from my studies I was supposed to spend a few weeks in the field with the Lithuanians as well as participate in their airborne school, however, my six-month stay was cut short by Covid and I was unable to participate.

Not only was my trip fun, but I think living and interacting with future officers of an allied military only a few hundred miles from Moscow gave me a new perspective on the importance of our alliances, how our allies train and interact with us, as well as helping to make me a more well rounded officer.

As for my remaining time at VMI, I am looking forward to getting my class ring and I am expecting my academics to pick up exponentially. This year should be my hardest and most important year at VMI because of the level of my classes and preparation for Advanced Camp. I hope that you are all in good health during these eventful times.

Sincerely,

Ethan Gilmore  
VMI '22

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

### UPDATE FROM SUMMER 2020 VIRTUAL STORMING FOR VCOC

27 August 2020

Several VCOC officers (1<sup>st</sup> VCOC President coordinated both sessions), PACMOAA President, Southside Chapter President, Mount Vernon Chapter Leg Rep, and Richmond Chapter President and Leg Rep participated (only with Senator Warner).

1. Met with Sen Warner on 19 August for 50 minutes discussing the MOAA action needed for the summer storming, issues with the post office and military housing as well as concurrent receipt. The Senator discussed issues he felt were important to MOAA that he has been working on for about 15 minutes and then listened to each attendees comments/information. It was a very interactive session. The meeting lasted 50 minutes and was the most productive out of the 4 Storming/Summer Storming meetings with our legislators I've participated in since May.
2. Met with Senator Kaine's representatives – Janet Kaufman; CAPT Janet Lomax, USN (Ret); and Mark Ewechiew, AD Navy, Defense Fellow on 27 August for 50 minutes. Very

good discussion among participants with questions from Janet and Mark. Mark did note the when the Senate returns from August break, focus will be on Heroes Heal conferencing first!!! NDAA ¾ trillion dollars and already spent 3 trillion dollars on COVID 19 and plan on spending another 3 trillion dollars. Unclear when conferencing to markup House and Senate version of FY21 NDAA will occur.

Reminder: The purpose of the regular storming and summer storming are to ensure provisions are included in FY21 NDAA to halt all cuts to military medical billets and reassess the alignment/MTF restructuring. The previous assessment was not accurate per the GAO report released in May 2020 which highlighted multiple deficiencies.

The house version includes language to do both but the senate version does not address the issue. Thus, MOAA's focus at this time is on the senate to:

“Support Sections 715 and 716 in House version of FY21 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) requiring DoD to conduct additional analysis and mitigation planning on MTF restructuring and billet cuts.”

Submitted by **Sherry D Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret)**  
President, PACMOAA

### Gordon Nelson Receives PACMOAA HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP



Pictured L to R above are, Twila and Gordon Nelson in their home, displaying the certificate and two PACMOAA Coffee Mugs

### GORDON NELSON AWARDED PACMOAA HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP

By unanimous vote via email, on 13 and 14 July 2020, the Board of Directors decided to award COL Gordon Nelson, USA (Ret) an honorary life membership! For the past 13 years, until June 2019, Gordon did most of the newsletter and I just sent several articles each month. He has been emailing newsletters as well sending them out by regular mail every month and keeping the membership roster updated. In addition to these regular tasks each month, Gordon forwarded pertinent information to members as requested. Gordon set up the current website and kept it updated until this January. Gordon attended as many PACMOAA activities as possible in his role as our photographer - dinner meetings, Annual Portsmouth Memorial Day parades, etc. He also videotaped significant events, like the Memorial Day parade and our annual Christmas Gala and added them to the PACMOAA website for everyone's enjoyment. Even though he rarely attended board meetings, Gordon regularly shared ideas on ways to increase membership and participation. Gordon also rarely if ever submitted a voucher but has spent his own funds mailing newsletters, upgrading his camera and computer systems to improve pictures and newsletter, etc.

From my perspective, I feel like Gordon is probably more deserving of this than anyone I have worked with in my 20 years' experience in PACTROA/PACMOAA.

Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret)

President

## MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

### PACMOAA Member Roger Hirsh - Veterans Profile in VDVSeNews September 2020 , Volume 2 Newsletter



**Please give an overview of your military service.**

Enlisted: Recruit Training/Boot Camp Great Lakes IL 1971, followed by Hospital Corps School, also at Great Lakes. First duty station was Naval Hospital Portsmouth, VA, assigned to Pharmacy, completed training for Pharmacy Technician NEC. Discharged August 1975, served an additional year in reserves as Corpsman for Harbor Clearance Unit Two.

Graduated Old Dominion University BS (Microbiology) 1976, then Medical College of Virginia/Virginia Commonwealth University BS in Pharmacy, 1979. Also completed MBA from Golden Gate Univ of San Francisco and MS in Pharmacy Administration from Purdue University.

Commissioned: LTJG Medical Service Corps as Pharmacy Officer 1980. Assigned to NH San Diego, duty included implementing Navy's first pharmacy computer systems, which became a career specialty. Duty stations included NH San Diego, NAS Miramar, NAS Oceana, NRMC Portsmouth, Naval School of Health Sciences Portsmouth, NAS Jacksonville, NH Great Lakes, NMC San Diego, and NMC Portsmouth VA. Retired as CAPT in 2006 after 30 years active duty.

Civil Service: After retiring from active duty, worked an additional ten years as a civilian Pharmacist for NMC Portsmouth VA. Retired from Civil Service in 2018.

Military awards included Meritorious Service Medal (3), Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, and several other unit and service medals.

**What was or were your most rewarding assignment or assignments while serving?**

Serving as Pharmacy Director for NMC San Diego and NMC Portsmouth were both professionally challenging as a Pharmacy Officer. Most rewarding was deploying as the Deputy Commander of U.S. Military Hospital Kuwait 2004-2005, during Operation Iraqi Freedom. It was a unique privilege to lead such a dedicated team on such a critical mission.



**What are you doing now?**

In 2017, I started an effort to get a U.S. Navy license plate established for Virginia, which currently only has Army, Coast Guard, and Marine Corps. As the DMV State Sponsor, I set the plate up as a revenue share to benefit the Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society. DMV requires 450 paid preorders to present the plate to the General Assembly, of which we currently have just over 200. Our legislative sponsor is Senator Jen Kiggans of Virginia Beach. Along the way, the project has been in a variety of media, including TV, radio, newspaper, and magazines. I was inexperienced in social media, but have since set up a Facebook page at @Navy.Plate.Virginia and last year, set up a website at [www.NavyPlateVirginia.com](http://www.NavyPlateVirginia.com)

**What advice would you give to a transitioning service member?** Be proud of the fact that you served your country, regardless of pay grade, awards, or assignments. The experience is much more valuable than many college degrees. Employers look for veterans because of their training, self-discipline, and work ethic, not because they were a Chief or Commander. Take advantage of earned education benefits, and network through your veteran's organizations, such as the Fleet Reserve Association.

### PHARMACY UPDATE

27 AUGUST 2020

The NMCP website and Facebook site do not have any updated pharmacy information, but per Suffolk Tricare Pharmacy:

Hours: 0730 – 1430 Sunday – Saturday

Refills: Can be picked up there

New Scripts: Only filled if NMCP prescriber or pain med/controlled substance (need printed copy). Otherwise need to go through NMCP Pharmacy Call Center at 953-0258.

### NMCP HOSPITAL UPDATE

25 Aug Please be aware that due to unforeseen circumstances the Hampton Roads Appointment Center at 1-866-645-4584 is experiencing unexpected delays and increased hold times. We care about your care and apologize for the inconvenience. As an option, we encourage you to use the Primary Care Appointment on Tricare's online service at <https://www.tricare.mil/FindDoctor/Appointments> or log into [tricareonline.com](http://tricareonline.com).

24 Aug Effective August 24, 2020, visitors, patients, or staff who come to the facility unmasked will not be permitted to enter the facility. If staff try to enter unmasked, they will be sent to their car, or home as required, to retrieve a mask. If visitors and patients present

unmasked, they will be offered a mask; if they are unable to wear a mask, they will be offered a face shield. If they refuse both, they will not be permitted to enter without written documentation from a health care provider waiving the use of a mask and/or face shield. If a patient is in duress or presenting with an emergency condition, they will be directed to the Emergency Room. In that scenario, the above masking requirement will not apply.

[Read More](#)

## SOME TIPS ON HURRICANE PREPAREDNESS

The American Red Cross website at [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) has lots of valuable information and suggestions on how to prepare before, during and after the storm. Knowing your evacuation zone is also key: <https://www.vaemergency.gov/hurricane-evacuation-zone-lookup/> . The Red Cross Office in Norfolk can be reached at 446-7700 or in Hampton at 838-7320.

### Prepare in Advance

Be sure you're Red Cross Ready. That means:

- Assembling an [emergency preparedness kit](#).
- Creating a [household evacuation plan](#) that includes your pets.
- Staying informed about your community's risk and response plans.
- Educating your family on how to use the [Safe and Well website](#).
- Download the Emergency App for [iPhone >>](#) or for [Android >>](#)

### How to Prepare Before a Hurricane

- Protecting Your Family
- Protecting Your Pets & Animals
- Protecting Your Home

### Right Before:

- Listen to local area radio, [NOAA radio](#) or TV stations for the latest information and updates.
- [Be prepared to evacuate](#) quickly and know your routes and destinations. Find a local [emergency shelter](#).
- Check your [emergency kit](#) and replenish any items missing or in short supply, especially medications or other medical supplies. Keep it nearby.

On the Red Cross website , you can download the **FREE Hero Care App** to access vital emergency and non-emergency resources for military members, veterans and military or text: "GETHEROCARE" to 90999

**From WAVY TV website:** Prepare your disaster kit ahead of time and store in a waterproof container. Prepare for up to 5 days worth of supplies!!

- 1 gallon water per person per day
- Non-perishable food
- Infant formula/food for elderly/food for pets as appropriate
- Medicine and first aid kit
- Tools and household goods

**USAA** also has a Natural Disaster Center on it's website. It also notes the importance to gather important documents and photograph your property to facilitate claims!

# VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH **COVIDWISE** SMART PHONE APP

## How It Works

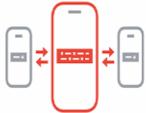
**COVIDWISE** uses Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology to quickly notify users who have likely been exposed so you can reduce the risk of infection for your friends and family and help Virginia stop the spread.



**Step 1** Download the free app [iPhone App Store](#) or [Android Google Play Store](#).



**Step 2** Once you opt-in to the notification system, the Exposure Notifications System will **generate an anonymous token for your device**. To help ensure these anonymous tokens can't be used to identify you or your location, they change every 10-20 minutes.



**Step 3** Your phone and the phones around you will work in the background, without draining your battery or data, to **exchange these privacy-preserving anonymous tokens via Bluetooth Low Energy (BLE) technology**. This is a passive process that begins once you opt-in and functions without the app open.

**Step 4** On a daily basis, your phone downloads a list of all the anonymous tokens associated with positive COVID-19 cases and **checks them against the list of anonymous tokens it has encountered in the last 14 days**.



**Step 5** If there's a match, the app will notify you with further instructions from your public health authority on **how to keep you and the people around you safe**.

It has been reported that if 60-70% of Virginians employed this smartphone App, it would be like **AUTOMATIC CONTACT TRACING**, and Greatly slow the spread of COVID-19!!!

### FROM THE TREASURER Regular Dinner Analysis

The current base cost of a meal at the Hilton Garden Inn is \$20 which becomes \$27 per person after service charge and taxes. We also have to pay for the room which is \$127.20 for a single room (we use two for the Christmas dinner). We charge everyone \$30 for the dinner. Thus, the room charge has to be paid from the \$3 per paying person left over after we pay for the meal. This means that we need 42+ people paying to completely cover the room cost. But we have had an actual average total loss of about \$106 per dinner over the last 18 months.

Even if we had sales tax forgiveness, it would only save us about \$1.44/meal. When we calculate a “breakeven” charge per paying person using the scenarios of the last 1½ years, we get a range from a “best” case of \$31 to a “worst” case of \$36. The average for the same period is \$33-\$34. If we get exemption from the state sales tax for the meals, we gain about a dollar for an average of \$32-\$33.

Therefore, if we are to continue using the Hilton Garden Inn, then it would appear that we have to consider raising the meal charge to perhaps \$35.

H. Sachse  
CDR, USN (Ret)  
Treasurer

## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

### Together We Can Make It

*We are all like one-winged angels. It's only when we help each other that we can fly.*

Luciano deCrescenzo

Bob Butler lost his legs in a 1965 land mine explosion in Vietnam. He returned home a war hero. Twenty years later, he proved once again that heroism comes from the heart.

Butler was working in his garage in a small town in Arizona on a hot summer day when he heard a woman's screams coming from a nearby house. He rolled his wheelchair toward the house, but the dense shrubbery wouldn't allow him access to the back door. So the veteran got out of his chair and crawled through the dirt and bushes. “I had to get there,” he says. “It didn't matter how much it hurt.”

When Butler arrived at the house, he traced the screams to the pool, where a three-year-old girl was lying at the bottom. She had been born without arms and had fallen in the water and couldn't swim. Her mother stood over her baby screaming frantically. Butler dove to the bottom of the pool and brought little Stephanie up to the deck. Her face was blue, she had no pulse and she was not breathing.

Butler immediately went to work performing CPR to revive her while Stephanie's mother telephoned the fire department. She was told the paramedics were already out on a call. Helplessly, she sobbed and hugged Butler's shoulder.

As Butler continued with CPR, he calmly reassured Stephanie's mother. “Don't worry,” he said. “I was her arms to get her out of the pool. It will be okay. I'm now her lungs. Together we can make it.”

Seconds later the little girl coughed, regained consciousness and began to cry. As they hugged and rejoiced together, the mother asked Butler how he knew it would be okay.

“When my legs were blown off in the war, I was all alone in a field,” He told her. “No one was there to help except a little Vietnamese girl. As she struggled to drag me into her village, she whispered in broken English, ‘t okay. You can live. I be your legs. Together we make it’ ”

“This was my chance,” he told Stephanie's mom, “to return the favor.”

*From Chicken Soup for the Veteran's Soul*

A true story about a soldier who never stopped caring and looking out for others. Go and do likewise.

Bob Steorts, COL USAF (Ret) Chaplain



**That's a Wrap!**