



The Council Crier

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*The Quarterly Newsletter of the
Virginia Council of Chapters of the
Military Officers Association of America*

VCOC Officers 2020-2022

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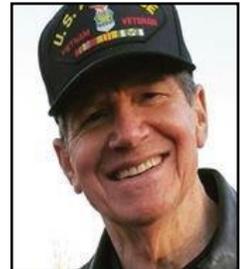
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As we conclude the second quarter of 2021, I would like to thank all of our Chapters for doing a great job of carrying out the MOAA mission. Examples in our Council abound with chapter community involvement and legislative advocacy. More good news: chapters are starting to return to in person meetings. Check the stories in the Spotlight on the Chapters Section both on the VCOC homepage and this edition of the Crier.



Also in in this edition of the Crier is an update on our VCOC Awards for 2020. With the COVID 19 Pandemic, we have been unable to meet in person so far this year, either with Quarterly meetings in Virginia, or with our annual Congressional Affairs Luncheon in the District of Columbia. This noted, we are anticipating a return to in person meetings by the fourth Quarter Meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, October 5, when we will also hold our Biennial Awards Luncheon.

With this issue of the Crier, I am presenting the second in an ongoing series of stories which I believe offers some learning points in basic leadership. Entitled, "My Experience During Exercise Shabazz-77 in Iran," this short story is a narrative which I believe expresses what a true leader would do for a fellow service member amidst a difficult situation. In this case, it was what an unnamed C-141 Aircraft Commander and an Air Force C-141 Loadmaster named MSgt O'Day did for me in 1977 in Tehran, Iran. Had they not done what they did, I might have ended up in a far different situation. By 11 February that year, the Shah of Iran had been deposed. See the last story in this issue of the Crier, in which I detail what happened.

As leaders and fellow military retirees, how we treat one another amidst day to day business matters, such as during meetings and personal interaction matters.



Albeit a far safer environment than that of the tarmac in Tehran, Iran, basic leadership principles are geographically and situationally blind.

To this day, I deeply admire what a C-141 Pilot and MSgt O'Day did that day at the airport. Over to our VCOC today in 2021, let us all strive to follow their example, amidst our daily interaction. Along with MOAA and our VCOC as organizations, each of us will be better for it.

In closing, I am happy to report that it appears I have fully recovered from some otherwise serious health issues which I encountered last Spring. I would like to personally thank our First Vice President CDR Linc Smith USNR (Ret) for holding our VCOC together amidst my year of long recovery. Not only has Linc skillfully covered our Council Legislative Affairs mission, he has ensured without pause ongoing and effective Council communication amidst the COVID 19 Pandemic. Our New Homepage and Council Crier remain as prime examples of such communication. I also would like to thank each member of our VCOC Board and our Committee Chairs for their hard work over the past year, for which I am most grateful.

To our Chapters, thank you for your dedicated service to our Virginia Council of Chapters this year, reflected by the ten chapters in our council who won the Harris Communication Award for 2020. We look forward to a productive remainder of 2021.

Col Boyd Nix, USAF (Ret)

MOAA Advocacy in Action 2021

The MOAA homepage article of February 09, 2021, "Advocacy in Action: Details on MOAA's Spring Campaign" outlines MOAA Advocacy Action 2021.

In the article, MOAA Vice President for Government Affairs COL Dan Merry, USAF (Ret) says, "We all miss the opportunity for in-person meetings on Capitol Hill with our legislators and their staffs. This annual event has been popular with our Chapters and Councils, as well as our Board of Directors and the MOAA staff. The big event this year is Advocacy in Action, the new name for our annual legislative push on Capitol Hill."





To MOAA Advocacy in Action 2021, VCOC has assembled an Advocacy Team consisting of volunteers from both our VCOC Board and six member chapters, for which a private participant Microsite site has been posted. To MOAA Membership, family, friends, and the community, MOAA has also posted a Public Microsite. Both sites are “go to” comprehensive on line resources for MOAA Advocacy in Action 2021.

VCOC is conducting virtual meetings with our legislators this Spring. Topics for 2021 address currently serving, veterans and recent retirees, and members of the National Guard and Reserve forces. The three Advocacy topics are Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Reform, TRICARE Young Adult Parity and Basic Needs Allowance.

Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Reform

“This focus on comprehensive toxic exposure reform highlights those currently serving, veterans, those recently retired from active duty, and the Guard and Reserves. When most people hear about toxic exposure, they think of Agent Orange and Vietnam, and we work that, too. However, there is a significant lack of awareness of the current toxic exposures for those in uniform today and since 9/11.

We seek the basics: expanded health care for those who were exposed, the creation of an advisory council, and to reauthorize the Agent Orange authorities which expired in 2015. This issue hits more than the service members — it is a direct impact to the families who are or will be the caregivers.”

TRICARE Young Adult Parity

“There is a glaring disparity between commercial health care plans that cover adult children to age 26 and TRICARE, which requires a separate premium for young adult coverage. In 2013, TYA monthly premiums were \$152 for Standard and \$176 for Prime; today, those monthly fees are \$257 and \$459 respectively, which is an unsustainable curve, charting a course for TYA plan failure. The Health Care Fairness for Military Families Act of 2021 (H.R. 475), sponsored by Reps. Elaine Luria (D-Va.) and Michael Waltz (R-Fla.), expand TRICARE eligibility to young adult dependents up to age 26.”

Basic Needs Allowance

“This proposed allowance would address our service members and their families who are most vulnerable to food insecurity and are finding it difficult to make ends meet. The subsistence allowance would be provided automatically to service members whose gross household income (not including their Basic Allowance for Housing, or BAH) is below 130% of the federal poverty line. This recurring struggle was exacerbated by COVID-19 layoffs.”

Our Council will also again advocate for the Richard Star Act, a MOAA perennial priority. The Star Act will allow service members forced to medically retire from injury on duty to be authorized for concurrent receipt, which is receiving retirement pay from DoD for their service, while also receiving disability pay from the VA to compensate for injury.



In closing, our council currently has members from eight chapters who have volunteered to serve on our VCOC Advocacy in Action Team for 2021. Whether Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Reform, TRICARE Young Adult Parity, Basic Needs Allowance, or the Richard Star Act, we look forward to advocating and obtaining support for each of these topics from our entire Virginia Delegation.

Spotlight on the Chapters

Portsmouth Area Chapter Hosts Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Commanding Officer

The Portsmouth Area Chapter hosted Naval Medical Center Portsmouth (NMCP) Commanding Officer CAPT Lisa P. Mulligan, USN, at an in person and virtual dinner, held on 8 April at Roger Brown's Restaurant in Portsmouth, Virginia.



A native of Lawrenceville, N.J., CAPT Mulligan attended the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, where she earned her medical degree. Capt. Mulligan served as Deputy Commander/Executive Officer, Naval Medical Center San Diego from July 2013 until assuming the duties as the Commanding Officer of Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton July 10, 2015.



In July of 2017 she assumed the role of Chief Medical Officer and Assistant Deputy Chief of High Reliability, Quality, and Patient Safety at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Falls Church, VA. As of July 2019, she is serving as the Commanding Officer of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. Pictured below: NMCP Portsmouth.

During her remarks, CAPT Mulligan highlighted her own career. She followed by a review of the history of NMCP, along with focus on the current NMCP efforts to distribute the COVID 19 Vaccine both at the Hospital and in the Hampton Roads Region.



Above: PACMOAA President COL William Smith, USA (Ret), introduces NMCP Commander CAPT Lisa Mulligan, USN



Above : left to right, Former VCOC President (1988-1989) and and PACMOAA Chaplain, LtCol Bob Steorts, USAF (Ret), VCOC Vice President CDR Linc Smith, USNR, Maj Sherry Ferki, USA, (Ret), PACMOAA President COL William Smith, USA (Ret)

VCOC Vice President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret) presented the PACMOAA President's pin to MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret) in recognition of her many years of dedicated service as President of PACMOAA.



Falcons Landing Chapter Falcons Landing Chapter Assists Veterans in Need Through Partnership

Col Bob Manning, USA (Ret), Falcons Landing Chapter President

For over three years, the Falcons Landing Chapter has worked with the Community Lutheran Church in Sterling Virginia to provide financial assistance to veterans and their families for rent, medical bills, home repairs, transportation and other needs. To date, Falcons Landing Chapter has provided over \$44,000 in assistance.

Pictured below: Don Poorman, Community Lutheran Church, Col. Howard Schue, USAF (Ret), Loudon County Family Support Coordinator, Col. Bob Manning, USA (Ret), Falcons Landing Chapter President.



View the full story by Blair Drake,
MOAA Magazine, April 2021, at: [Partnering to Help Veterans](#)



Awards

VCOC Awards

In our last Crier, VCOC President Nix highlighted VCOC Board and chapter members for their service as follows.

Col Victoria Revilla, USA (Ret) for her 18 year of service to VCOC and many years of service as Southside Virginia Chapter President.

CDR Linc Smith, USNR, (Ret) for creation and launch of our new VCOC homepage, leading our Legislative Affairs Summer Storming 2020 and assuming duties as Legislative Co-Chair, Federal level.

Col Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret) for his faithful service as our Secretary this year, also assuming duties as Legislative Affairs Co-Chair, state level and VCOC representative to the Virginia Joint leadership Council (JLC).

LtCol Ken Ruppard, USA (Ret), CAPT Mary Lou Wassel, USN (Ret) and COL Vince Cammarata, USA (Ret) for dedicated service to VCOC.

CDR John Prevar USN (Ret), Maj Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret) and Col Jim Pauls, USAF (Ret) for their persistent Legislative Affairs contributions during our Summer Storming 2020.

Each of the aforementioned team players will be receiving MOAA or VCOC awards for their fine service to VCOC at our Fourth Quarter and Biennial Awards Luncheon.

Harris Communications Award Winners

From MOAA:

“Each year, MOAA recognizes affiliates that achieve excellence in communications with four or five star Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Awards. Councils and chapters may submit entries in up to two categories: newsletters (print or electronic) and web- sites. We are pleased to announce 210 five star awards and seven four star awards to the following 139 affiliates for 2020. Congratulations!”



The Harris Communications Awards winners 2020 in our VCOC are as follows:

Virginia Council of Chapters (print newsletter and website)
Central Virginia Chapter (print newsletter and website)
Falcons Landing Chapter (print newsletter and website)
Hampton Roads Chapter (print newsletter and website)
Heritage Chapter (print newsletter and website)
Heritage Hunt Chapter (print newsletter)
Mount Vernon Chapter (print newsletter and website)
Portsmouth Area Chapter (print newsletter and website)
Richmond Area Chapter (print newsletter and website)
Southwest Virginia Chapter (print newsletter and website)
Virginia Peninsula Chapter (print newsletter and website)

VCOC plans to formally present the Harris Communication Awards at our Fourth Quarter Meeting and Biennial Awards Luncheon, tentatively scheduled from 1000 to 1200, Tuesday, 5 October 2021.

On behalf of our Council, congratulations to all of our Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Awards Five Star winners for 2020.

VCOC Homepage

In reminder, the recently launched VCOC homepage presents six primary sections: About Us, Chapters, Meetings and Resources, Crier Newsletter, Legislative Affairs and Contact Us.

The purpose of the homepage is fourfold. First, provide an online platform to assist in ensuring the longterm viability of VCOC. Second, further grow the MOAA brand in Virginia. Third, provide a platform for VCOC chapter involvement and recognition. Finally, provide an improved call to action to VCOC membership, encouraging website visitors to multiple actions, such as joining a MOAA chapter.

To the aforementioned, chapter stories are most welcome for posting to the VCOC Homepage in an ongoing basis. Contact VCOC Webmaster CDR Linc Smith at mvng288@aol.com with any stories or announcements that you may have.



VCOC Meeting Schedule 2021

The VCOC Meeting Schedule for the remainder of 2021, tentative and subject to modification, follows:

July 13, 2021: Third Quarter Meeting, 1000 to 1400, Virtual Zoom Meeting.

October 5, 2021: Fourth Quarter Meeting and Biennial Awards Ceremony, 1000 to 1400, Patriots Colony, 6000 Patriots Colony Drive, Williamsburg, VA 23188.

Leadership Story Series

My Experience During Exercise SHABAZZ-77 In Iran

VCOC President Col Boyd Nix, USAF (Ret)

I served in West Germany from 1977 to 1985. My primary duty was supporting the Air Defense of Western Europe.

Two weeks after I arrived and passed my final check ride my Squadron Commander asked me to his office. I reported in as Captain Nix and he had me take a seat. He congratulated me on my success in passing my Stan Eval check-ride.

Immediately afterwards, he said Captain I have selected you to represent HQ USAFE (USAF Europe) and our squadron as an evaluator of the Iranian Air Defense System during the Iranian Exercise SABAZZ-77. I was apprehensive as he gave me more details but saluted smartly and said thank you sir.

Within the week I boarded a C-130 at Ramstein AFB, Germany for Incirlik AB, Turkey. Shortly after arriving at Incirlik I caught a C-7 to Tehran Iran.

Shortly after debarking the C-7 I found myself on the tarmac in 120 degrees temperature and not another person in sight. After a few minutes, I saw someone in the distance walking towards me from a hangar on the other side of the runway. As he got closer I saw he was a USAF Master Sergeant. As he came close..." he asked me if I was the Operations Officer for the Exercise?" I said I wasn't and he told me he had about 200 enlisted in the hangar to keep them out of the sun until the Ops Officer shows up to tell us where to go. I told him I was sorry and would keep a lookout for the officer and tell him where you are.



After another half an hour or so an Iranian Air Force Major showed up in a Jeep and said hop in Captain and we sped away to his office. Once we were inside his office"... he said Captain Nix what are you doing in my Country?" I told him I was a member of the Exercise SHABAZZ-77 Evaluation Team.

Next, he asked me if I knew where I was supposed to go? I really thought he should know but asked him if he had a copy of the SHABAZZ-77 Ops Plan. He opened his safe and handed it to me. I flipped through the plan and pointed out my position and he said you need to go to Shiraz which is in the South. Then I asked him how do I get there and he told me they didn't have an aircraft going there.

Later, an Iranian AF Lieutenant and driver showed up in a sedan and took me to the Tehran Intercontinental Hotel for overnight until they could arrange for my transportation to Shiraz.

The Lieutenant helped check me into the hotel and then escorted me to my room. As we walked down the hall to my room I heard very loud noises and hammering which was near my room. I asked him what the noise was about. He asked the workers in Farsi what happened and was told a bomb exploded there last night. I immediately asked if they had another hotel where I could stay and although insulted, he checked me into a high rise across town where all the American contractors stayed. I remember thinking that I guess I would be safer here.

After breakfast the next morning the Lieutenant and driver took me back to the airport tarmac and I waited by myself until another C-7 arrived carrying two passengers, two Majors, one Libyan and the other Turkish. The Libyan Major was very loud and direct but the Turkish Major was very solemn and quiet. I boarded and we took off for Shiraz.

Again, once when we landed and parked, another Lieutenant with driver pulled up to take us to our quarters. Our orders stated that once we landed we were supposed to report ASAP to the Team Chief at the Shiraz AB Headquarters Building. I apprized the Lieutenant of the fact and he said sir my General wants to see you first. I tried to convince him that our orders said otherwise but he insisted we go to the General's office. All of a sudden the Libyan Major exploded and ordered..."Lieutenant take us to the Base Headquarters but instead, he took us to the general's office!

When we walked into the General's office he stood up, shook our hands and had us sit on a sofa and ordered tea. Once seated, the General drilled me for about 45 minutes on President Carter's Human Rights Policy. I told him I was an Air Force Officer like him and not an International Affairs expert. He never spoke a word to either of the Majors during the time he grilled me. Suddenly, he stood up and shook our hands and we departed.

Finally, the Lieutenant took us to our quarters. I found out the difference between company grade versus field grade quarters in Iran. My quarters did not even meet USAF enlisted standards.

We had decided to meet at the Officer's Club for dinner and drinks after we settled in our rooms and cleaned up. After looking at the club's menu we noticed no alcohol was on the menu and they didn't have a wine menu. Fortunately, the Turkish Major showed up with a



briefcase with his own stash of three full bottles of Vodka. The major from Turkey came well prepared, hated the Iranians and demonstrated his ire throughout the exercise.

The next morning a jeep showed up to take the Turkish Major and myself to the top of a mountain where their Air Defense Operations Center was located. I had no idea we were going to be in the mountains or how cold it was at the top. I figured it would be hot in Iran so I packed my AF dark blue pants, a light blue short sleeved shirt and also brought my light weight blue zip up jacket. I shivered all the way up the mountain and only warmed up once I entered the Operations Center.

I had missed breakfast was hungry. But I was told there wasn't a cafeteria or snacks on the mountain. Instead at lunch the Iranians threw a blanket on the floor and we sat around eating their food with our hands because there were no utensils in available. Afterwards, I also learned how to squat to drop my load in a hole in the floor. My score of hits and misses told me I wouldn't have made a good AF Bombardier.

My Turkish Major and I had the responsibility to use our identical evaluation sheets to score the Iranian Air Force's ability protect their homeland from air attacks during the programmed Exercise Events.

At the end of the first day the Major and I compared our evaluation sheets but our grades were not anywhere close, my grades were "satisfactory or above" his scores were composed of "failed or satisfactory". We were told by the Team Chief at our in-brief that at the end of the Exercise we would turn in our reports at a reception at the American Embassy in Tehran. I told the Major we couldn't be that far apart in the scores on our report. His response was..."the Iranians are no good"! And then he claimed his English wasn't that good and I would have to write the report. I said..."if I have to write the report we have to come closer together. He responded..."okay I'll be a yes man"!

When I first arrived in Tehran I met the USAF MAG Officer and he gave me his card. He told me..."if you get in trouble while here give me a call"! At that time I had no idea I might need to call him in the future.

About halfway through the exercise I got a feeling that someone was looking over my shoulder. I turned around and it was the Chief of Staff of the Iranian Air Force and his entourage. The General asked me..."how are my guys doing"? I told him that they were doing okay and he told me..."don't be easy on them! He handed me his card and said..."call me if you have a problem in my country"! Again, I never thought I would need his help!

As I mentioned before, after the Exercise was over the U.S. Evaluators went to the American Embassy to turn in their reports and celebrate with drinks and Hors d'Oeuvres. While there, I met a USAF Captain who was a C-141 Aircraft Commander. He and he asked me

where I was stationed. I told him I was stationed in Germany and had caught a C-130 from Ramstein AB to Incirlik AB, Turkey. There I transferred to a C-7 and flew from Incirlik to Tehran. Then he said..."I am based at Ramstein and returning VFR direct tomorrow morning and asked me if I needed a ride home"! I said you bet I do! He told me to be at the tar mac in front of MAG HQ at 0800 and I will have you on the manifest. Sounded great!



The next morning my Lieutenant picked me up and drove me to the airport. I was really excited about getting home early. My last stop before boarding the plane was to go through Iranian Customs. When my turn came I stood in front of a Customs Officer who asked for my passport. I told him I didn't have a passport because I flew in on Military Orders. Then he asked for a my Visa. I told him I didn't need a Visa because my Military Orders were all I needed. He looked me in the eye and said you can't leave!

I thought about the MAG Colonel's card that I had put in my wallet. I took it out and asked if I could use the Custom Officer's phone. It was Sunday, I called and the Colonel answered. I explained the situation and he asked to speak with the Customs Officer. I handed the phone to the officer and he stood very straight and said "yes sir" "Yes sir" hung up and said ..."you still can't leave"! Then I called the Iranian Chief of Staff. His secretary answered the phone and..."told me the General was flying but expected him back soon. She was about to hand up when the General came in the door. I explained my problem and he asked to speak to the Customs Officer. The Officer came to attention and said..."Yes sir, Yes sir, hung up and repeated..." you still can't leave"!

By this time I figured I would have to spend the night in Tehran and go to the Embassy on Monday morning with a determination of rushing my passport application through a normally lengthy process.

A few minutes later MSgt O'Day the C-141 Loadmaster came up to me and said..."Captain Nix we are ready to go and you are the last one to board before takeoff." I told him the "customs guy" won't let me leave. He walked up to the Customs Officer and whispered something in his ear and the officer turned to me and said..."if MSgt O'Day says you can go it is okay! Sweeter words I have never heard! I never found out what he whispered in his ear.

Before I left Germany for the exercise, I read a book about Shah Pahlavi, which praised him and Iran as a good friend of America. Little did I know, the Shah would be ousted on 11 February 1979, less than a year after I was there for Exercise SHABAZZ-77.

With Master Sergeant O'Day, my Guardian Angel worked overtime that day to earn his his wings, thank God. Along with his aircraft commander, let us all strive to follow his example.





MOAA Year in Review Video

View the MOAA Year In Review Video, as narrated by VCOC Vice President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret) here: [MOAA Year in Review](#)

Sponsors

A promotional advertisement for Patriots Colony. The top portion shows a chef in a white uniform and hat standing behind a table where several people are seated and eating. A logo for Patriots Colony is in the top left corner. Below the image, the text reads: "For those who have served us, only the best will do." followed by an invitation to experience the community and a complimentary lunch. Contact information and a Facebook icon are provided. A small disclaimer at the bottom states that the community is sponsored by Riverside Health System and is exclusively for retired military and federal employees and their spouses.

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