



February 2021

To: All Colorado Council of Chapters (CCoC) Chapter Members

From: Dick Smith, President CCoC

As we begin 2021, I felt it necessary to communicate and share a few things with everyone in the CCoC community. Importantly we need to be thankful for our nation and to those who are actively serving in all corners of the world and on / under the seas protecting our nation.

We are off to a new year full of hope. We have faced the enemy (COVID-19) and it appears the tide is turning – mainly because of the miracle of fast development and deployment of effective vaccines along with most people taking reasonable protective measures. Last year was tough on our chapters, CCoC and our families. Veteran suicide rates have gone up due to a variety of reasons. We need to continue to stay in touch with each other as we weather through what are hopefully the end stages of the Pandemic. Check on our MOAA and other friends – due a buddy check and let someone know when a problem is detected! It is important now more so than ever.

My family and friends keep in touch via Zoom, email, phone or in person if restrictive conditions allow. My wife and I are thankful for our sons who go out of their way to make sure all is well with us.

I would like congratulate Lt Col Shelly Kalkowski, USAF (Ret), CCoC Legislative Chair and President WY-CO Chapter, who was awarded the 2020 Colonel Steve Strobridge Legislative Award.

This is an incredibly significant MOAA award for Shelly to receive. It is awarded annually to one (repeat one) Legislative Chair or Liaison nationally who has demonstrated superior service to their council/chapter working legislative issues of great importance to the uniformed services community.

What will 2021 bring? I am hoping that most chapters will soon be meeting face to face. While ZOOM has sort of worked, it is not a substitute for the “chit chat” and socializing that occurs during a normal chapter meeting. One advantage of our mostly senior membership is many of us have had one or both COVID vaccine injections so this should help. A problem some chapters are facing is a venue that can host chapter meetings. For example, it will be some time before AABC can return to having meetings at the Frasier Meadows Retirement Community. Therefore, chapter leaders are investigating other locations.

Additionally, most chapters have suspended electing new officers for 2021 with a plan to hold new officer elections once normal meetings resume. That is also the situation with CCoC – last year’s officers are continuing until an appropriate time to hold an election.

Last year did include some good news. I was able to visit 2 chapters – WY-CO and Four Corners.

- In August WY-CO was able to schedule a field trip tour to the 233rd Space Group (Mobile Ground Systems) Colorado ANG facility in Greeley. I participated – it was a great opportunity to meet with several members of the WY-CO Chapter.
- In October I traveled to Durango to meet with the new Four Corners President LTC Meg Vanesse, USA (Ret) and her leadership team. Meg took the helm after the passing of long time President

Ralph Goulds. There had been some recent concern over the sustainability of Four Corners, but that concern has ended. The Four Corners leadership team is focused on building chapter membership and other actions to revive the chapter.

At MOAA national "Council and Chapter Affairs" directorate some significant changes are taking place. Like most councils and chapters, they have been conducting business virtually. Events such as the regional leadership training seminar scheduled for Colorado Springs in September were canceled and held virtually. Our own CCoC "Building Sustainable Chapters" event that was to be held in conjunction with the national event also had to be canceled. Currently MOAA is scheduling, for 19-20 November, an in person "Southwest Leaders Regional Workshop" in Southern California that will include invitations to leaders from CCoC and Colorado chapters.

We have also been notified that long time MOAA Senior Director, Council and Chapter Affairs COL Teri Coles, USA (Ret) is retiring from MOAA on 1 March 2021. She will be missed.

Recruiting chapter leadership is a significant issue for most Colorado chapters. It is important to carefully consider accepting a request to run for a chapter office if you are asked. Better yet let your current leadership know if you are interested in any leadership position including chair positions your chapter may have. MORE THAN ONE OTHERWISE HEALTHY MOAA CHAPTER HAS FAILED WHEN NO ONE WOULD AGREE TO TAKE ON A LEADERSHIP ROLE. USING A NAVY ANOLOGY, A SHIP WILL SOON RUN AGROUND IF NO ONE IS AT THE HELM.

Regarding membership, MOAA is continuing to emphasize chapter recruiting with monetary and other incentives. It is interesting that the MOAA national organization has around 350,000 members but only around 40,00 belong to chapters. Probably the best recruiting tool a chapter has is to invite someone you may know who a national MOAA member, or is otherwise qualified, to visit your chapter once normal meetings resume to "try us out".

At the end of this message, you will see logos for MOAA Insurance Plans (administered by Mercer Insurance) and USAA. This is in recognition of the stipend that both companies provide councils and chapters to support events or communications such as newsletters. These two companies specialize in serving the military community and offer all kinds of insurance and other services.

Stay Healthy, Safe and get your COVID shots.

*Dick Smith*

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