

Summer 2020

# 84th Railsplitters Association

## Bugler



Greetings Fellow Railsplitters!

Who's with me in hitting a reset on 2020? This year has presented many challenges to each of us and the same can be said for this organization. Our year got off to a great start with the Valentine's Dinner hosted in February at the Western Racquet Club in Elm Grove, then March came and life has been topsy-turvy ever since.

The coronavirus pandemic caused us to cancel the Annual Dining Out; we also just held a very abbreviated Annual Meeting. Sadly, I must report out of concerns for the health, welfare and safety of our members we will be canceling the Annual Steak/Chicken Fry in September. I have to tell you there was a great deal of discussion and angst went into this decision. But, ultimately your board felt it was in the best interest of all concerned that we cancel this year's event. Planning for next year's events will be underway soon. As dates are locked in they will be published in future editions of the Bugler and posted on our website. We are hopefully optimistic that 2021 will be a better year all around.

The Annual Meeting was convened since this is an action that is mandated by our by-laws. The meeting was administrative in nature in that a "state of the organization" presentation, treasurer's report was made as well as the election of board directors. Results of the election are provided on page seven.

Are you aware of any organizations that support local veterans that could use a monetary or other assist? If so, please contact a member of our board and the request will be given consideration.

Our association's success and stability is dependent upon its members. Do you know of retired, former or current serving Railsplitters who may be interested in joining? The membership form can be found at <http://www.84thrailsplitters.com/membership.html>. If you are not computer savvy, please call a board director and they will get a membership form to the interested soldier.

Sadly we've recently lost some Railsplitters and have some that are dealing with health issues. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers. Enjoy the rest of the summer and look forward to seeing you at our events in 2021.

Goldie M. Schuh  
MSG, USA Retired  
President, 84th Railsplitters Association LTD



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### Save the Date

2021 event dates are to be determined;  
stay tuned!



# Thank You for Your Service

By Capt. Steven R. Ellison, M.D., US Army

I am a doctor specializing in the Emergency Departments of the only two military Level One-Trauma Centers, both in San Antonio, TX. We care for civilian emergencies as well as military personnel. San Antonio has the largest military retiree population in the world living here. As a military doctor, I work long hours and the pay is less than glamorous. One tends to become jaded by the long hours, lack of sleep, food, family contact and the endless parade of human suffering passing before you. The arrival of another ambulance does not mean more pay, only more work.

Most often, it is a victim from a motor vehicle crash. Often it is a person of dubious character who has been shot or stabbed. With our large military retiree population, it is often a nursing home patient. Even with my enlisted service and minimal combat experience in Panama, I have caught myself groaning when the ambulance brings in yet another sick, elderly person from one of the local retirement centers that cater to military retirees. I had not stopped to think of what the citizens of this age group represented.

I saw 'Saving Private Ryan.' I was touched deeply. Not so much by the carnage, but by the sacrifices of so many. I was touched most by the scene of the elderly survivor at the graveside, asking his wife if he'd been a good man. I realized that I had seen these same men and women coming through my Emergency Dept. and had not realized what magnificent sacrifices they had made. The things they did for me and everyone else that has lived on this planet since the end of that conflict are priceless.

Situation permitting, I now try to ask my patients about their experiences. They would never bring up the subject without my inquiry. I have been privileged to hear an amazing array of experiences, recounted in the brief minutes allowed in an Emergency Dept. encounter. These experiences have revealed the incredible individuals I have had the honor of serving in a medical capacity, many on their last admission to the hospital.

There was a frail, elderly woman who reassured my young enlisted medic, trying to start an IV line in her arm. She remained calm and poised, despite her illness and the multiple needle-sticks into her fragile veins. She was what we call a 'hard stick.' As the medic made another attempt, I noticed a number tattooed across her forearm. I touched it with one finger and looked into her eyes. She simply said, 'Auschwitz'. Many of later generations would have loudly and openly berated the young medic in his many attempts. How different was the response from this person who'd seen unspeakable suffering.

Also, there was this long retired Colonel, who as a young officer had parachuted from his burning plane over a Pacific Island held by the Japanese. Now an octogenarian, he had a minor cut on his head from a fall at his home where he lived alone. His CT scan and suturing had been delayed until after midnight by the usual parade of high priority ambulance patients. Still spry for his age, he asked to use the phone to call a taxi, to take him home, then he realized his ambulance had brought him without his wallet. He asked if he could use the phone to make a long distance call to his daughter who lived 7 miles away. With great pride we told him that he could not, as he'd done enough for his country and the least we could do was get him a taxi home, even if we had to pay for it ourselves. My only regret was that my shift wouldn't end for several hours, and I couldn't drive him myself.

I was there the night Master Sgt Roy Benavidez came through the Emergency Dept. for the last time. He was very sick. I was not the doctor taking care of him, but I walked to his bedside and took his hand. I said nothing. He was so sick, he didn't know I was there. I'd read his Congressional Medal of Honor citation and wanted to shake his hand. He died a few days later.

And many others, I may still groan when yet another ambulance comes in, but now I am much more aware of what an honor it is to serve these particular men and women.

I have seen a Congress who would turn their back on these individuals who've sacrificed so much to protect our liberty. I see later generations that seem to be totally engrossed in abusing these same liberties, won with such sacrifice. It has become my personal endeavor to make the nurses and young enlisted medics aware of these amazing individuals when I encounter them in our Emergency Dept. Their response to these particular citizens has made me think that perhaps all is not lost in the next generation. My experiences have solidified my belief that we are losing an incredible generation, and this nation knows not what it is losing. Our uncaring government and ungrateful civilian populace should all take note. We should all remember that we must 'earn this.'

If it weren't for the United States Military, there would be NO United States of America! And now as you have finished reading this, our Congress enjoys their free medical care, are in the process of charging these people for their medical care and at the same time possibly reducing their retirement pay. A typical political "Thank you" for their Service.

# Older Veterans are at Higher Risk

There's no getting around it: adults who are 65 and older who have COVID-19 are more likely to develop serious complications, be hospitalized and die from COVID-19. While those 65 and older account for just 22% of COVID-19 cases, they make up 45% of people hospitalized for COVID-19 and 80% of those who die from it. Older adults are also more likely to have underlying medical conditions that are linked with severe illness from COVID-19, including chronic lung, heart, kidney, and liver disease, diabetes, severe obesity and weakened immune systems.

The VA is taking action to ensure that all Veterans, including older Veterans, are protected from exposure to COVID-19 and receive high-quality COVID-19 testing and care, no matter who they are or where they get their care.

## Know if you are at higher risk of exposure

If you are a Veteran who is 65 years old or older and think that you may be at higher risk for being exposed to COVID-19, it is important that you let your VA health care team know right away so they can help make sure you get the care and testing you need. You are especially at risk of being exposed to COVID-19 if you:

- Live in a household where family members may be exposed to COVID-19 at work or while taking public transportation.
- Live in a household where family members go out more often for supplies or to socialize.
- Are part of a multigenerational household.
- Don't wash your hands frequently with soap and running water or regularly use hand sanitizer.
- Don't use a face mask or facial covering when you go outside your home.

## Keep yourself and your loved ones safe

Whatever your level of risk, there are things you can do right now to protect yourself and those you love:

- Make a plan of action for when a COVID-19 outbreak occurs in your community.
- Follow Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and local guidance on precautions to keep yourself, your family and your community safe, such as handwashing, physical distancing and wearing masks.
- Stay healthy and positive during a time of stress and reach out to other Veterans who may be having a harder time.
- If you need to stay at home, get your medications and contact your health care providers remotely, such as through VA Video Connect.
- If you are young and at a lower risk, run errands for older family members and friends. Doing so protects them from unnecessary exposure.
- Recognize possible COVID-19 symptoms. Contact your VA health care team for a test and get care when needed.

## VSOs play a role

Veteran service organizations can help VA reach out to Veterans. It is especially important for older Veterans to receive a test and connect to care. Here's how VSOs can help:

- Share COVID-19 information from VA and CDC with Veterans.
- Encourage Veterans to take precautions to protect their health and cope with stress.
- Connect Veterans with community services so they can get groceries and essentials safely.
- Connect Veterans with VA health care services to make sure they can get medications, appointments and COVID-19 testing and care when needed.

## Take it seriously

Veteran Michael Novielli said he hopes that his experience with COVID-19 encourages his fellow Veterans to take COVID-19 seriously. "Going through something like this makes you feel for other people who weren't as fortunate. I hope it encourages people to take more care."







## Remembering Past Steak Fries!







# Memories



Send your pictures to  
[railsplitters84th@yahoo.com](mailto:railsplitters84th@yahoo.com).





Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of those who passed away recently:

MSG Theresa Hurley, former 5091st member

SSG Courtney McCalla, former HHC, 84th member

Barbara Jastrow, wife of Don Jastrow

Wishing good health and speedy recovery to:

COL Gary Davis

Marion Brunner

Pat Horter

Remember to send any information, or correspondence for Get Well, Encouragement, Sympathy, etc. to Mary Orley at (414) 425-0256 or email, [maryo\\_44@yahoo.com](mailto:maryo_44@yahoo.com)

## Military Recreational Lodging | Vacation Spots Without Crowds

Domestic travel seems like the best option for those seeking a little adventure this year, so in this update, we have dozens of ideas to add to your list for when you feel safe traveling again. These are places where crowds are generally limited and you have plenty of outdoor activities to choose from.

### Military Recreational Lodging

Although we talk a lot about Space-A flights, they are not the only amazing travel-related benefit you've earned through your service. Military Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) has incredible lodging facilities all over the world, and this is the perfect year to take advantage of them!

Poppin' Smoke, a website geared toward retired or soon-to-be retired members of the military, profiled 17 facilities all over the continental United States, including beach cottages, RV parks, and mountain resorts. These are high-quality recreation areas for a fraction of what you would pay for anything comparable in the civilian world. The profiles can be found at [www.poppin smoke.com/us-military-recreation-facilities/](http://www.poppin smoke.com/us-military-recreation-facilities/).

Please note that, depending on the location, some of these facilities may still have limited services due to COVID-19, so contact them directly for their reopening schedule.

### Off-the-Beaten Path Destinations in the U.S.

Outside of military facilities, you can find many other destinations in the U.S. to vacation and still avoid crowds. [www.poppin smoke.com/best-unknown-vacation-spots-in-the-united-states/](http://www.poppin smoke.com/best-unknown-vacation-spots-in-the-united-states/) lists 22 of the best hidden gems in the United States (including one in Hawaii) to consider for your next getaway!

These destinations include lesser-known national parks, quaint towns, and quiet beaches all over the country, and there's bound to be one that's a fit for you and your family.

### For RV Travelers

If you're traveling in your RV this year, [www.poppin smoke.com/tips-for-using-military-campgrounds/](http://www.poppin smoke.com/tips-for-using-military-campgrounds/) let's you know what you should know about using military campgrounds!



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## ANNUAL MEETING



Your 84th Railsplitters Association LTD board met on August 6, 2020 to hold the Annual Meeting as required by our by-laws. President Goldie Schuh discussed the cancellation of events including the Steak Fry and the Milwaukee County War Memorial's End of WWII Commemoration – 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. She hoped that the association would be holding events in 2021.

The election of board members was held:

Three-Year Terms

**Clarence Brunner, Ron DeVillers, Bill Krieger, Bill Ridgely, and Jim Schuler**

One-Year Appointments

**Julie Koss, Peter "Skip" Pochowski, and Jerry Wold**

The officers remain the same.

President Schuh also discussed increasing membership and asked for everyone to reach out to former members of the 84th to promote the association and membership.

The treasurer's report discussed donations made in the past year. Remember, members can recommend

donations be made to any charitable organization who support local veterans. Just contact any board member and your request will be considered.

## RETIREMENT HELP

Most of our members are already receiving their military retirement pay, but some may need help getting information or applying for their retirement. HRC is available to assist you. Call or email HRC at:

**(888) 276-9472**

**usarmy.knox.hrc.mbx.tagd-ask-hrc@mail.mil**





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Please support:

Cudworth-Stenz-Griesell-Smith

American Legion Post 449

Home of the 84th Railsplitters

Association

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HERE

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

*President:*

Goldie Schuh, MSG USA Retired

*VP Events/Activities:*

Michael Simmons, CSM USA Retired

*VP Communications:*

Scott Griffith, CW2 USA Retired

*Secretary:*

Lori Kunstman, LTC USA Retired

*Treasurer:*

David Gramins, CSM USA Retired

*Past President:*

Dean Orley, COL USA Retired

*Board Members:*

Clarence F. Brunner, CSM USA Retired

Ronald DeVillers, CW4 USA Retired

Julie Koss, MSG USA Retired

William Krieger, SFC USA Retired

William Ridgely, COL USA Retired

James Schuler, MAJ USA Retired

Peter (Skip) Pochowski, COL USA Retired

Tim Vanderboom, SFC USA Retired

Jerry Wold, CW4 USA Retired

*Legal Advisor:*

Michael Berzowski, MG USA Retired

*Senior Advisor:*

John Horter, COL USA Retired

*Newsletter Editor:*

Mary Oppliger, MAJ USA Retired

The 84th Railsplitters Association LTD  
Sadly announces that  
The 84th Annual Steak and Chicken Fry  
is canceled this year.

We regret that we won't be together for the great steaks and chicken; the door prize raffle table filled with unique items; the guess the number of ping pong balls, peanuts or golf balls in the jar game; the silent auction which raises funds we donate to veteran's organizations; and most of all the camaraderie we share with you.

We want you to be safe.

