



Dovermoaa.org)

January 2021

HOT OFF THE PRESS!

Roma's WILL reopen on Weds, Jan 19, 2022—yes, they have been closed

Signed copies of legislative actions Ron will present are attached!

Member Judge Bill Witham to speak about his “baby”—Veterans Court

Membership dues being happily accepted by Treasurer Tom

Dinner Meeting

When: Jan 20, 2022 THURSDAY NOT a Saturday!

Program: **Helping Fellow Veterans!**

New member Bill Witham will talk about the Delaware Veterans Court. To get an idea about it before next week, please click on: <https://courts.delaware.gov/superior/veteranscourt/>.



William L. Witham Jr. was a resident judge on the [Kent County Superior Court](#) in Delaware. He joined the court as an associate judge in February 1999 and was appointed resident judge in January 2005. Bill retired from the court on May 14, 2021, but will still be assisting on Veterans Court matters..

Prior to becoming a superior court judge, Bill was a partner with Prickett, Jones, Elliott & Kristol. In 1999, he served as a Kent County Levy Court attorney. He was involved in the creation of Delaware's Veterans Court in 2011 and has served as the Veteran Court Judge. He has also served as an adjunct professor at Wilmington University

Bill earned a B.A. in political science and history from the University of Delaware in 1970 and a [J.D.](#) from the University of Maryland in 1973.

Bill is listed as one of the best bankruptcy attorneys in the United States (5 years in a row prior to going on the bench. He served on the third circuit merit selection board, which selects bankruptcy judges in the Third Circuit.

Bill spent 32 years in the US Army, combined active, reserve, and National Guard time, earning a Distinguished Service Medal.

He served in Korea, activated for the Middle East prior to retirement. Bill retired in 2001.

I have been hounding Bill to join our chapter ever since he retired, so PLEASE be on your best behavior (*I'm talking to you pilots!--warrant and commissioned*) until Tom gets his membership check deposited!



Location: [Roma Italian Ristorante](#) on 3 Presidents Drive, Dover DE (*click for more about the venue and directions*)

Social Hour 5 pm

Dinner: 6 p.m.

Program: 7 p.m.

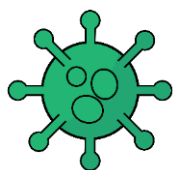
Meeting: 7:20 p.m.

Adjournment: 8 pm.

Menu: your choice of Chicken Marsala (\$27); Roasted Salmon (\$29); Veal Parmigiana (\$30); or stuffed shells (\$23). Price includes 20% tip, side salad, bread and oil, and dessert (holiday cookies!).

Would you please call Tom Smith at 301-904-0228 or email him rotorhead65@aol.com to tell him your menu selections.

COVID 19 Update: Governor Carney to again take an action to require Masks. [Carney issues mask mandate as hospitals triage - DBT](#).



"Gov. John Carney signed a [Monday order](#) requiring that masks once again be worn in indoor public settings, including convenience stores, grocery stores, gyms, restaurants, bars, hair salons, malls, and casinos.

The renewal of a mask mandate, which was effective 8 a.m. Tuesday, came just after virtually every health care system in Delaware reported enacting "crisis standards of care," essentially triaging the direst cases as staffing and resources are stretched beyond capacity due to a surge in COVID-19 cases.

Council President Ron Sarg encourages Delaware chapters to have hybrid meetings and /or zoom meetings. In the past, I asked you if you want to do this, and most of you replied, no. If you change your minds about this, please give me or anyone else on the exec committee a call and we can discuss it.

Chamber Events. As a Dover MOAA member, you are also a member of the Central Delaware Chamber of Commerce. You may attend any event or business opening (fun and primarily

FREE--and get the inside scoop on biz in our area! And let them know about us and our JROTC scholarships, etc.) Just go to the CDCC website and look at the upcoming events. Visit <https://www.cdcc.net/> for more information and to sign up to attend. At least look at the website to keep up with many happenings in Kent County businesses.

Advocacy:

School Tax Exception and Property Tax Exemption: As we have been working on, these two exemptions have come to fruition. Now, how to apply? Please see attached pdf that I took from the Kent County Levy Court quarterly brochure. NOTE: you can still get exemptions for being over 65 years old, even if you are not 100 percent disabled as a Veteran.

Retired Veterans Pay Elimination, SB 188:

Another state has eliminated state taxes for retiree. If you run into your legislators, please be sure to urge them to support SB 188. <https://www.stripes.com/veterans/2021-12-28/north-carolina-military-retirees-state-tax-break-4113071.html>.

To see the latest status of this bill, please click:

<https://legis.delaware.gov/json/BillDetail/GenerateHtmlDocument?legislationId=78925&legislationTypeId=1&docTypeId=2&legislationName=SB188>

We will hear more from Ron about this at our meeting.

Delaware Veterans Home (DVH). The Delaware Commission on Veterans Affairs held a special meeting to discuss the petition on Change.org on Dec 21, 2021 at the DelVets building in Dover.





Several family members and one former employee spoke. Several elected officials also spoke, mainly to say they were tired of hearing complaints about the DVH from their constituents! There was bipartisan support: one Democrat and one Republican from, the House, and Levy court, two GOP and one Dem from the Senate. Everyone was united for this cause.

Although not a member of the DVCA, the President of the Delaware VVA, Paul Davis, was there, and after listening to all, he urged the Commission to finally do something about the situation (the situation being lack of staff leading to delayed care of veteran residents. Lack of staff due to poor leadership in the DVH for the past several years after Bill Peterman retired.)

MOAA was well represented by Ron (MOAA Council Pres and member of the DVCA) and also Bill Farley (representing his own Marine organization on the DVCA) and myself, Dover MOAA Chapter President, a speaker at the meeting, and member of petition committee. As you know, I got the ball rolling with questions about how the DVH was being run when your fellow chapter member and my husband, LTC Don Jagger resided there and we noted the slip in 2020 once contractors got in charge.

The current DVH Administrator, Carole Erhart, was *not an attendee*, not even via zoom, which was both surprising and disappointing since she was the subject of the meeting. However, her boss, Deputy Secretary of State Kris Knight spoke on behalf of both the DVH and the SOS.

After hearing complaints nonstop for about three hours, the DCVA decided to form a subcommittee to discuss the matter. This was originally scheduled to begin in January, but has been postponed for reasons unknown.

In the meanwhile, the State of Delaware is training members of the Delaware National Guard to serve as Certified Nursing Assistants (C.N.A.s), a job in shortage throughout the state. We understand that a few NG will work at the DVH while some staff are recovering from illness I think the DVH is a great place for the NG, frankly, IF they have to be used anywhere as CNAs..

The pandemic has been rough on many career fields, and the medical field was hit especially hard. There is a nation-wide shortage in medical jobs. Couple that with bad leadership which caused a mass exodus in the staff out of the facility, and the DVH needs a lot of attention.

We look forward to hearing from Ron about the progress of this subcommittee. Two articles are attached that appeared in the Delaware State News and we are expecting a WBOC report when the snow excitement calms down.

Delaware Veterans Commission list of Legislative Items: As stated at the last meeting, Ron Sarg, our representative on the DVAC will brief us on the various matters the Veterans Commission hopes to see taken up by the next legislative session. Our entire business meeting in January will be devoted to this subject. Ron has got a signed list of these initiatives and they are attached. Recommend you print this and bring it to the meeting to speed along Ron's comments since he has quite a bit to cover in a short time.

SB 188 (tax exempt status for retired military pay). See the attached for the latest version:

<https://legis.delaware.gov/BillDetail/78925>

Since reducing the impact of it (phasing it in) there has been no action on the bill. This is not surprising considering the fate of its processors, SB 48 and SB 91, though this bill phases in the tax breaks, and it was thought by Ron, Frank, and Chuck that this might be the camel getting the nose under the tent.

National Advocacy:

Our National MOAA emails and *The Officer* magazine do a great job of keeping us informed. This month, you will learn about steps being taken to help prevent military suicide and information about VA benefits you might not have been aware of. If you are not a member of the national MOAA, I highly recommend it. [MOAA online newsletter](#)

Chapter News:



Thanks again. Thanks again to the chapter for cheering me up post-surgery.

JROTC: John is currently working with JROTC instructors. He wrote a nice press release, see attached. I urge you to submit this press release to any local community bulletin board, etc.

JROTC Scholarship Fundraiser: See attached flyer for details about our fundraiser here at Romas. Let's make it a big turn out please! This is a no host event, please bring lots of friends!!

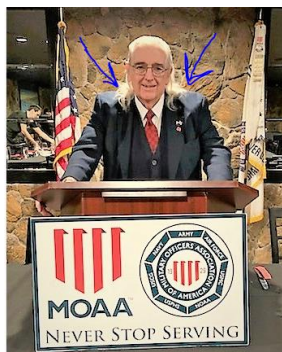
Wreaths across America. Out link is:

<https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/pages/166217>

Delaware is getting into the Wreaths Across America swing of things. Please see attached press release...but...if you



donate, please donate through our page. (Link in the previous paragraph).

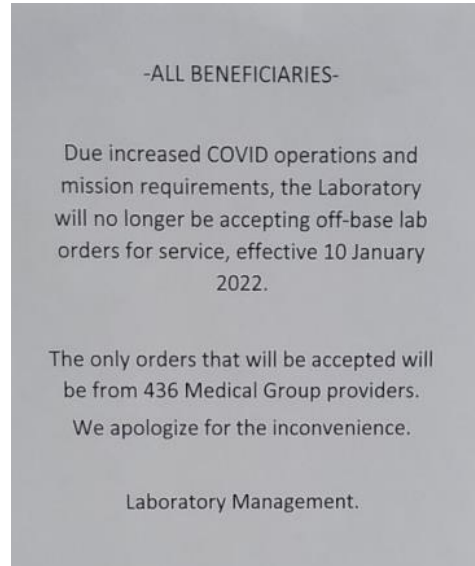


Locks of Love—Ron Sarg will be sporting his new look. . Leaving this in, since Ron was not here last month...just a reminder of his long locks that he donated to charity.

Safe In-person meetings. If any of you contract COVID after attending a meeting (within the past several days), please let me know so I can warn the members. I believe we are entering into the Phase “Its not IF you get Omicron, but WHEN you get it, but we still need to maintain safe protocols and that means advising others who might have been exposed. Please contact any member of the Executive Committee if you want to have hybrid or virtual meetings, as stated earlier in this newsletter.

DUES! Its that time of year again.... please bring an extra check for you membership, if you have not already paid it. NOTE: some of you pay ahead, in which case Tom has notified you that you are paid up. A check will be sufficient if you are already a member. For those of you who have not joined our chapter, please click the Dover MOAA website link (on page one, in the masthead) and look under chapter for the form and where to send it. Thank you.

DAFB News: When Tom was at DAFB last, he noticed this sign on the lab. Thought you might want to see this and save yourself the trip.



PLANNED MEETINGS:

February 17, location Roma's, any time, any menu item, JROTC fundraiser, not program.

March 17, location Romas, social hour begins at 5, dinner 6, guest speaker Member Colonel Loren Weeks, California National Guard, to tell us of his many experiences in Afghanistan while working with the contractors that, sadly, we left most of behind.

April 21, Location Roma, program TBA, chicken cacciatore-27; Shrimp Scampi -29; Roma Steak (pasta dish, not whole steak)-30; manicotti -23

May 19, Location Roma, Program: JROTC awards banquet

Never Stop Serving,

Eugenia "Gene" Thornton
Dover Chapter President