



**From the Desk of the NCOA Chairman of the Board
April 1, 2020**

April is upon us and this April will be unlike any other April in the recent past if ever. Tax Day, April 15th has been pushed back to July 15th. Easter is on the calendar but with Public gatherings being limited to no more than 10, there won't be any Easter Egg hunts and Easter Church services will be live streamed instead of in a building. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed life in this country in ways that most of us could not have imagined.

The government has asked all Americans to change how we behave on a daily basis. Social Distancing has become the new catch phrase that could redefine how we behave going forward. Washing our hands is a good thing that we should all do more often. However, getting together with friends and family is a difficult thing to get used to and the longer this threat remains high, this social isolation can have some long lasting impacts.

We in this country have become more socially isolated because of technology where we don't talk to each other, we text. We spend too much time on Facebook rather than with our families. With so many people having been laid off and routines disrupted, we have a unique opportunity for a do-over. Reach out to your neighbors and find out if you can help, if they need it, with grocery shopping. Call friends and check in to ensure that they are OK.

In the military we had a saying. Leave no man (or woman) behind. Perhaps we can adjust that phrase under the current situation to do another phrase those who have served are familiar with. Buddy checks could be done for elderly neighbors or those with limited mobility. Getting out of your home to help others in a controlled way can reduce a sense of isolation and help us all maintain a healthy mental attitude.

Isolation can contribute to depression, especially if we glue ourselves to watching a constant barrage of negative news. I have mentioned before how concerned I am with an abnormally high rate of veteran suicides. Anything that we can do during this COVID-19 crisis to maintain a healthy attitude and to help others around us to feel a bit of hope is a good thing. All who ever achieved the rank of Noncommissioned Officer or Petty Officer know and understand the responsibility of taking care of our people. Let's use that knowledge and sense of responsibility to help those around us get through these difficult times.

Finally, I want to emphasize that your International Board of Directors has been meeting via teleconference to deal with concerns about the upcoming plans for our annual conference in July. We are closely monitoring other organizations that are currently scheduled throughout the summer. The DOD has limited In-Conus travel until May 11 and we are scheduled to meet again on May 12th to make a decision whether we stay the course or reschedule for later in the year. You will all be notified no later than May 15th as to our decision.

If you have any ideas or suggestions, either contact headquarters or contact me at chairman@ncoausa.org and I can assure you that your leadership will take note.

Strength in Unity & Leadership By Example,

MCPO (SCW) Terry M. Haines
Chairman, International Board of Directors