



Monthly newsletter of the Portsmouth Area Chapter, an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America, serving Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Suffolk, Smithfield and Franklin, Virginia, since 1983. Dinner meetings are held the Second Thursday of each month except July and August. Although MOAA and PACMOAA actively lobby legislatures for all US uniformed services members, we are nonpartisan do not participate in political activities.

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FEBRUARY 2020

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



PACMOAA had a great start to the New Year with thirty members, spouses, and guests attending the January meeting! Guests attending included COL Boyd Nix , USAF (Ret), VCOC President , and his wife Sharon. I had met Boyd and Sharon several times in the past but had not been able to talk with them before. It was a pleasure to be able to do so after the meeting. It was great to have three guests attend: COL Cecelia Anstead, USAF (Ret), a nurse, and a guest of Doug Weller (to



the far left); LT Amanda Faulkner, USCG ( left ); and Earnest Jones, Surviving Spouse (below & left).



After dinner, COL Nix inducted the new Leadership Team Members: 1st Vice President –CWO3 Karl Wilson, USA (Ret); 2nd Vice President LCDR Dolly Cherrington, USN (Ret); Treasurer CDR Hans Sachse, USN (Ret); and Board Of Directors – COL Bill Smith, USA (Ret) and CAPT Jeff Westling, USCG (Ret). Pictured to the right

After the induction ceremony, COL Nix discussed the change in visiting legislators in Richmond. The ongoing 4-year move for renovation of the original General Assembly and the move to the Pocahontas Building has resulted in reduced space for conducting an annual MOAA/VCOC Storming Day as done in previous years. This year VCOC representatives were invited to join in several events on the JLC (Joint Leadership Council) Day at the General Assembly on January 16. In the past, VCOC had Storming the Hill each year in January, the day after the 1st Quarterly meeting. Because of construction and no place to meet, the VCOC Storming the Hill has not occurred in several years. The JLC day activities were arranged through COL Frank Wickersham and attendees had to register with him.



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FOR LEADERSHIP

[http://www.pacmoaa.org/leadership\\_2.html](http://www.pacmoaa.org/leadership_2.html)

## CHAPTER NEWS

### FEBRUARY CALENDAR

02 ARMY NURSES CORPS 119TH BIRTHDAY DAY	
04 USO 79TH BIRTHDAY	19 USCG RESERVE 79TH BIRTHDAY
13 PACMOAA DINNER MEETING	20 PACMOAA BOARD MEETING
14 VALENTINE'S DAY	23 MOAA 91ST BIRTHDAY

### FEBRUARY DINNER

Our dinner will be held on **Thursday February 13<sup>th</sup>** at the Hilton Garden Inn (HGI) Ballroom at 5921 Harbour View Boulevard in Northern Suffolk.  
**Social hour begins at 5:30 PM, dinner served at 6:30PM.**

#### MENU

Caesar Salad with Parmesan Cheese and Croutons

Chicken Marsala Red Roasted Potatoes Broccoli

Broccoli and Rolls

Chef's Choice Dessert

Coffee and Hot Water for Tea Station Water and Ice Tea

Cost is **\$30.00** (includes tax and gratuity). Please make your reservation no later than **Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>** with Sherry Ferki at ----- or by email at [navmed1@cox.net](mailto:navmed1@cox.net). Come join us for good company, good food and a good time.

**A RESERVATION MADE IS A RESERVATION PAID.**

### FEBRUARY PROGRAM

"The mission of The Mariners' Museum and Park is to connect people to the world's waters, because that is how we are connected to one another. A steward of one of the world's most extensive maritime collections, The Mariners' Museum and Park is committed to the preservation and conservation of more than 32,000 objects and several million library and archive materials. We provide access to the collection through exhibitions, loans, publications, educational programs and online media. The Museum is proud to be accredited by the American Alliance of Museums and follows its



standards of care to ensure the survival of the collection for generations yet-to-come." Information from Mariner's Museum website. Two presenters from the Speakers Bureau for the museum will participate in our February program.

**Wisteria Perry**

Wisteria has worked in the museum field for nineteen years. She has conducted programs as a costumed historical interpreter and educator and currently serves as the Manager of Interpretation and Community Outreach at The Mariners' Museum and Park in Newport News. Having worked a variety of museums, Wisteria has gained skills in historical cooking techniques, natural dyeing and enjoys making things out of gourds and fabric.



### Lauren Furey

Lauren started her career in living history, moved on to museum education, and has been in visitor engagement for several years now. With a background in historic weaving, and an extensive library, her love of history is part of everything she does. She also is an award winning textile artist and creates ministers' stoles. Raised in Newport, Rhode Island, Newport News, Virginia has been her home for her adult life.

### *(Continued from page 1)* FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

COL Nix noted that he wanted chapter input on three key items, as follows:

1. What is each chapter charging for annual dues in 2020?
2. In previous years, VCOC scheduled a dedicated VCOC storming of the hill in Richmond, in addition to JLC Day. For 2020 and beyond, would your chapter be interested in participating in storming separately, or with a JLC/VCOC combined group?
3. Which location do you prefer for future quarterly VCOC Meetings - American Legion, Richmond, or Patriots Colony, Williamsburg?

Thank you all for your assistance and participation over the past year. Even though we ended the year with seven new members, membership is an ongoing issue and involvement of the membership in running the organization is vital. **Please renew your membership**, either at a meeting or via the mail. Many of us on the Leadership Team have been serving in one role or another for some time, most for over 10 years. We need new ideas and approaches to continue to make PACMOAA a successful organization. If any of you have any ideas or suggestions, please share them with me or any of the Leadership Team. For example, if you have any ideas for a good speaker or program, please share your ideas with myself or our program chair, Karl Wilson. I look forward to working with everyone for a successful and productive 2020. Please continue to keep our service members and their families in your thoughts and prayers and also the local homeless population. Remember we collect items for the Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless as well as for the baby pantry at the Coast Guard Base Portsmouth every month.

### **UPDATE PER UPCOMING EVENTS FOR THIS QUARTER 2020**

18 MAR: MOAA JOINT RECRUITING EVENT with Hampton Roads and Peninsula Chapters at Patriots Colony in Williamsburg

## MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

The PACMOAA dues follow:

Regular members pay \$25.00/year

Auxiliary members pay \$20.00/year

You can pay your dues at the next PACMOAA meeting or mail it to: PACMOAA, P.O. Box 5353, Portsmouth, VA 23703.

Your dues money enables PACMOAA to pay for things like the newsletter; speaker expenses; VCOC dues and expenses; admin expenses like name tags, printing, postage and entertainment like the Tidewater Concert band that performed at our Christmas Gala.

**Remember that your membership is important.** Some members feel like they should not belong to an organization if they cannot be an active member, attending meetings and/or participating in PACMOAA activities. We would love to have all of you attend each meeting but that is not possible for many members. Without increased membership and engagement of the current membership, we will not be able to continue being effective in legislative advocacy and involvement with community advocacy.

Again, an important part of PACMOAA and MOAA membership is **legislative involvement**. Whether you are able to attend meetings or not, you can contact your Congressman and State Legislators about issues relevant to veterans. Encourage fellow veterans to be proactive also. Your membership helps keep you updated on those issue impacting veterans. **Please help us protect the benefits of our veterans, retirees, reservists, National Guard and active duty military.**

Several member brought potential new members as guests to the January meeting. We need to continue this practice and follow up with our guests. PACMOAA ended 2019 with 7 new members and 4 deaths; thus ending the year with 71 members, continuing the decreasing yearly membership cycle with the exception of 2010 and 2017 when we had increases from the previous years. We already have several members that have moved out of our area and usually have at least 5 or more members that do not renew for various reasons.

***If you have not done so, please pay your dues as soon as possible*** so PACMOAA can continue to provide all these services. Please include the renewal form in this newsletter to help us update our records. Remember the effectiveness VCOC has in the state legislature is related to chapter membership! **Adding extra money to your dues check for the PACMOAA scholarship would be very helpful.** Thank you.

## PERSONAL AFFAIRS

Please keep our members/families that are having problems in your thoughts and prayers and reach out to them if you can. If possible, please let me know if you, a member of your family, or another PACMOAA member is ill and would like visitors or for us to remember them in the newsletter. We cannot support members when they need us unless someone notifies us.

Margaret "Peg" Cicirelli fell and is currently in rehab at Lake Prince Woods in Suffolk in room 535. She is in and out of her room a lot for therapy. If you would like to send her a card, send it to her home address : 105 Flick court in Suffolk 23434.

Many of us are having mobility issues and needing to use assistive devices so please bear with us if we move a little slower. I will try to keep you updated when I find out of any issues so that we may be a more supportive community. As I've mentioned before, many PACMOAA members stepped up and helped me visit my Mom after she broke her hip and I was recuperating from foot surgery. If I can assist anyone else, I would be happy to as would many of our members.

**SOME OF OUR MEMBERS DO NOT FEEL COMFORTABLE DRIVING AT NIGHT OR DURING THE DAY. SEVERAL PACMOAA MEMBERS HAVE VOLUNTEERED TO BRING MEMBERS TO MEETINGS OR OTHER APPOINTMENTS AS NEEDED. CONTACT SHERRY IF YOU NEED ASSISTANCE AND WE WILL TRY TO HELP.**

Thank you.

Sherry Ferki, Personal Affairs Officer

Home number: 686-4650 Cell: 630-5608

## LEGISLATIVE

### UPDATE ON FIRST QUARTER VCOC MEETING 2020

The Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) first quarter meeting was held on January 14, 2020 in Richmond, Virginia.

During the 2020 legislative session of the Virginia General Assembly, the following six objectives, adopted by the Joint Leadership Council and listed by priority, will be presented:

1. Personal property tax exemption
2. Counting military absentee ballots after election day
3. Income tax subtraction for certain low income 100% disabled veterans
4. Virginia National Guard emergency pay
5. Tax credits for employers who hire personnel from the ranks of the Virginia National Guard and Reserves
6. Microloans for veteran programs

Due to ongoing renovations to the General Assembly building, this year's Storming of the Hill will be limited solely to Col. Frank Wickersham, VCOC Legislative Chair and Col. Boyd Nix, VCOC President. Individual VCOC chapters are encouraged to call, write, or email their respective representatives before, during, and after the current session.

Regards,

Karl Wilson, CWO3, USA (Ret)

Legislative Chair

**Reminder:** The Virginia General Assembly convened on 8 January 2020 for a 60 day session. The official website is [viriniageneralassembly.gov](http://viriniageneralassembly.gov) to find out what is happening during the legislative session. Many issues being addressed may impact all of us so be sure to keep up with the issues and bills addressing them. VCOC will be working to ensure the JLC initiatives listed in the December newsletter are presented to our legislators. *Contacting legislators to let them know your thoughts/concerns on issues is very important during the session.*

## **How Your Voice Can Help MOAA's Advocacy Mission from Jan 30 MOAA Newsletter** By: Amanda Meyers January 29, 2020

*Adapted from article that originally appeared in the January 2020 issue of Military Officer, a magazine available to all MOAA Premium and Life members.* Some examples removed due to space constraints.

MOAA works hard to shape and advance policy in Washington, D.C., but the most effective voice in reaching members of Congress is yours, the constituent.

So how can you make sure your concerns are received by — and acted on — by legislators?

We examined traditional and newer ways of advocating for change on issues you care about, and we encourage you to explore all avenues to make sure your voice is heard in 2020 and beyond.

**RELATED info online: [MOAA's 6 Tips for Engaging Congress](#)**

### **Face to Face**

As you might expect, in-person visits from constituents are the most influential way to communicate with a senator or representative who is undecided on an issue, according to the Congressional Management Foundation, a nonpartisan nonprofit that works with Congress to improve operations and constituent engagement.

“You do better when you're face to face,” says Rep. Phil Roe (R-Tenn.). “There's an interaction. You see a person. You look into their eyes. You feel their needs. It's different.” The congressman said nothing beats an in-person conversation. His staff welcome members of the public to their district offices once a month, and any topic is fair game. And if you happen to see Roe at the local Walmart, he says you should chat him up. “Some of your best ideas are from your constituents,” he says.

MOAA recognizes the importance of in-person advocacy. Each year, MOAA members from across the nation gather in Washington, D.C., for Storming the Hill. This allows individuals to meet with lawmakers and secure their support for legislation and policies that will benefit servicemembers past and present — and their families.

## Online

As effective as in-person advocacy is, it's not always feasible or practical to visit Washington, D.C., every time you want to talk to a member of Congress about an important issue. Consider sending an email instead. **Sixty-five percent of congressional staffers said email is the most effective way to reach out to representatives, according to a study by Dr. David Rehr, professor and director of the Center for Business Civic Engagement at George Mason University.**

Rehr's study showed that congressional offices receive an average of 151 emails every day. If you've sent an email through the MOAA Take Action Center, you know that staffers respond to many of them on a regular basis.

## Social Media - Primary way many younger people communicate

Take online communication a step further with social media — such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. These sites have transformed constituents' ability to interact with lawmakers.

**A 2015 report from the Congressional Management Foundation (CMF) noted that more than 75% of congressional staffers felt that social media allowed for more meaningful constituent interactions, and 70% said it made members of Congress accountable to their constituents.**

Social media “is affecting the democratic dialogue in unexpected ways,” says the report. A tweet or social media comment alone might not get anyone's attention, but if staffers are seeing repeat posts about the same issue, especially posts with comments and other discussion, it's more likely to merit a response from a congressional staffer or get the attention of their boss.

**As few as 10 comments** could prompt attention from congressional offices, according to surveys conducted in 2014 by the CMF.

A timely social media campaign, especially at key moments in the legislative season, can garner a lot of attention and move the needle on an issue you care about.

## Phone and Mail

If you're not comfortable engaging Congress from your computer or mobile device, rest assured that you can still pick up the phone or write a letter to voice your concern. Although regular mail is on the decline, Roe says it's still valued. But mail is among the least effective ways to reach legislators, according to Rehr, the GMU professor.

Rep. Joe Wilson (R-S.C.) says phone calls are still important. An added bonus of this method is you can get instant feedback. “I strive to be accountable and accessible to the community I

represent,” he says. “I encourage those who need assistance to stop by or call one of our district offices or our Washington office.” His office also operates on a policy that all means of contact get equal treatment, be it in person or via letter.

### ‘A Measureable Impact’

Although the forms and methods are changing, **advocacy remains essential to the political landscape.**

With myriad options to reach legislators, the common denominator — and the most powerful tool — is your voice. Make sure to speak up in some way on important issues that affect you and other servicemembers and their families. Whether that’s increasing health care costs, benefits, or the widows tax, communicate frequently and with purpose.

“By diversifying their interactions, strengthening the quality of exchanges, and focusing on relationship building rather than transactional communications with Capitol Hill, constituents can have a measurable impact on decision-making in Congress,” says a CMF report on citizen-centric advocacy.

Legislative advocacy is often a years-long effort to advance an issue from obscurity into bills that must then undergo intense review before they can be passed through congressional committees and then through each of the House and Senate chambers. But sometimes, enough momentum builds to bring an issue to the foreground. None of this is possible without the efforts of individuals engaging with their congressional representatives.

### SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE FROM 2019 RECIPIENT

From email sent 1/15/2020

Mrs. Ferki,



Here at Marion Military Academy, students are challenged mentally and physically every day. Cadets will have early morning formations, organized meals and a full day of classes. In between classes cadets will have another formation where they will then do a Pass and Review Drill in front of the Commandant of the Corps of Cadets. Classes have a wide range of subjects but every cadet takes a Science, Math, English and a Military Science class where cadets learn the basics of the military for example customs and courtesies and even basic tactics. Cadets are encouraged to participate in Intramural sports or go to the gym or pool and workout. In the evening there is another formation for all cadets; after the formation and dinner the

Corps of Cadets enters quiet hours so that cadets are able to get the work done that is assigned to them. At Marion there are a wide range of clubs and activities that anyone can try out for. One of the activities that I did in the past semester is called Ranger Challenge. Ranger

Challenge is a 3 day event in Fort Knox Kentucky where Senior and Junior Military Colleges put teams together and compete against one another in events such as ruck marching, orienteering, pistol and rifle shooting, weapon assembly, obstacle courses, and much more. Being a part of Marion Military Institute has helped me better not only my time management skills but also discipline and military understanding all of which will better help me in the future at the Air Force Academy.

If you need anything else please let me know. Thank you again for all your help I really appreciate everything you've done to help me.

Sincerely,

Ethan V. Nelson

PLEASE CONTINUE TO DONATE TO OUR SCHOLARSHIP FUND, THUS ENABLING PACMOAA TO AWARD TWO SCHOLARSHIPS FOR 2020.

## CHAPLAINS CORNER

### The Visit

*The nation which forgets its defenders will be itself forgotten* Calvin Coolidge

My dad, Angelo, was in the hospital in Tacoma, Washington. A former Marine and veteran of the Korean War, he was having his third knee-replacement surgery.

A long and very painful operation was going to be made even worse because Dad was going through it alone. There was no one to hold his hand, no familiar soft voices to reassure him. His wife was ill and unable to accompany him or even visit during his weeklong stay. My sisters and brother lived in California, and I lived even farther away, in Indiana. There wasn't even anyone to drive him to the hospital, so he had to arrive that morning by cab. The thought of my dad lying there alone was more than I could stand. But what could I do from here?

I picked up the phone and called information for the Puyallup, Washington, Marine Corps recruiting station, where I joined the Marines ten years before. I thought that if I could talk to a Marine and explain the situation, maybe one of them would visit my dad.

I called the number. A man answered the phone and in a very confident voice said, "United States Marines, Sergeant Van-es. May I help you?"

Feeling just as certain, I replied, "Sergeant Van-es, you may find this request a little strange, but this is why I am calling..." I proceeded to tell him who I was and that my father was also a former Marine and 100 percent disabled from the Korean War. I explained that he was in the hospital, alone, without anyone to visit him and asked if Sergeant Van-es would please go and see him.

Without hesitation, he answered, "Absolutely."

Then I asked, "If I send flowers to the recruiting station, would you deliver them to my dad when you go to the hospital?"

"Ma'am, I will be happy to take the flowers to your dad. I'll give you my address. You send them, and I will make sure that he receives them," he replied.

The next morning, I sent flowers to Sergeant Van-es's office just like we had planned. I went to work, and that evening, I returned home and phoned my dad to inquire about his surprise visitor.

If you had ever talked with a small child after that child had just seen Santa Claus, you will understand the glee I heard in my dad's voice. "I was just waking up when I thought I saw two Marines in their dress blue uniforms standing at the foot of my bed", he told me excitedly. "I thought I had died and gone to heaven. But they were really there!"

I began to laugh, partly at his excitement, but also because he didn't even mention his operation. He felt so honored: Two Marines he had never met took time out to visit an old Marine like him. He told me again and again how sharp they looked and how all the nurses thought he was so important. "But how did you ever get them to do that?" he asked me.

"It was easy. We are all Marines, Dad, past and present; it's the bond."

After hanging up with my dad, I called Sergeant Van-es to thank him for visiting my dad. And to thank him for the extra things he did to make it special: wearing his dress blue uniform, bringing another Marine along - he even took a digital camera with him. He had pictures taken of the two Marines with my dad, right beside his bed. That evening, he emailed them to me so I could see for myself that my dad was not alone and that he was going to be okay.

As for the flowers, they hardly mattered, but I was glad for the opportunity to express my feelings. The card read: "Daddy, I didn't want just anyone bringing you flowers... so I sent the World's Finest. Semper Fi."

From Chicken Soup for the Veterans Soul

Love and prayers to all!

Bob Steorts, Chaplain

***FEBRUARY BIRTHDAY WISHES TO :***

Shirley Barker

Bob Parker

Traci Greene

Lynn Terry

**THAT'S A WRAP FOR FEBRUARY 2020**