



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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LEARN MORE AT PACMOAA.ORG

APRIL 2020



NO APRIL and MAY MEETING

FROM THE PRESIDENT

We are all facing a very different world than we did last month. With Governor Northam's order to continue to shelter in place until June 10th, PACMOAA won't be able to have a meeting in April or May. Hopefully, if Virginians follow the CDC guidelines, our experience won't be the same as New York's!! We will hold off on canceling the June meeting until May and hope things improve. Please follow the CDC guidelines to protect yourself, family and friends.

Even though we can't get together now, staying in touch with family and friends via phone calls, emails, text messages and social media are important for all of us. Perhaps many younger Americans will appreciate the importance of interacting in person more with family and friends after the coronavirus pandemic finishes.

I spoke with CAPT David Collins, USN (Ret) , Executive Director at the Hampton VA Medical Center, on Monday, 9 March to see if he felt it was okay to meet on the 12th as the guidance at that time was to only meet in groups less than 50!! He felt it was fine as long as we had a large bottle of Purell which we had.

Twenty-eight members, spouses and guests attended the meeting. Thank you all very much for attending and sharing the evening with us. It was great to see Bob and Carol Pomeroy – they had not attended in some time due to health issues. Jamie Wise, Ron Segestrom, and Earnest Jones attended again, and they all submitted membership applications at the meeting!!

CAPT Collins and Sue Lawver, MSW, LICSW, LCSW (the Suicide Prevention Coordinator for Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences at the Hampton VA Medical Center) were speakers and with all the changes going on in medical facilities, we were especially grateful that they still were able to attend our meeting. CAPT Collins gave an excellent overview of changes that have occurred at the Hampton VA including 5 directors in 6 years as well as his background and plans. He has been at the Hampton VA for 6 months and has a 9-year plan to be there and then will re-evaluate his goals. The lack of continuity in leadership over the last 6 years certainly contributed to some of the problems that have been publicized with the Hampton VA.

Some interesting facts include Virginia has the largest percentage of female veterans in the country and Tidewater has the 2nd fastest growing number of veterans.

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In the past, most of the VA patients were 55-year-old white males and the patients are now from a much more diverse population. The current approach to care is that it is a family business - the VA needs to engage in the community as CAPT Collins and Sue did with attending the PACMOAA meeting. Long term goals and strategy include – Respect, dignity and trust as well as high reliability. It was noted that 80% of doctors in the country have done a rotation in a VA hospital! On the Hampton VA homepage, it lists caregivers as well as several different categories of veterans including those that are homeless and women.

Sue Lawver reminded us that 20 vets die each day due to suicide and only 6 of the 20 are usually attached to a VA facility. Since most are scattered in the community, great effort is being made to get them involved with the VA. She suggested that each of us should think about who in your community needs help. Some may not want to go to the VA or need help. “Family taking care of family and community taking care of community” is their aim per Sue.



David Collins and Sue Lawver

In caring for the community, you first must acknowledge the issue. Looking at risk factors that increase the risk of suicide that include homelessness, TBI/chronic medical condition, substance abuse, difficult experiences and PTSD is essential. Vets have a higher suicide rate than civilians with the highest time of risk during the transition from AD to being a civilian. Coping with everyday life is very different and difficult. Treatment is very effective, but you must get to them first! The Hampton VA expansion includes community-based outpatient clinics in Chesapeake, Elizabeth City and VA Beach. Because 65% of vets live on the southside, the goal is to build 2 full-service centers on the southside, one to start in 2024 and another one in 2026.

Twenty five percent of patients are Vietnam vets and that will increase with the recognition of the Blue Water Navy vets being eligible for care. There is a need for volunteers especially for the long-term care patients to include spinal cord injuries and the nursing home as well as hospice. At this time, due to the coronavirus, visitors are restricted in most parts of the hospital as they are in all hospitals at this time. Sue brought a lot of flyers with info per resources as well as some gun locks, etc. I will bring them to our next meeting but if anyone wants to see the handouts, I can scan them and email them to you or send via snail mail.

Please keep our soldiers and their families in your thoughts and prayers as well as all the medical personnel and first responders putting their lives at risk to protect us. We also need to remember the truck drivers delivering groceries to the stores, the workers in the stores, restaurant employees helping us pick up meals as well as the janitors and other service people. Hopefully, we all will appreciate each other a little more and realize we all must work together to help our country thrive!! We don't know how long this new normal will last but be safe and keep social distancing!!

PACMOAA LEADERSHIP



CHAPTER NEWS

APRIL CALENDAR

05 GOLD STAR SPOUSES DAY	14 USAF RESERVE BIRTHDAY (1948)
08 PASSOVER	23 US ARMY RESERVE BIRTHDAY (1908)
09 HOLY THURSDAY	24 BEGINNING OF RAMANDAN
12 EASTER SUNDAY	30 VCOC 2 ND QUARTER VIRTUAL MEETING

BIRTHDAY WISHES FOR APRIL

Scotty Bruce
Paige Cherry
Dan Hartwell
June Leckrone
Tony Oliphant
Bob Pomeroy
Jim Stephan
Doug Weller

TENTATIVE UPCOMING EVENTS FOR SUMMER

All April and May events canceled for PACMOAA and PACMOAA Board.
Date for PACMOAA Virtual Board meeting TBD.

11 JUNE: ANNUAL PACMOAA DINNER MEETING honoring scholarship recipients

2 JULY: VCOC 3RD QUARTER MEETING in Richmond

JULY: ANNUAL JOINT BRUNCH WITH VIPMOAA & HRCMOAA

AUGUST: PACMOAA BOARD MEETING

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

WELCOME ABOARD

PACMOAA extends hearty welcome to four new members this month!
Earnest Jones, Surviving Spouse, from Chesapeake



LCDR Ron Segerstrom, USNR (Ret) and CAPT Jamie Wise, USN (Ret) from Suffolk (picture to the left)
Maj Steve Watkins, USA (Ret) and his wife Kay from Suffolk

Remember that your membership is important. It is one of our three main objectives/goals. 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.

Out of 70 members from last year, one moved out of our area, 44 had renewed as of 7 April (14 more than the end of Feb.) Three new members joined at our March meeting and all of them had attended a previous meeting as the guest of a member. Their membership and that of Steve Watkins brings us up to 48 members paid as of 7 April. We need to continue this practice and follow up with our guests. If you have friends or neighbors that might like to join PACMOAA, invite them to a meeting. The cost for a prospective new member is ½ the regular dinner cost. We certainly want to increase our membership with new members but also to maintain the current members!!

If you have not done so, please pay your dues as soon as possible!! Please include the renewal form in this newsletter to help us update our records. If you're not sure if you've paid or not, please check with our membership chair, Dolly cherrington, at dcherrington@earthlink.com or with our treasurer, Hans Sachse at hsachse@earthlink.com. 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 for your membership and ongoing support!

PERSONAL AFFAIRS

This is a very difficult time for everyone with all the changes in our daily lives even if no one is ill. I haven't heard of any of our members having increased medical issues or COVID-19 problems at this time. Fortunately, there are many resources to provide support and comfort available. I have watched three concerts on TV in the past week reflecting a communal effort to provide some degree of temporary relief from our stress and anxiety. As I mentioned earlier, maintaining contact with family and friends is very important now. It is so heartening to see communities pulling together and helping each other now. It is wonderful to see how many people throughout the country are working together to help each other and our communities. Some examples I've seen on the news over the past few weeks include restaurants delivering meals to hospital personnel and first responders, a church choir walking through neighborhoods and singing hymns to their neighbors, members of the community making lunches for families in need and delivering them to the families or having families drive by to pick up free meals.

Thank you.

Sherry Ferki, Personal Affairs Officer Home number: 686-4650 Cell: 630-5608

LEGISLATIVE

Congress Must Halt Medical Billet Reductions, MTF Restructuring Amid COVID-19

By: Karen Ruedisueli March 25, 2020

Earlier this week, MOAA called on the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to halt all military medical billet reductions and any proposed military treatment facility (MTF) downsizing given the impact of the [COVID-19 pandemic](#).

While we appreciate DoD's assurances that all changes to MTF capacity will be conditions-based, both beneficiaries *and* medical providers must be certain proposals to reduce the military's direct care system capacity are not moving forward at this time. Since the [FY 2017 NDAA Section 703 report](#) detailing MTF downsizing was released, MOAA has heard from both providers and beneficiaries with concerns about their local communities' ability to absorb care transitioned out of MTFs.

With medical capacity in extraordinary flux across the civilian health care system, it becomes increasingly prudent to officially halt all proposals to transition military families and retirees to civilian providers.

GO TO TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmaker to Answer MOAA's Call](#)

Demands related to the uniformed medical mission have also increased due to COVID-19, since the private sector has little incentive to produce and maintain excess patient care capacity. Governors have called on the administration for military medical assistance, [USNS Mercy \(T-AH 19\)](#) and [USNS Comfort \(T-AH 20\)](#) will expand capacity for non-COVID-19 patients in coastal areas, and active duty medical units and reserve personnel are [on alert or have been deployed to man field hospitals](#). The military medical response to the COVID-19 pandemic is destined to inform future operational and medical readiness requirements for the medical force.

Rep. Ross Spano (R-Fla.) has already [sent a letter](#) to Secretary of Defense Mark Esper urging him to stop the proposed closure and downsizing of clinics in his district given the strain the coronavirus could place on local medical services. Proposed changes to the MacDill Air Force Base Clinic and the Sabal Park Clinic in Spano's district would move approximately 30,000 military beneficiaries to civilian care in the Tampa Bay area.

[THE LIST: [Plans Call for These MTFs to Stop Seeing Retirees, Family Members](#)]

MOAA has always supported an enhanced focus on military medical readiness while vowing to ensure continued access to high quality care for servicemembers and retirees, as well as their families and survivors. However, the unprecedented challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic demand [all plans to reduce MHS direct care system capacity cease now](#); they can be

reconsidered at a later date once the significant servicewide (and nationwide) lessons are processed and applied.

ADDENDUM by Sherry Ferki on 6 April: **Military medical personnel** are being deployed all over the US to assist the civilian population deal with the COVID 19 pandemic. The Army put a call to retirees in critical care and ED medical specialties to assist and as of 30 March per the Army Times, over 17,000 volunteers had responded. Both the USNS Mercy and Comfort have been deployed to help LA and New York, the Army Corps of Engineers is busy building “large hospitals” in New York and Washington state and will build more in other areas as the need arises, and on 24 March, the secretary of the Army offered three field hospitals to deploy to New York and Washington to assist governors there. An additional 1000 medical personnel have been deployed to staff the hospital set up in New York. A VA hospital in New York has opened bed space to non-COVID 19 civilian patients to free up space for the inundated civilian hospitals.

On 25 March, Governor Northam noted that the Virginia Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) has more than 8000 deployable volunteers but they need more. Within 5 days, 1600 people had signed up. The MRC is a force of volunteers who are prepared to support the community in the event of a public health emergency like the coronavirus pandemic.

With military medical systems being deployed throughout the country to assist the civilian community, **IT IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT TO USE THE MOAA Take Action** link or call your legislators!!

UPDATES FROM NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER PORTSMOUTH

25 MARCH PHARMACY CHANGES *All information below from NMCP website*

- All new or renewal of **chronic maintenance** medications must be either dropped off at location below or sent electronically by provider to the NMCP e-pharmacy
- If prescription is sent electronically by provider, you must initiate your prescription by calling call center at 757-953-0258 (same number as calling pharmacy at NMCP). **NOTE:** Several PACMOAA members called this number and were on hold from 1 – 2 ½ hours!! *Better to call very early to get through more quickly.*
- You can drop off/pick up your prescription at one of the following locations:
 - Oceana Pharmacy (M-F 0700-1600)
 - Norfolk Pharmacy (M-F 0700-1600)
 - Boone Drive thru Pharmacy (M-F 0700-1600)
 - Drop off at main hospital (hours below) for Scott Center Pharmacy drive thru pick up (M-S 0700-1800 & Sun 0730-1600)

When you call/drop-off your prescription a pick up time will be assigned to you.

Call/drop off before 1400, it will be ready for pick up the next business day.

Call/drop off after 1400, it will be ready after two business days.

REFILLS still must be called in through Audiocare 757-953-6337

30 MARCH McDonald Army Health Center Pharmacy closed since several pharmacy personnel tested positive for COVID 19! Some of those beneficiaries may be temporarily using NMCP pharmacy services.

31 MARCH MESSAGE TO PHARMACY BENEFICIARIES from Defense Health Agency (DHA) Pharmacy Operations Division- Military Pharmacies will adapt their hours and services to maintain patient and personnel safety.

- If there is a local outbreak or confirmed cases of COVID-19 among Military MTF Pharmacy personnel, the MTF can limit pharmacy services as necessary. Actions may include:
 - Introduction of alternative pick up options (staggered pick up times, curbside pickup, etc.).
 - Temporary transfer of non-enrolled, non- Active duty Service Members (ADSMs) and/or non- Active duty Family Members to home delivery or retail.
 - The temporary closure of the military pharmacy.

“During this time, the overarching best course of action for beneficiaries is, in order to limit opportunities for exposure, to switch to TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery. By switching, you can get up to a 90-day supply of most medications safely and conveniently delivered to your home or APO/FPO address (please note that quantity limits apply, laws for mailing certain medications such as controlled substances vary state-to-state, home delivery is not available in Germany, and co-pays apply for non-Active Duty beneficiaries). **NOTE:** Another one of MOAAs **TAKE ACTION** issues is not charging co-pay during this pandemic.

6 APRIL COVID-19 No Visitor Policy - for patients on wards, Only one visitor for labor and delivery, Mother Baby Unit, Pediatric and NICU (parent or caregiver).

8 APRIL All individuals coming to NMCP need to wear their own cloth face masks in addition to being screened before they enter.

SCHOLARSHIP UPDATE FROM 2018 RECIPIENT

Email received 3 April 2020 from Gwen Leman

Sorry for the late response. We are hanging in there with the quarantine, I hope yours is as well! As for ROTC, it's been going very well so far. Sophomore year is usually the most important for cadets because you go to field training that summer, but obviously that's all up in the air now. I'm really hoping they find a way for us to still go, I'm super ready for it! The past year and a half my detachment has done a great job to prepare me. I've joined the Arnold Air Society and I'm signed up to run a half marathon this summer! I'm also super thankful for my wingmen, they're my family! My best friend in college is one of my fellow cadets. Overall it's been a great experience and I feel like it's really shaped me to be who I am, and I'm so excited for the years to

come. If you have any other questions I'd be happy to share! Here's some pictures I have of me in my uniform, I hope these are okay. Thank you so much!!

Gwen saluting superior below and with several classmates with a field of flags behind them.



COMMUNITY SERVICE/ACTIVITIES

Many of us are not able to get out in the community and help others as we have in the past but the need is tremendous at this time. **NEVER STOP SERVING** is ingrained in most of us and Americans and military personnel are very innovative and adaptable. Thank you all for everything you have done for our nation and are doing now!!! **Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless** is still serving the homeless community but with much more difficulty now!! You can order supplies for them from Amazon or local stores that deliver. The biggest needs now are:

- Non latex gloves--large
- Masks
- Lysol
- Hand Sanitizer
- Aloe cream
- Bleach
- Odoban

Many of these items are in short supply at this time but may be able to be delivered later. PVH is open from 0800 to 1800 during the COVID 19 pandemic. Their number is 399-0200.

DIFFERENT UNIFORMS, ALL HEROES
Thanks to the men & women fighting COVID-19



FROM MOAA FACEBOOK POSTING "Love and respect to ALL those in uniform fighting this pandemic. Thank you for answering the call. And shout-out to the police, EMTs, bank tellers, cashiers, grocery store clerks, gas station attendants ..." Also housekeeping & truck drivers.

PLEASE BE SAFE AND KNOW THAT OUR LOVE AND PRAYERS ARE WITH ALL OUR MEMBERS AND YOUR FAMILIES!!

PACMOAA MEMBERSHIP FORM 2020

FULL NAME: _____ NICKNAME: _____

GRADE/RANK: _____ SERVICE: _____ BIRTH DATE: _____

STATUS: Active Retired Former Surviving Spouse

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ CELL PHONE: _____

Civilian Occupation: _____

MOAA Membership No.: _____ (From MOAA card or Military Off. Mailing Label)

Spouse's Name: _____ Spouse's Nickname: _____

Are you willing to serve as board member or on a committee? () Yes () No

PLEASE CIRCLE CORRECT AMOUNT: ANNUAL DUES ENCLOSED IS \$25.00 FOR REGULAR MEMBER OR \$20.00 FOR AUXILIARY MEMBER. Make checks payable to PACMOAA and send mail to:

PACMOAA, PO Box 5353, Portsmouth, VA 23703

DATE: _____ SIGNATURE: _____