



The Salute express



Monthly newsletter of the Portsmouth Area Chapter, an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America, serving Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Smithfield, Suffolk, Franklin, Isle of Wight, Southampton, and Surry, Virginia, since 1983. Dinner meetings are 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 and do not participate in political activities.

VOLUME XXXIX Issue VI

LEARN MORE AT PACMOAA.ORG

JUNE 2020

FROM THE PRESIDENT



I hope you and your families are doing as well as can be expected after 3 months of staying home. As COVID 19 seems to be on the decline and we move into Phase 2, our world is very different than it was 4 months ago. We still don't know how widespread the infection rate is, so continuing to practice the CDC recommendations of wearing a mask in groups, washing your hands thoroughly, etc. seem prudent to continue to follow as well as following the Phase 2 Guidelines for Virginia. As a nurse who worked with children with a variety of

infectious diseases for many years and since many of our members are in high risk categories, I have always tried to be proactive protecting my patients, family, and friends. Thus, I am writing this from multiple perspectives – President of PACMOAA, President of the Hampton Roads Chapter of the Virginia Nurses Association, and as a Pediatric Clinical Nursing Instructor.

As of 29 April, over 4400 military medical personnel had been deployed throughout the country to assist other communities deal with the influx of patients with COVID 19. Other medical and non-medical military personnel (including the Corps of Engineers) have also been deployed to assist with the COVID 19 pandemic. We have all seen the pictures of the VA National Guard deployed throughout the state to assist with COVID 19 testing. Many of our newer members may not be aware that the VA National Guard is a dual-status force with state and federal missions. Thus, either the Governor or President can deploy them. They usually are deployed in VA to assist with natural disasters like snowstorms or hurricanes. They have recently been deployed in VA to protect citizens and property when peaceful demonstrations changed into a destructive event, usually late in the evening. Most of the VA National Guard are citizen soldiers who have full time civilian jobs. They are our friends and neighbors who are called up to serve, often with minimal notice and do so as needed.

Throughout my career, and I'm sure throughout all of your careers, we worked with people from many different cultures, races and religions. One of the reasons I went to school on an Army Nursing Scholarship was that I was so impressed to see people from many different backgrounds working together. My initial exposure to this was through a field trip with The Future Nurses of America Club from my high school to Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Most of us were stationed in overseas assignments and learned about the cultures of the different communities we were stationed. The bond that we share is quite different from anything I have experienced in the civilian world and is part of the strength of PACMOAA and MOAA.

(CONTINUED on PAGE 2)

PACMOAA LEADERSHIP

SEE

PACMOAA.ORG



CHAPTER NEWS

JUNE CALENDAR

4-7 BATTLE OF MIDWAY 1942	14 FLAG DAY
06 D-DAY (76 TH ANNIVERSARY)	21 FATHER'S DAY
11 PACMOAA VIRTUAL BD MTG	23 USCG AUX BIRTHDAY (1939)
14 US ARMY BIRTHDAY (1775)	27 PTSD AWARENESS DAY

MAY BIRTHDAYS

Oran Chenault
Richard Grigg
Earnest Jones
Mary Snyder

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Martha Anderson
Tom Cahill
Dan Hinkle
Joyce Johnson
Kevin Terry
Dollise Howard-Whitehurst

FROM THE PRESIDENT cont.

As we "Never Stop Serving", please remember our troops currently serving – Active Duty, Reserve, National Guard, and their families; retirees and their families; and all the veterans and wounded warriors in your thoughts and prayers.

NOTE: Even though we haven't had any regular meetings for several months, the Scholarship Committee has been busy. We would like to have a Membership Zoom meeting to recognize the 2 PACMOAA scholarship recipients, tentatively July 9, 2020 at 7PM, and possibly have a short presentation by a speaker. I will keep you updated. More info on scholarship recipients later in this newsletter.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

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.

PACMOAA had 65 paid members, including 6 life members and 6 new members, as of 6 June 2020. There were 71 members at the end of 2019 and two of those moved **and there are still 8 members that have not renewed yet.**

Hopefully, we'll be able to have a meeting in September. If so, please think about an eligible friend that you can invite as your guest. Potential members can attend their first meeting at half price.

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. Remember the effectiveness VCOG 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.

Some members prefer privacy about medical problems but still need our support and prayers.

Bob Parker is having more mobility issues and his wife, Eleanor, went in to hospice in late May but was improving a little by 9 June. Bob would really appreciate hearing from his PACMOAA friends also. Bob's address is 3450 Gallows Rd Apt #231 in Annandale, VA 22003.

With the death of a long time PACMOAA member and the number of Americans that have gotten ill very quickly and died within a few weeks from COVID 19, the importance of planning ahead for the surviving spouse/family members was amply demonstrated. Quite often, one spouse takes care of most of the financial matters and that is often the service member. Dealing with the death of a loved one is difficult enough without having to figure out from scratch how to do everything - who to call, what info is needed, what the passwords are for different accounts, etc.

MOAA has many helpful booklets but several are especially helpful in planning ahead for our survivors. *Help Your Survivors Now: A Guide to Planning Ahead*, looks at SBP and burial procedures and expenses; continuing entitlements like medical care, pharmacy care and dental care; and personal affairs like your estate, documents requirements checklist and when a service member dies checklist. *The Personal Affairs Guide: A Personal Inventory for Peace of Mind* looks at personal data security including passwords and where to keep this document; record keeping including important info per self and spouse, family records, social security, etc.; financial information including financial and retirements accounts and annuities, credit cards, loans, etc.; insurance - life, long term care, medical, dental, vision, VA hospital and any other insurance; and wills and other arrangements. *The MOAA Survivor's Checklist: First Steps for*

Moving On is small pamphlet but it gives names and contact info for "who to contact" with room to add important numbers and notes. All of these resources can be downloaded or ordered from MOAA at no cost. I will bring some copies of each to the next dinner meeting or mail you copies if that would be helpful. Thank you.

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

IN MEMORIUM



Many of you may have seen the obituary in the newspaper for CAPT Larry Anderson, USN (Ret). Larry died in late May. "A natural leader, his no nonsense approach, optimistic and positive attitude dealing with complex responsibilities earned numerous medals, awards and accolades during his 30 years proudly serving his country. Portsmouth, VA was his choice for retirement. He worked for the city on boards, including a plank owner of the Children's Museum, Boardwalk Arts Festivals, and the Historic Courthouse museum committees."

The above is from his obituary.



Larry joined PACTROA (now PACMOAA) in 1987 and was President in 1991. He and his wife Freida were able to attend our 35th Anniversary Celebration in April 2018. He is on the far right in the picture to the left with 2 other longtime PACMOAA members, Jack Lyons and Henry Boschen. It was a pleasure to see Larry and Freida as they had not been able to attend a meeting in some time. Freida would appreciate hearing from Larry's friends. The home address is in Portsmouth

at 141 Rolfe Terrace, Portsmouth, VA 23707. The home number is 397-9165. A Mass and Celebration of Life will be announced later, once the community risk for COVID 19 is felt to be much less. Interment will be at Albert Horton Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk. I will keep you updated on both. Our thoughts and prayers are with Freida and their families.

As many of Larry's friends knew, he had a passion for antiques, working with wood and restoring furniture and art which led him into an antique shop on Granby Street in Norfolk which he owned for 30 years. Larry was a Godsend to me after my Daddy died and left many old coins and bills. Larry guided me in the process of disposing of many of those items and really lifted a weight off my shoulders!!

LEGISLATIVE

How MOAA Members Joined Forces for a Successful Virtual Storm By:

Dan Merry June 03, 2020 From MOAA website: The COVID-19 pandemic usurped MOAA's efforts to [Storm the Hill](#) in March of this year, so we did what most everyone else started doing – we hunkered down and found solutions.

From teleworking with laptops to phone calls and video chats to full-blown meetings online, we all adapted to the new business models of remote work and maintaining social distance. Fortunately, MOAA had been preparing for telework as an enhancement to our operations, so our conversion was a little less strenuous than others experienced.

One of the positive byproducts of the pandemic constraints was MOAA's Virtual Storming the Hill. With an army of stormers previously primed to lead our signature event in March, MOAA was in a good position to recall those forces and revector them to an alternative method of storming. While health care was the center of our planned storm in March, the COVID-19 pandemic forced a re-look at the topic to ensure it remained relevant. **[RELATED: [Answering Your Questions on Planned Cuts to Military Medicine](#)]**

As the pandemic unfolded, we learned [DoD was pausing](#) its congressionally mandated reform to the military health system (MHS) – a reform that consisted of reducing or closing nearly 50 medical treatment facilities. DoD also acknowledged a pause in their plan, initiated last year, [to cut nearly 18,000 military medical billets](#) to help fund an increase in warfighting specialties.

Our Virtual Stormers urged Congress to direct DoD to not only pause, but to halt and fully reassess plans to reform and reduce medical capacity. MOAA believes it is imperative to take the lessons learned from this pandemic and assess how the whole of government can be stronger and better prepared as a result.

So, how did we do?

Leveraging our grassroots advocates in our [councils and chapters network](#), we set a course for 100% congressional contact within the month of May. I can report we delivered on that goal and then some.

Our members have been exceptionally busy over this Virtual Storm. In May, MOAA:

- Sent over 19,000 letters to 435 districts and 50 states – covering 100% of Congress.
- Held 253 storming meeting appointments via virtual meeting platforms.
- Shared [an educational video](#) garnering nearly 18,000 views on Facebook.

Further, our efforts gained traction within the House of Representatives – Reps. Bill Posey (R-Fla.) and Kathy Castor (D-Fla.) circulated a congressional letter urging House Armed Services Committee leadership to ensure the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) includes language to stop planned cuts to military medical capacity. Others have shown an interest in halting these reductions until Congress and DoD can assess lessons learned. **[[READ THE LETTER](#)]**

What's next? Within a few weeks, we will get a chance to see the House Armed Services Committee draft of the NDAA and assess the language relative to these two issues: MHS reform, and DoD reductions of military medical billets.

If the language fits the ask, we will immediately pivot to the Senate to ensure the provision makes it through conference and into the final bill. We will need to remain engaged throughout the conference process, which generates the final bill for the floor votes and onto the president to sign.

Now is not the time to let up. We need MOAA members and our partners to translate our virtual success into reality by remaining actively engaged.

We will keep you updated along the way, and you can count on at least a couple of calls to action to ensure we shepherd this issue all the way to the White House.

Protect Your TRICARE Benefits

Tell Congress to make sure servicemembers and their families get access to care they need.

[Act Now](#)

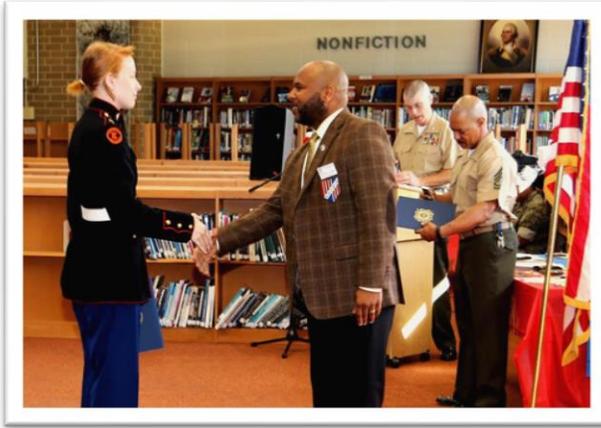
Update for Virtual Storming the Hill for PACMOAA

Sherry Ferki participated in the MOAA Training Webinar for the Virtual Storming the Hill held on 29 April as a member of the MOAA Uniformed Services Nurse Advocates Virtual Chapter (MUSNAVC). Thus, I participated in the May 2020 Virtual Storming representing MUSNAVC and PACMOAA. The focus of the storming this year to ensure the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) includes language to stop planned cuts to military medical capacity and reassess based on lessons learned with the pandemic.

Sherry led the PACMOAA team which included Karl Wilson, our VCOC Leg Rep, and Hal Hostetler, our Assist Leg Rep that met with Rep Bobby Scott and his Chief of Staff, David Dailey on 26 May. Linc Smith, VCOC 1st VP also participated. The meeting lasted about 30 minutes with Sherry reviewing the MOAA Talking Points, info on the impact of military medical billet cuts on the Military Medical School and future supply of doctors, as well as her perspectives as a retired Army Nurse and woman. The meeting went well and David asked for clarification on the status of 2 units at Joint Base Langley-Eustis so Sherry followed up with MOAA and sent the requested info to him.

Sherry also led the same PACMOAA team as well as Boyd Nix, VCOC President, and Linc Smith, VCOC 1st VP with Carolyn Wadhams, Senior Policy Advisor for National Security & Veterans for Sen Warner on 29 May. The same format was followed as on the call to Bobby Scott. Caroline was very interested and asked many questions. The meeting lasted almost an hour and Caroline said she would investigate the status of NDAA 21 per the medical billet cuts and meet with our group again to update us! Follow up information was also sent to her.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES



MCJROTC Award several years ago pictured to the left. This year, only 8 cadets received MOAA medals and certificates from PACMOAA.

2020 Virtual JROTC Award Ceremonies 6/7/2020

CHESAPEAKE	<i>All AFJROTC</i>		Date	Cadet
Deep Creek HS	MAJ Pearman	558-5302		<i>Austin Duez</i>
Great Bridge HS	Lt Col Christian Wendler	482-5191		<i>Christopher Skipper</i>
Indian River HS	Lt Col Lynn Holmbeck	578-7000	5/20/20	<i>Emily Weifert</i>
Oscar Smith HS	Col Michael Helsabeck	548-0498		<i>Jonathan Sanchez-Moore</i>
Western Branch HS	COL Roy Allen	638-7900		<i>None</i>
Grassfield HS	LtCol Gordon Strong	<u>558-4549</u>		<i>Isabella Dimmerling</i>
PORTSMOUTH				
Churchland HS <i>MCJROTC</i>	LtCol Paul Pratt	686-2500		<i>To be decided</i>
I.C. Norcom HS <i>NJROTC</i>	CWO2 Joseph Redwood	393-5442 school		<i>No response</i>

Woodrow Wilson HS <i>AJROTC</i>	LTC (Ret) Wendell K. Johnson	465-2947 Cell 404- 0983	5/14/20	<i>Cadet 1SG Izania Martin- Gray</i>
SUFFOLK				
Lakeland HS <i>AFJROTC</i>	SMSgt Terrell Rogers (ret) Lt Col Palmer	925-5530	5/5/20	<i>Michael Jones</i>
Nansemond River HS <i>AFJROTC</i>	LtCol David Hedger Sgt Young	923-4101		<i>No response</i>
Kings Fork HS	MSgt Rodney Chatman	923-5240		<i>No response</i>
Smithfield HS <i>AJROTC</i>	LTC Badoiam	357-0056	May 2020	<i>Cadet LTC Devin Fitzgerald</i>
Franklin HS	LTC Linwood Wright	562-5187 school		<i>No response</i>

PACMOAA 2020 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Thank you to the Scholarship Committee members able to participate this year: Co-Chair Scott Dickinson, Lynn Terry, Ben Barnard, and Sherry Ferki. The online application process and grading tool that Scott set up several years ago made this process much easier for the committee. There were 6 applicants for the two 2020 PACMOAA scholarships; 5 were active in JROTC and all have very high grade point averages. It is amazing how students can maintain excellent grades while participating in many extracurricular activities such as sports, clubs, band, and community activities as well as providing leadership in some of these endeavors. Several applicants also work part time.

Both recipients selected are very competitive and well-rounded students: **Morgan Margrisi from Nansemond River High School and Devin Fitzgerald from Smithfield High School.** Both are outstanding students that maintained excellent grades while taking many advanced honors classes and advanced placement courses and belonging to several honor societies.

Morgan Magrisi rose to the position of LT COL, Unit Deputy Commander in the AFJROTC and won multiple awards including a 2019 USAF JROTC Chief of Staff Flight Academy Private Pilot Scholarship (only 150 worldwide) to earn a private pilot's license! Morgan was very active in multiple sports was Captain of three of six teams. These are some of the many activities this very versatile student was involved in. Morgan plans on attending VMI, majoring in mechanical engineering with an aerospace concentration.

Devin Fitzgerald rose to the position of Battalion Commander, managing over 100 cadets. In addition to numerous AJROTC positions during her four year JROTC experience, she won numerous awards, was Drill Team Commander, and had over 200 hours of volunteer service with JROTC. Devin was also very active in leadership positions in her high school ranging from Executive student council member to School Board Liaison from 2018-2020. In addition to being a member of the high school debate team, Devin was Debate state champion for school years 2014-2018. Again, these are some of the activities Devin was involved in. Devin plans to attend JMU and major in intelligence analysis.

Congratulation to Morgan and Devin and best wishes for successful college experiences and military careers.

Submitted by Sherry Ferki, Scholarship Committee Co-Chair.

May 25, 2020 June 2020 Council and Chapter News

Surviving Spouse Corner: The Benefits of a Canine Companion

Dogs not only are loving members of their families, but they also provide needed therapy, comfort, and joy during difficult times.

By Georgie Suitor, Surviving Spouse Advisory Council member

"For me, a house or an apartment becomes a home when you add one set of four legs, a happy tail, and that indescribable measure of love we call a dog," said Roger Caras, president emeritus of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

I couldn't agree more. Dogs truly are loving, protective, understanding canine members of our families. Science tells us dogs feel our moods and bring comfort when needed, as well as great amounts of humor and wonder.

For seriously wounded members of the military, a dedicated companion dog can help with the healing and recovery process. Because each of these specially trained canines is able to read human body language, there is a dedication to meeting physical and emotional needs, while forming trusted relationships and achieving a sense of human independence.

As a strong advocate of rescued pet adoption, for the past three years, I have had the joy of having Shih Tzu rescue brother and sister, Tye and Sadie, as members of my family. While sheltering in place during the COVID-19 pandemic, Tye and Sadie have kept me active with four walks a day and laughing, and I think they are quite happy to have me at home — most of the time.

CHAPLAINS CORNER JUNE 2020

A Soldier Remembers

In 1987, while serving as the public affairs officer at Fort Bragg, I would frequently visit the local high school to speak to students about the Army. As a LTC, I found it particularly rewarding to talk with the teenagers about the benefits of military service, if only for a few years of their lives.

During one of these visits, I reported to the secretary in the principal's office to let her know that I was here for the third-period civics class. I was surprised when she told me, "The principal would like to see you before you go to the class." Normally, in these small country schools, the principal was busy with a myriad of duties such as driver's education, administration, counseling and the like.

As I entered his office, I was greeted by a gentleman who appeared to be in his late thirties or early forties, and he welcomed me with a smile and a handshake. "You don't remember me, do you?" he queried.

I looked closely at the face again and could not recall where we may have met before. "No," I said. "I'm sorry, I don't."

"You were my company commander in basic training at Ft Jackson in 1970," the principal said.

I again looked at the middle-aged face and had no recollection. We usually had 220 soldiers in each unit, and they all looked alike in uniform with short haircuts – and it had been seventeen years ago.

"Let me help you out," he suggested. "You gave me a three-day pass to go home and see my newborn baby." I immediately remembered the incident, if not the soldier!

"Yes," I said. "I remember now." It was the only three-day pass I had issued, because the soldiers were on their way to Vietnam immediately after they finished training. But I knew if I did not let him go home to see his son and something happened to him, I would regret denying the opportunity he had to be with his family.

He stood up from his chair, walked around the desk and put his hand on my shoulder as we went down the hall to the classroom. "Come on, Colonel. I'd like to introduce you to 'the baby.' He's in your third-period class. By letting me go see him, you gave me a reason to stay focused and to come home safe from that war. Thank you, sir."

It was the most rewarding class I had ever given, and I had no problem telling the students about the bonds of friendship and the values that Army life can provide... and that last a lifetime.

From Chicken Soup for the Veteran's Soul

Love and prayers to all! Bob Steorts, Chaplain