



# The Salute Online



Monthly newsletter of the Portsmouth Area Chapter, an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America, serving Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Suffolk, Smithfield, Franklin, and surrounding counties, 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 XXXX Issue VIII

LEARN MORE AT [PACMOAA.ORG](http://PACMOAA.ORG)

OCTOBER 2021

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



### Greetings,

We had a wonderful Zoom meeting in September. **The Holocaust Commission of the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater told the powerful story of Ms. Kitty Saks, a holocaust survivor.** It was a remarkably interesting, moving presentation and a reminder that we must never forget the evil that man can impose on his fellow man. We hope to have another program from the Holocaust Commission in the future.

I am pleased to say we are having an **in-person meeting on October 14, 2021, at Roger Brown's. Representative Bobby Scott, VA 3<sup>rd</sup> District, will be our guest speaker.**

As you know, PACMOAA and MOAA are apolitical, and the party affiliation of our elected officials is irrelevant to seeking their support for our issues. Representative Scott has been a longtime supporter of the military and veterans and he supports all the current issues MOAA

is advocating before Congress.

I missed seeing you over the summer. With the pandemic, Delta variant, booster shots, mask/no masks, etc. it can be confusing and baffling to know what is safe. As there are no current prohibitions from the State, and the Pfizer Booster shot availability (more info on page 6), we have decided to meet in-person this month. As always, use your own judgment and do what is best for you and your family. The meeting will be on Zoom also, with the program starting at 1930 hours (7:30 PM for Civilians).

PACMOAA has an election upcoming. In addition to electing officers (vacancies listed in another article on pages 5 and 6), we will be appointing a new VCOC representative. **Dolly Cherrington** has faithfully been our VCOC rep for several years but has resigned. Now is your chance to serve. If interested, let me know.

Hope to see you soon.

Bill

The October Speaker's Biography, **Representative Bobby Scott**, Virginia 3<sup>rd</sup> District, appears on page 3-4.

PACMOAA  
LEADERSHIP



## CHAPTER NEWS

### OCTOBER CALENDAR

- 03 NOAA Reestablished 1970 (US SURVEY of the COAST February 10, 1807)
- 14 PACMOAA Dinner Meeting, Roger Brown's: Speaker **Rep Bobby Scott**
- 05 VCOC Fourth Quarter Meeting & Biennial Luncheon, Ford's Colony, Williamsburg - 1000 Hours
- 07 PACMOAA BOARD MEETING Zoom 1400
- 12 Columbus Day
- 13 U.S. NAVY 346<sup>th</sup> Birthday 1775
- 13 U. S. NAVY Memorial 33 Anniversary
- 14 CUBAN Missile Crisis 1962
- 23 BEIRUT Barracks Bombed 1983
- 24 United Nations Day
- 25 US Invades Grenada 1985
- 31 Halloween

### HAPPY OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

**ROBERT ALEXANDER   JAMES ANDERSON  
JOSEPH BARRECA   HAROLD COLE  
JAMES WEBB JONES   JACK LYONS  
GEORGE VAN LAETHEM**

### THE OCTOBER DINNER MEETING WILL **BE BOTH IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL.**

Our October Dinner Meeting will be held on **Thursday, October 14<sup>th</sup>** at Roger Brown's Banquet Room, and on **Zoom** for those not attending in person.

**Sign in and social hour begins at 6 PM, with Dinner Served at 6:30 PM.**

**Speaker 7:30 PM – US Representative Bobby Scott, VA 3<sup>rd</sup> District**

#### ***Buffett Menu***

*Harvest Salad,*

*Cornbread and Honey Butter*

*Slow Roasted Brisket, Baked Salmon with Basil Sherry Cream Sauce*

*Mashed Potatoes and Gravy*

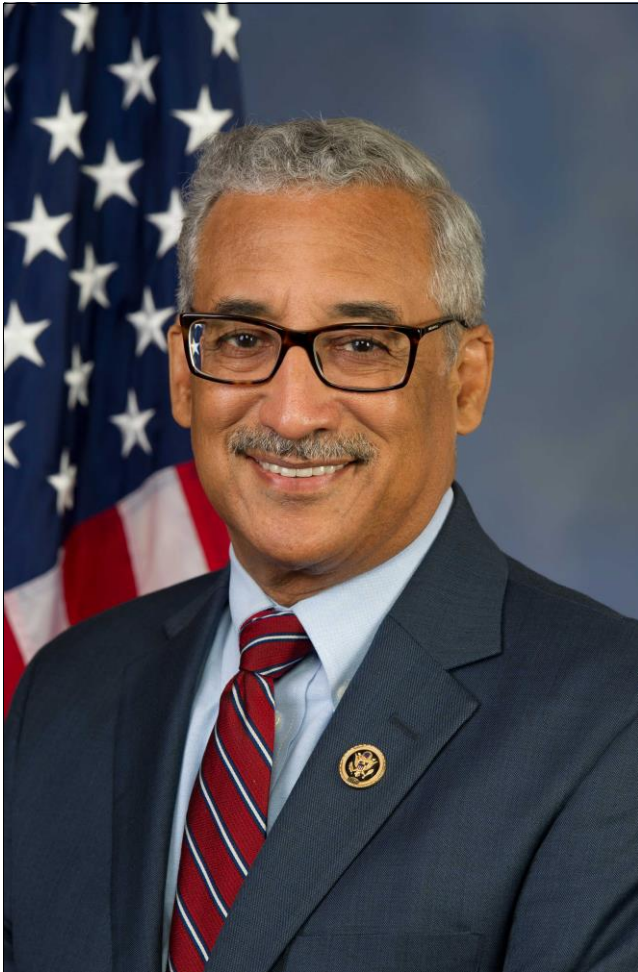
*Green Beans*

*Apple Cobbler with Salted Caramel*

*Tea, Water, & Coffee*

Cost is \$25 (includes gratuity and tax). Please make your reservation no October 8<sup>th</sup> with Sherry Ferki at 757-686-4650 or by email at [navmed1@cox.net](mailto:navmed1@cox.net).

**A RESERVATION MADE IS A RESERVATION PAID**



## Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

has represented Virginia's third congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives since 1993. Prior to his service in Congress, he served in the Virginia House of Delegates from 1978 to 1983 and in the Senate of Virginia from 1983 to 1993.

During his tenure in the Virginia General Assembly, Congressman Scott successfully sponsored laws critical to Virginians in education, employment, health care, social services, economic development, crime prevention and consumer protection. His legislative successes in the state legislature included laws that increased Virginia's minimum wage, created the Governor's Employment and Training Council and improved health care benefits for women, infants and children.

Congressman Scott has the distinction of being the first African-American elected to Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia since Reconstruction and only the second African-American elected to Congress in Virginia's history. Having a maternal grandfather of Filipino ancestry also gives him the distinction of being the first American with Filipino ancestry to serve as a voting member of Congress.

Congressman Scott currently serves as the Chairman of the [Committee on Education and Labor](#). In this capacity, he is

advancing an agenda that improves equity in education, frees students from the burdens of crippling debt, protects and expands access to affordable health care, ensures workers have a safe workplace where they can earn a living wage free from discrimination, and guarantees seniors have a secure and dignified retirement.

From 2015-2018, he served as the ranking member of what was then called the Committee on Education and the Workforce and developed a strong record of working across the aisle to pass critical legislation. In 2015, he was one of the four primary authors of the Every Student Succeeds Act, which reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for the first time in 13 years and replaced the No Child Left Behind Act. Additionally, in 2017, he worked to secure passage of legislation to reform and update our nation's career and technical education system, as well as the juvenile justice system in 2018, which were both signed into law by President Donald Trump. The latter legislation, the Juvenile Justice Reform Act, contained core tenets of Congressman Scott's Youth Prison Reduction through Opportunities, Mentoring, Intervention, Support, and Education (Youth PROMISE) Act, which he had introduced in every Congress since 2007.

As a part of his effort to provide universal health care for all, prior to the passage of the Affordable Care Act, Congressman Scott sponsored the All Healthy Children Act, which sought to ensure that millions of uninsured children in the United States have access to a comprehensive set of health care services.

Congressman Scott also serves on the [Committee on the Budget](#) where he is a leading voice on fiscal policy and reducing the deficit. He was an ardent opponent of the 2001 and 2003 Bush-era tax cuts that were skewed towards the wealthiest Americans and contributed trillions to the national debt. He opposed the 2008 taxpayer-funded bailout of Wall Street, the 2013 Fiscal Cliff deal that permanently extended most of the Bush-era tax cuts, and President Trump's Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017.

Congressman Scott is also a recognized champion of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights, and he has fought to protect the rights and civil liberties of all Americans. In 1997, he protected the right of all children with disabilities to obtain a free and appropriate education under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act



(IDEA) by leading a successful effort to defeat amendments aimed at curtailing that right for some children. Congressman Scott also actively opposed passage of the USA PATRIOT Act and has been a leading critic of both Republican and Democratic Administrations' misuse of surveillance authorities. He is also a leading opponent in Congress of efforts to permit employment discrimination in federally funded programs.

As the former Chairman and Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security on the Committee on the Judiciary, Congressman Scott is also a leading advocate for reforming our nation's broken criminal justice system. Congressman Scott sponsored the Death in Custody Reporting Act, which was originally signed into law by President Bill Clinton in 2000 and its subsequent reauthorization was signed into law by President Barack Obama in 2014. The law requires state and local law enforcement agencies to report to the U.S. Department of Justice how many individuals die each year while in the custody of law enforcement or during the course of an arrest. In 2010, Congressman Scott successfully led efforts in the House to pass the Fair Sentencing Act, one of the first successful reductions in a mandatory minimum sentence in decades. The law reduced the unfair sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine.

In 2015, Congressman Scott and Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) co-authored the Safe, Accountable, Fair, and Effective (SAFE) Justice Act, which has been recognized as one of the most comprehensive criminal justice reform bills in a generation and attracted significant support from across the political spectrum. Several provisions of the SAFE Justice Act, including retroactive application of the Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 and a fix to how "good time" credits for prisoners are calculated, were included in the First Step Act, a sentencing and prison reform bill signed into law by President Trump in December 2018.

Congressman Scott is also a strong supporter of our nation's military readiness as well as our troops and their safety. In 2007, he introduced the House version of Senator Jim Webb's Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, which was signed into law by President George W. Bush in 2008 and has been cited as the largest expansion of veteran education benefits since World War II. As a member of the Congressional Shipbuilding Caucus, Congressman Scott is a leading advocate for shipbuilding, our shipbuilders, and our men and women in uniform.

In 2010, *The Hill*, a Capitol Hill newspaper, recognized Congressman Scott [as one of the 25 hardest working Members of Congress](#). *The Hill* later recognized him in 2012 as one of [Capitol Hill's 50 most beautiful people](#).

Congressman Scott was born on April 30, 1947, in Washington, D.C. and grew up in Newport News, Virginia. He is a graduate of Harvard College and Boston College Law School. After graduating from law school, he returned home to Newport News and practiced law from 1973 to 1991. As a young attorney, he founded the Peninsula Legal Aid Center to assist those who could not afford legal representation. He received an honorable discharge for his service in the Massachusetts National Guard and the United States Army Reserve.

Congressman Scott is a member of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church in Newport News and is a member of many professional, community, and civic boards and organizations.

## MEMBERSHIP

### MEMBERSHIP UPDATE OCTOBER 2021

PACMOAA has 70 members paid as of 28 September. No change in membership numbers since August. That number includes our 6 Life members and 2 Honorary Life Members as well as 7 new members for 2021. I am utilizing the Near Real Time Report MOAA posts every month listing MOAA members, MOAA members whose addresses have changed in our area, and members that opt in to receive emails from the chapter (PACMOAA can send out 2 emails/year to them). So far, I've not had any response to emails or mailed info per PACMOAA and membership.



As I mentioned in the last newsletter, Patriot's Colony had to change the Joint Recruiting Event scheduled for 9 September from in person in the evening to Zoom at 1300 due to the rising cases of COVID. Shane Ostrom, CFP® Lt Col, USAF (Ret), is the Director of Finance and Benefits Information at the MOAA Transition Center and gave an excellent presentation on "Legislative Update on Military and Veterans Benefits". Unfortunately, only 12 people attended and half of them were Chapter representatives or hotel employees!! Needless the say, we did not obtain any new members from this event.

The first year PACMOAA participated was in 2017 and recruited 5 new PACMOAA members! Picture to the left shows 2 HRCMOAA representatives as well as Sherry Ferki and Ken App from PACMOAA. No new members

were recruited in 2018 and the event has either been canceled or rescheduled via Zoom 4 times since 2019.

### MOAA Chapter/Council Leadership Workshop on 17 September

Some of the suggestions to increase membership and retention are listed below:

- Every member is a recruiter! Invite a friend that is eligible to PACMOAA activity. Remember, they can attend at ½ of the regular cost!
- Looking at generational recruiting and retention is important – Younger generation wants to DO something: make a difference. **Any suggestions?**
- Former officers as well as Surviving Spouses often join for camaraderie.
- First impressions are key! We always recognize new members in the next newsletter and at the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting they attend after joining. Be sure to introduce yourself to any new faces at meetings and welcome them.
- Conduct meetings at different venues and times. **Any suggestions?**
- Stress variety of ways to join. Many currently serving officers join at a basic level – no fee and all communication electronic or join for 2 or 3 years and not have to remember to renew every year! Those levels would require a fee and they would receive mailed as well as electronic information, similar to current PACMOAA dues.

Any suggestions members have would be greatly appreciated!!

Submitted by Sherry Ferki, 2<sup>nd</sup> VP/Membership Chair

## HELP US HELP YOU - ELECTIONS 2021

Members elected this November will serve from January 2022 to January 2024, unless otherwise noted.

Please consider becoming a member of the Leadership Team as an elected officer or an appointment. PACMOAA needs as many different perspectives as possible to help us represent all our members and their interests! Nominations Chair is Sherry Ferki. If you are interested in running for any of the positions listed below or have any questions, please contact Sherry (757-630-5608, [navmed1@cox.net](mailto:navmed1@cox.net)) or Bill Smith (252-333-0871) **before the 14 October meeting.**

The Board of Directors (BOD) is composed of the elective officers:

President, 1st and 2nd Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, the immediate past president, and four elective directors who will serve for a period of two years. The BOD regularly meets quarterly and as needed.

**Notes:** Good computer skills are essential to facilitate speedy communication among the Board members.

*Positions to be filled with a brief overview include:*

**1st Vice President:** Is Program Chair, a member of the BOD, and fills in for the President in his absence.

**2nd Vice President:** Is a member of BOD and Membership Chair.

**Secretary** (for the last year of a two-year term): Is a member of the BOD, provides notification of meetings, writes and maintains minutes of all BOD meetings and the Annual November Business Meeting, prepares correspondence as needed.

**Treasurer:** Collects dues and maintains financial records. Prepares a quarterly budget and annual report to the board. Financial or accounting background would be helpful!

**Two Board Members:** "The Board of Directors shall have supervision, control and direction of the affairs of PACMOAA, shall determine its policies or changes therein within the limits of the Bylaws, shall actively prosecute its purposes, and shall exercise direction in the disbursement of funds. It may adopt such rules and regulations for the conduct of its business as may be deemed advisable and may, in the execution of the powers granted, appoint such agents as it may consider necessary". From PACMOAA Bylaws. Also participate in quarterly board meetings and other duties as designated.

**We also need a VCOC Representative.** Dolly Cherrington has filled that position since 2016 and is stepping down in October. The representative should attend the quarterly VCOC meetings (all have been virtual since May 2020 and will probably continue to be virtual or a hybrid version) and provide an update in the annual business meeting as well as in the newsletter as appropriate.

Sherry Ferki is the Assistant VCOC Representative.

## HEALTH NEWS

### NMCP Booster Shots

**Updated 9/27/2021:** If you received the **Pfizer vaccine six months** or more ago, and are at risk, you can now boost your immunity with another dose according to CDC and FDA. Don't confuse a third dose of the primary series needed by a few severely immunocompromised patients.

Right now this is just for Pfizer vaccine, but stay tuned as things change fast in COVID-19!

NMCP offers the Pfizer COVID-19 third dose and booster vaccines for active-duty service members, GS employees, and beneficiaries (family members of active duty and retirees 65+).

The NMCP Immunization Clinic currently offers the Pfizer third dose and booster vaccines on a walk-in basis as follows:

**Monday – Friday: 7 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.**

**Saturday: 8 – 10:30 a.m.**

### WHO NEEDS A BOOSTER DOSE?

Anyone with frequent exposure or conditions associated with severe disease who got a primary Pfizer vaccine series six months or more ago and may have waning immunity. Risk factors include age over 65 years old, occupations with a risk of exposure such as healthcare workers, and many other medical conditions.

**See CDC for full list, and ask your doctor if you aren't sure.**

| Age   | Criteria  | Recommendation  |
|-------|---|---|
| 65 +  | Age only  | <b>SHOULD</b> receive at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series.   |
| 50-64 | With underlying medical conditions  | <b>SHOULD</b> receive at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series.   |
| 18-49 | With underlying medical conditions  | <b>MAY</b> receive based on their individual benefits and risks at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series. |
| 18-64 | At increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational or institutional setting | <b>MAY</b> receive based on their individual benefits and risks at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series. |

**Update as of 30 September 2021****COVID Booster at VA Medical Center in Hampton**

Booster shot currently available only if prescribed by your primary Dr at Hampton VA Medical Center

**FLU IMMUNIZATION STILL VERY IMPORTANT !!**

**NMCP** - Limited supply at this time. Call to check on availability before going to NMCP: 757-953-2207

**Hampton VAMC** - Senior flu vaccine available and being administered by driving into tent, getting vaccine while in your vehicle on Monday - Thursday 0900-1400 and on Friday from 0900-1200.

Hampton VAMC main number : 757-722-9961

**Both the COVID vaccine Pfizer booster vaccine and senior flu vaccine are available at local pharmacies for no charge, but you may need an appointment. Be sure to check with facility about availability before going to receive vaccine.**

**SURVIVING SPOUSE CORNER****Surviving Spouse Corner: Get to Know the Surviving Spouse Advisory Council**

from moaa.org *By: Gail Joyce June 28, 2021*

The Surviving Spouse Advisory Council (SSAC) was established in 2004 as the Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee to report to and advise the MOAA president about issues that are important to the surviving spouses of MOAA members. Its main goal is to represent YOU — not only survivors but military spouses as well — about issues that impact each of us.

The SSAC has had numerous major accomplishments, including:

- Creating and designing the [\*Survivor's Planning Guide: A Handbook for One of Life Toughest Assignments\*](#).
- Starting, in 2018, the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter. The chapter currently meets via phone on the third Tuesday of each month and has grown from 10 members to 160 members from 33 states. [Learn more about the chapter.](#)
- Assisting with the 2019 passage of the bill that eliminated the Survivor Benefit Plan-Dependency and Indemnity Compensation offset, which took 40 years to accomplish.
- Developing and producing the Surviving Spouse Liaison Training, which is held several times each year in conjunction with the regional chapter leadership training.

Current members of the council represent all services and several states and bring a broad swath of experience. Each member was nominated by her chapter and then thoroughly vetted and selected by members of the SSAC.

[Meet the current members of the SSAC.](#)

While the SSAC initially was organized to work with surviving spouses, the council has expanded its role to work with military spouses to help better prepare them for the future.

If you have questions or concerns, the SSAC is your conduit for answers and to make things happen. Please get in touch when and where you see a need at [sscomm@moaa.org](mailto:sscomm@moaa.org). We look forward to meeting you.

**Surviving Spouse Corner: Resources for Caregiver**

from moaa.org *By: Barbara Ann Bowman August 27, 2021*

Each caregiving journey is unique. My role of caregiver for my husband expanded from not only getting him to medical care but also making legal decisions in his stead. Common issues that affect most caregivers include navigating VA procedures, obtaining help with specific disabilities and diseases, learning how to deal with dementia, organizing paperwork, and knowing what legal documents are needed with regard to consent issues, legal capacity, and decision making.

During my journey as a caregiver, I found the following resources to be beneficial:



**MOAA and VA.** Talk with members of your local chapter, join the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter whose outreach includes current spouses ([mssvc02@gmail.com](mailto:mssvc02@gmail.com)), and take a look at pertinent [MOAA publications](#). Veterans service organizations will help with disability claims, requests for respite care, and pay for long term care, as well as other benefits. The VA and MOAA have planning brochures and guidebooks to help you collect and organize necessary paperwork.

**Health agencies.** Search for caregiver resources on the [National Institutes of Health](#) and [Department of Health and Human Services](#) websites to find helpful information.

**Disease-specific associations.** Contact organizations like the [Alzheimer's Association](#), the [ALS Association](#), and the [American Heart Association](#). These groups have educational information and support groups available to caregivers.

**Military family support groups.** [TAPS](#), [Gold Star Wives of America](#), and [American Gold Star Mothers](#), and others provide a wide variety of support services to military families and friends.

**Respite care.** Organizations such as the [Elizabeth Dole Foundation's Hidden Heroes](#) and the [Yellow Ribbon Fund](#) provide resources and support specifically tailored to military caregivers.

[RELATED: [How Military, Veteran Caregivers Can Apply for Well-Earned Respite Relief](#)]

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, caregivers need to take care of themselves. Eat healthful foods, stay active, ask for help, and pamper yourself. Like the pre-flight instruction says, "Put your face mask on first." If you don't take care of yourself, you won't be able to take care of your loved one.

## FROM MOAA & LEGISLATIVE

### DoD Releases Detailed Plans for Medical Billet Cuts

from MOAA Newsletter 23 September 2021 at [moaa.org](http://moaa.org)

By: Karen Ruedisueli September 22, 2021

The services plan to cut nearly 13,000 military medical billets using a phased approach through FY 2027, according to a recently released DoD report – a 25% reduction in billet cuts compared with previous proposals.

The report, reflecting MOAA wins from [FY 2020](#) and [FY 2021](#) National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) legislation, provides the first glimpse at how billet reductions may impact military treatment facilities (MTFs) and uniformed medical providers. It also provides MOAA with insights we can leverage to continue our efforts to halt the billet cuts and ensure continued beneficiary access to care – efforts that continue to be a top priority for the remainder of the FY 2022 NDAA cycle.

MOAA has advocated for enhanced congressional oversight since the medical billet cuts were revealed in the FY 2020 administration budget request. Thanks in large part to efforts from MOAA members who sent thousands of messages to their elected officials, DoD and the services were required to report to Congress on detailed plans and mitigation strategies related to medical billet reductions.

[MOAA IN MILITARY TIMES: [New Plan Scales Back Massive Cuts in Military Medical Billets](#)]

MOAA remains concerned about the potential negative impact of medical billet cuts on both operational requirements and beneficiary access to quality care and will continue to seek a halt to the cuts alongside greater transparency and congressional oversight on mitigation planning.

### What's in the Report

The full report – which includes breakdowns of project cuts by year, installation, occupation code, and service branch – is [available online in PDF format](#). Some details:

- **Planned** medical billet cuts have been reduced by 25% from 17,005 (submitted in FY 2020) to 12,801. The Army is responsible for the bulk of the adjustment, with the secretary of the Army deciding to adjust medical billet cuts from 6,935 to 2,948 based on additional analysis. The Army accounts for 95% of the overall DoD medical billet cut reductions.



- **The majority of cuts** (71%) are enlisted positions. The other 29% are aimed at officer and warrant officer billets, including 779 physicians and 1,081 nurses.
- **Data** by occupational code indicate notable reductions in positions related to clinical care including Behavioral Sciences/Mental Health Services, Biomedical Laboratory Services, Dental Care, Family Practice, Medical/Surgical Nurse, Ophthalmology/Optometry, Pediatrics, Pharmacy, and Radiology, among others.
- **Medical billet cuts** will impact 220 different units including hospitals, clinics, medical centers, research organizations, and educational facilities. The National Capital Region (NCR) will take the largest portion of the reductions; 1,603 billet cuts are in NCR MTFs because, as the report states, the ability to hire in this area is greater.
- **All the services** report a phased approach to billet reductions, with the preponderance planned for FY 2023 and the totals tapering off through FY 2027.
- **The services plan** to replace 56% of the uniformed medical billets with civilian hires and “absorb” 26% of the cuts where remaining staff at a location is assumed to be sufficient to cover current and future health care delivery demands. Of the other cuts, 9% are student positions and don’t require mitigation, per DoD, and 1% will be addressed by sending care to the TRICARE network – according to the report, the network optimization strategy was used sparingly based on limited network adequacy information.

### What’s Next

While the report provides some details on medical billet cuts, it raises more questions than answers on mitigation planning and the potential impact on the direct care system, including beneficiary access to care. Without these answers, it’s unlikely to change the minds of many in Congress who have expressed concerns throughout this process that DoD’s proposed cuts go beyond the military health system (MHS) reform directed in the FY 2017 NDAA. At a December 2019 hearing, for instance, Rep. Jackie Speier (D-Calif.) said it appeared the plan “prioritized cost cutting over operational needs and common sense,” and Rep. Trent Kelly (R-Miss.) said DoD “may be viewing this as a cost-savings exercise when the actual purpose is to improve efficiency and health care quality.”

MOAA has continued to raise concerns about medical billet cuts on the Hill and in [meetings](#) and [letters](#) to senior DoD leadership throughout this legislative cycle. We appreciate the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) responded to our concerns with a provision in its version of the FY 2022 NDAA that would force DoD to delay any planned cuts for a year after the bill’s passage and require a Government Accountability Office (GAO) assessment of the analyses used to support any reduction of military medical manning.

Please stay tuned for a Call to Action supporting this provision as the NDAA process moves ahead.

### Concurrent Receipt Update: Senate Support Remains Strong After House Setback

from MOAA Newsletter 23 September 2021 on [moaa.org](http://moaa.org)

By: Mark Belinsky September 22, 2021

A House committee ruling will keep much-needed concurrent receipt reforms out of that chamber’s defense authorization debate, but there’s still time to make your voice heard on behalf of tens of thousands of ill and injured veterans.

During its discussion of the FY 2022 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the House Rules Committee on Sept. 20 found the Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282/S. 344) was not in order as an NDAA amendment because there was no identified way to pay for concurrent receipt for the 48,000 combat injured it

would support. The bill must have majority support in the House to overcome the chamber's budgetary "[Pay as You Go](#)" procedures and secure a waiver from the committee that would allow it to proceed for a vote.

Sens. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) will submit the Star Act as an amendment to the Senate version of the NDAA later this month, though without its inclusion in the House bill, it's unlikely to reach the final version.

It remains important for you to [reach out to your lawmakers](#) and ask them to sign onto H.R. 1282 and S. 344. Cosponsors (121 in the House, 52 in the Senate) will carry over to the next legislative session, where there is a strong foundation of support. Click these links to see whether your [House](#) member or your [senators](#) support this legislation. Continuing to build cosponsors for the Star Act each year is the strategy to achieve a win on concurrent receipt.

**[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Support the Major Richard Star Act](#)]**

The text of the Star Act was No. 558 of the more than 860 [proposed amendments](#) to the House version of the NDAA ([H.R. 4350](#)). It would have authorized [Concurrent Retirement and Disability Pay](#) (CRDP) for combat-related injury or illness. The Star Act is championed in the House by Rep. Gus Bilirakis (R-Fla.) and Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-Calif.).

"This group of retired veterans, also known as Chapter 61 retirees, are arguably the most at-risk because of their complex combat injuries and are just as deserving as those who served greater than 20 years of service," Bilirakis said. "By creating the CRDP, I firmly believe that Congress admitted that the offset required of disabled veterans was wrong.

"Approximately 550,000 military retirees are eligible to receive both military retired pay and VA disability compensation but are prohibited under the current guidelines of this program. In my view, I see these veterans as essentially being taxed for their service and sacrifice because they were deemed service-connected disabled."

The Star Act is part of a bipartisan, bicameral strategy to address the larger concurrent receipt problem. It would provide support to 48,000 veterans forced to medically retire because of a combat-related injury. You can find the information on those affected, by state, in the [Statistical Report on the Military Retirement System](#).

### **Many Retirees Fund Their Own Disability Pay**

Retired pay is for vested years of service paid by DoD, while disability compensation is for service-caused injury paid by the VA. Reducing a retiree's retirement pay to fund their own disability is an injustice, yet [Title 10 of the U.S. Code](#) requires this reduction, referred to as an offset, dollar for dollar.

In 2004, MOAA and The Military Coalition (TMC), a group of organizations representing nearly 5.5 million members of the military community, secured concurrent receipt for retirees who served at least 20 years and have a VA disability rating at 50% or higher. Left behind after that 2004 change are 20-year retirees with a 40% disability rating and below, and those who were medically retired under [Chapter 61](#) with less than 20 years of service.

Previous efforts and advocacy opportunities have not moved us any closer to full concurrent receipt for all those others with service-connected disabilities who are also drawing retirement pay. The total cost to fix concurrent receipt is estimated at \$33 billion over 10 years, which is why an incremental strategy, with iterative progress, is necessary.

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### VIOLINS OF HOPE

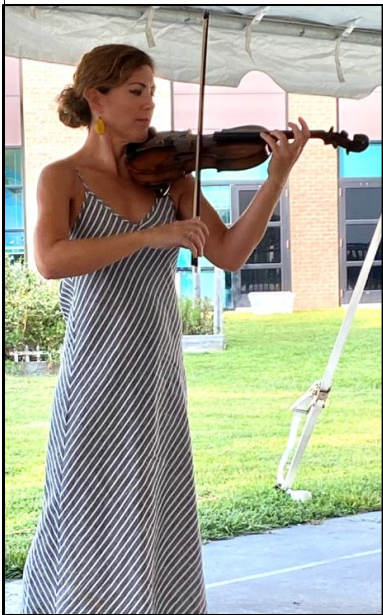
(A follow-up to PACMOAA's September meeting) by Hal Hostetler

On 13 September I had the unique experience to take-in an informative and emotional event, "Violins of Hope," at the United Jewish Federation of Tidewater in Virginia Beach. There I met Elena Baum and Ina Leiderman, who presided over our September zoom meeting concerning the Life of holocaust survivor, "Miss Kitty" Saks.



Elena introduced the speaker, Avshi Weinstein, grandson of a holocaust survivor, and son of the initiator of the "Violins of Hope." Avshi informed us of the ghastly history behind three violins on display from the holocaust—nineteen are on display in Richmond.

It is estimated that thousands of violins, played by Jews forced to do so in concentration camps as persons were marched to their deaths, were never recovered. PTSD suffering survivors never spoke of their trauma, and in Israel where many moved, all things German-made were shunned.



In the 1990s, Mr. Weinstein's father was asked to repair a holocaust violin from Auschwitz. Inside he discovered ash from the smoke of the infamous crematorium where Jewish bodies were burned. This event led to the collection of the "Violins of Hope."

One orchestra of 20 women in Auschwitz was protected by their Nazi lords. They lived in a separate barracks—the only one with indoor toilets. Eighteen of the twenty survived—all depicting the illogic of evil Nazi leadership.

For further involvement you may take note of a couple items:

1. Concert of "Violins of Hope" at Norfolk Academy, Wednesday, 6 October 1930 hrs. One person performing will be Elizabeth Vonderheide, who played a short, beautiful tune.
2. The movie, "Defiance," on Netflix and DVD – The story of Jewish survivors of Belarus. It includes the marriage of the presenter's grandparents in

the woods while evading the Nazis.



For follow-up and questions, feel free to contact me anytime. Hal Hostetler, 757-418-4576.

At left: Elena, Avshi and Hal



## MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT



**Bruce Gary LaLonde**  
**Captain USN -Retired (Supply Corps)**

My life's keel was launched in Guam by a young, enlisted Navy father (retired as a Chief Postal Clerk) and striking local girl in 1952. After tours in Taiwan and Ohio, the family settled in 1957 in the Hodges Manor area of Portsmouth. My public schooling culminated with graduation from Woodrow Wilson High (represented the school at the state level in tennis and track and field).

While a freshman at the University of Tennessee, I had to have presidential intervention to get into the Navy Reserve Officer Candidate (ROC) program (denied for medical reasons). Upon graduation in 1975 and completion of Supply Officer Training, my first operational duty station was the USS Coronado (LPD-11) homeported in Norfolk Va.

Next was a Department Head assignment aboard the USS Higbee (DD-806) located in Seattle, WA. Then back to Norfolk to join the staff at the Commander, Naval Surface Forces Atlantic, where my specialty was combat systems supply support. This allowed me to become the pre-commissioning Supply Officer for the USS Scott (DDG-995). With specialized schooling, I became a Navy Exchange Retail specialist. Tours as the Officer in Charge of the Navy Exchange at Little Creek, VA, Executive Officer for the East Coast Region Navy Exchanges, and then the Retail/Food Service Staff liaison for the Navy Support Corps Command followed. I returned to sea as the Supply Officer on the USS Inchon (LPH-12), homeported in Norfolk and later moved to Corpus Christi Texas. My final tour in 2000 was as the Deputy Commander for the Defense Support Command headquartered at Ft Eustis. I wore Aviation Support wings and my highest medal awarded was the Defense Superior Service Medal.

I am presently the Chairman of the Portsmouth Development Authority, President/Executive Director of the Housing Development Corporation of Hampton Roads, Vice President of Portsmouth's Safety Town, Board member Portsmouth Catholic Regional School and Deputy Portsmouth City Treasurer. I have served as Chairman of Board of Catholic Charities and Past President of the Father Ryan Catholic Club. I am very active in the TEAM UP mentoring program. Over the years, I have been honored twice by Flagship Newspaper, recognized by WAVY-TV10, Volunteer Hampton Roads and the Virginia Mentoring Partnership for my service to the community.



I earned a Bachelors (accounting) from the University of Tennessee and three master's Degrees—an MBA (marketing) from The Ohio State University, MS (computer systems) from George Washington University and an MS (strategic resources) from the National Defense University. I am also a Certified Public Accountant.

I am blessed with four amazing daughters and seven fantastic grandchildren. In my spare time, I play tennis, run road races and collect coins.

At Left: Bruce Completing his **20<sup>th</sup> Rock n Roll Half Marathon over this past Labor Day Weekend!**



**CHAPLAIN'S CORNER****The Prayer of "St. Francis"**

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.  
Where there is hatred let me bring love.  
Where there is offence, let me bring pardon.  
Where there is discord, let me bring union.  
Where there is error, let me bring truth.  
Where there is doubt, let me bring faith.  
Where there is despair, let me bring hope.  
Where there is darkness, let me bring you light.  
Where there is sadness, let me bring joy.

O Master, let me not seek as much to be consoled as to console,  
To be understood as to understand,  
To be loved as to love,  
For it is in giving that one receives,  
It is in self-forgetting that one finds self,  
It is in pardoning that one is pardoned,  
It is in dying that one is raised to eternal life.

The anonymous text that is usually called the Prayer of Saint Francis (or Peace Prayer) is a widely known Christian prayer for peace. Although often associated with the Italian Saint Francis of Assisi (c. ;1182-1226) but entirely absent from his writings, the prayer in its present form has not been traced back further than 1912. Its origin occurred in a small spiritual magazine called La Clochette (The Little Bell) in Paris by a Catholic association. The prayer was sent in French to Pope Benedict XV in 1915, next published in Italian, in the Vatican's newspaper L'Osservatore Romano and in 1920 printed on the back of an image of St. Francis with the title "Prayer for Peace". Between the two world wars, the prayer circulated in Europe and was translated into English. It was attributed the first time to Saint Francis in 1927 by a French Protestant Movement, Les Chevaliers du Prince de la Paix (The Knights of the Prince of Peace), founded by Etienne Bach (1892-1986). In 1936 the prayer appeared in Living Courageously a book by Kirby Page (1890-1954), a Disciple of Christ minister, pacifist, social evangelist, writer and editor of The World Tomorrow (New York City). Page clearly attributed the text to St Francis of Assisi. During World War II and immediately after, this prayer for peace began circulating widely as the Prayer of St. Francis and over the years has gained a worldwide popularity with peoples of all faiths. It has been frequently set to music by notable songwriters and quoted by prominent leaders, and its broadly inclusive language has found appeal with diverse faith encouraging service to others.

Article by Captain Robert Brewer, USN (Ret)  
PACMOAA, Acting Chaplain

**THAT'S A WRAP FOR OCTOBER 2021!**