



The Salute express



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 IV

LEARN MORE AT PACMOAA.ORG

APRIL 2021

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Greetings,

A lot has changed in the last month! Covid news, immunization availability, Virginia and CDC guidance and a seemingly more positive outlook for the future seems to be growing. I hope the information PACMOAA provided through this newsletter, email and other means, has enabled you to stay informed, to get your vaccinations and to start enjoying the spring weather.

Earlier this month the PACMOAA Leadership Team met via Zoom to decide when it would be prudent to resume in-person general membership meetings. We discussed, at length, the current CDC and Virginia Guidance, the growing numbers of vaccinations available, the remaining risks to our membership and the continued negative impact of not meeting in-person. **We decided unanimously to meet in-person on April 8, 2021!** Our meeting will be at Roger Brown's Restaurant in Portsmouth. CAPT Mulligan, Commander of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, will be our speaker via Zoom. Details can be found in another section of this newsletter.

I am excited to see you at our April meeting. Since I have been President of PACMOAA, we've not had an opportunity to interact. Some of you I have not met yet, others just briefly. I trust the time has come to develop relationships, friendships and camaraderie with you. If you are uncomfortable with an in-person meeting, I respect whatever personal decision you make. If you cannot attend, then I hope to see you on Zoom!

Best Regards,
Bill Smith
COL USA (Ret)

April Dinner Meeting Speaker



**Captain Lisa P. Mulligan,
Medical Corps, United States Navy**

Capt. Mulligan is a native of Lawrenceville, N.J. She attended Harvard College where she earned a bachelor's degree in Biology in 1989. From there, she attended the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences where she earned her medical degree. After completing her surgical internship at the National Naval Medical Center (NNMC), she spent a year as a general medical officer with 3rd Force Service Support Group (FSSG) in

Okinawa, Japan.

Upon her return she entered the Neurosurgical residency at NNMC and subsequently completed a fellowship in Epilepsy Surgery from Yale University in 2000. Mulligan served in various capacities at NNMC between 2000 and 2013 to include serving as a staff surgeon and the director of Functional and Epilepsy Surgery as a member (Continued on Page 3)

PACMOAA LEADERSHIP

President (252) 333-0871
COL Bill Smith, USA (Ret)
wmsmith6487@gmail.com

1st VP for Programs 673-2766
CWO3 Karl Wilson, USA (Ret)
marbles54@gmail.com

2nd VP for Membership 686-4650
MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret)
navmed1@cox.net

3rd VP for Communications 630-0886
CDR Ken App, USN (Ret)
Thesalute1@gmail.com

Secretary 483-8943
LCDR Paul Lucas USN (Ret)
Paul_sharon_lucas@msn.com

Treasurer 686-4766
CDR Hans Sachse, USN (Ret)
hsachse@earthlink.net

Immediate Past President
MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CAPT J. Westling, USCG (Ret)
746-6064
COL H. Hostetler USA (Ret)
686-4650

CAPT Bob Brewer, USN (Ret)
484-9486

CAPT Roger Hirsch, USN (Ret)
274-5245

**COMMITTEES AND
APPOINTMENTS**
Chaplain 465-8469
LTC RA Steorts USAF (Ret)

Arrangements 686-4650
MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret)

Personal Affairs
MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret)

Budget/Finance 686-4766
CDR Hans Sachse, USN (Ret)

VCOC Rep. 686-4766
LCDR Cherrington USN (Ret)

Legislative Rep. 673-2766
CWO 3 Karl Wilson, USA (Ret)

Scholarship
MAJ S. Ferki, USA (Ret)
CDR S. Dickinson, USN (Ret)

Co-chairs above
LCDR Lynn Terry, USN (Ret)

Hospitality Co-Chairs
LTC S. Barker, USAR (Ret)
LTC R Steorts, USAF (Ret)

Surviving Spouse Liaison
MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret)

Historian
LTC R Steorts, USAF (Ret)



CHAPTER NEWS

APRIL CALENDAR

Month of the Military Child

- 01 April Fool's Day
- 01 Holy Thursday
- 02 Good Friday
- 04 Passover Ends
- 04 Easter
- 05 Gold Star Spouses day
- 06 VCOC Second Quarter Meeting
- 06 Persian Gulf War Ends 1991
- 09 National Former POW Recognition Day
- 14 US Air Force Reserve Birthday (1948)
- 15 Tax Day - Now moved to Monday, May 17, 2021
- 18 Doolittle Raid on Tokyo (1942)
- 22 Earth Day
- 23 US Army Reserve Birthday (1908)
- 24 Beginning of Ramadan
- TBD CONGRESSIONAL LUNCHEON –TBD
- 30 Arbor Day

THE APRIL DINNER MEETING WILL BE **BOTH IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL.**



Our dinner will be held on **Thursday April 8th** at Roger Brown's Banquet Room.

Sign in and Social hour begins at 6:00 PM, dinner served at 6:30PM.

Speaker 7:30 PM - CAPT Lisa P. Mulligan, MC, USN (Virtual due to DOD Restrictions), who is the Commanding Officer of the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth.

BUFFET MENU

*Harvest Salad,
Baked Chicken, Marinated Flank Steak, Garlic Mashed Potatoes Mixed
Vegetables
Apple Cobbler
Coffee, Tea, Water, Soda*

Cost is **\$25.00** (includes tax and gratuity). Please make your reservation no later than **Friday, April 2nd** with Sherry Ferki at 686-4650 or by email at navmed1@cox.net. Come join us for good company, good food and a good time.

A RESERVATION MADE IS A RESERVATION PAID

All CDC and VIRGINIA COVID-19 Precautions remain in effect. Masks must worn when not eating or drinking, and when moving about while in the restaurant.

NOTES: All in person meetings depend on the current phase for Hampton Roads.

HAPPY APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Aylous Bruce

Bettye Hussey

Bob Pomeroy

James Stephan

Doug Weller

(Continued from page 1)

of the teaching faculty for the combined National Capital Consortium Neurosurgery residency. Mulligan deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in the spring of 2003 aboard USNS Comfort (T-AH 20), then returned to resume her previous duties.

In 2004, she became the department head of neurosurgery and shortly thereafter was named the associate program director for the residency. In 2006, she became the Specialty Leader for Neurosurgery and in 2008 became the first integrated Neurosurgery Service Chief, responsible for both NNMC and Walter Reed Army Medical Center (WRAMC) Neurosurgery Services. From 2009 to 2010 she served as the Executive Committee of the Medical Staff (ECOMS) chair at NNMC. From 2011 to 2013, she served as the Deputy Commander for Surgery, overseeing the final integration of surgical services at WRAMC and NNMC culminating in the opening of the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (WRNMMC).

Capt. Mulligan served as Deputy Commander/Executive Officer, Naval Medical Center San Diego from July 2013 until assuming the duties as the Commanding Officer of Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton July 10, 2015. In July of 2017 she assumed the role of Chief Medical Officer and Assistant Deputy Chief of High Reliability, Quality, and Patient Safety at the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery in Falls Church, VA. As of July 2019, she is serving as the Commanding Officer of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth.

Mulligan's awards include the Legion of Merit Medal with Gold Star, Meritorious Service Medal with Gold Star, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy Achievement Medal and numerous unit and deployment awards.

MEMBERSHIP

PACMOAA has 44 members paid as of 30 March. That number includes our 6 Life members and 2 Honorary Life Members. Several of our members moved out of state and there are 24 members that have not paid their dues yet. Hopefully, some of these members will pay at our April dinner meeting. I will be following up with the other members via letters, email and phone calls. If you're not sure if you've paid your dues, please contact me or our treasurer, Hans Sachse.

Your membership is important! Local chapters are critically important to the ultimate success of MOAA. Membership and dues are critical to chapter survival. There is power in numbers. As a chapter member you enjoy the camaraderie and community of meeting with other local members who share the exceptional experience of military service and financially support the chapter. You become something larger than a lone voice by lending necessary strength in numbers to effectively support the greater good. Another important component of PACMOAA membership is legislative involvement. Part of your dues pays membership in the Virginia Council of Chapters representing you in Richmond via the Joint Legislative Council, which advises the State Legislature on all matters concerning military personnel and their families in Virginia.

As a member, you receive information focused on issues from the websites and publications from MOAA and PACMOAA. Our website is **PACMOAA TODAY**. Our newsletter is published in three forms: *The Salute* by mail, *The Salute express* by email and *The Salute online*. We also have a **Facebook** page. If you're interested in joining the PACMOAA Facebook group, send a request to thesalute1@gmail.com. Please help us protect the benefits earned by veterans, retirees, reservists, National Guard and active duty military as well as their spouses and dependents by continuing your membership and **convincing others that it is in their best interest to join**.

REMINDER: PACMOAA still plans on awarding 2 scholarships this spring and we need your donations! Many people include extra funds with their dues renewal or you can donate money separately either by mail or online. **Membership renewals now include the new two and three year renewal option!!!**

IN MEMORIAM

I reported on the deaths of **CDR Henry Boschen**, USN (Ret) and **MAJ Jim Yandle**, USA (Ret) last month. Henry Boschen's Memorial Service will be held on Memorial Day with time and place to be determined. Janet Boschen, Henry's wife, is a Surviving Spouse member of PACMOAA. Janet is very appreciative of cards and follow up from PACMOAA.



Jim Yandle's funeral was held on 2 March and COL Hal Hostetler, USA (Ret) and LTC Bob Steorts, USAF (Ret) attended. Hal was also able to attend the internment for Jim. At both services, family and friends spoke about what a great man Jim was in every way. Their words were the highlight of the event. The burial was with military honors.

Submitted by COL Hal Hostetler,
USA (Ret)

I spoke with Lois Yandle, Jim's wife, and she expressed appreciation for PACMOAA members attending Jim's funeral and the cards and MOAA info she has received. She is also a Surviving Spouse member of PACMOAA.

CAPT Henry Fred Berck, Jr., USNR (Ret)

It is with deep sorrow that we announce the death of CAPT Henry Fred Berck Jr., USNR (Ret) of Portsmouth, Virginia, born in Long Beach, California, who passed away on March 3, 2021, at the age of 78, leaving to mourn family and friends.

Fred joined PACMOAA in 2004 and was on the PACMOAA Board of Directors from January 2006 to January 2008. He also was a Life of MOAA. Fred had been ill for some time and not able to attend PACMOAA meetings. After numerous attempts to contact Fred, his PACMOAA membership ended in 2020. Please keep Carolyn and her family in your thoughts and prayers.

Visitation was held on Sunday, March 7th 2021 and MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret) attended it. A funeral service was held Monday, March 8th 2021 at the Sturtevant Funeral Home (5201 Portsmouth Blvd, Portsmouth, VA 23701). COL Hal Hostetler, USA (Ret) attended the service. You can send your sympathy in the guestbook provided on the Sturtevant website and share it with the family. You may also light a candle in honor of Henry Fred Berck Jr.

Submitted by MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA
Personal Affairs Chair

PERSONAL AFFAIRS

April 2021

This information first ran in our newsletter in Feb 2019 but I updated it. With the deaths of seven long time PACMOAA members over the past couple of years, the importance of planning ahead for the surviving spouse/family members was amply demonstrated. **Three** service members that I know of did not seem to have done any preplanning for the surviving family member and one left detailed instructions for everything including the funeral! 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. This was a reminder to me as I have started on the booklet but have not finished putting in all the necessary information. **Knowing where the DD214 is essential before anything else can be done!!!**

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.

Many of our members and some spouses have had a rather difficult year with illnesses, surgery, hospitalizations, etc. All of these events were made even more stressful with the COVID-19 pandemic and isolation. Being a caregiver is a also very stressful situation. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers. Most prefer not to be identified

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.

Thank you.

Sherry Ferki,

Personal Affairs Officer

Home number: 686-4650 Cell: 630-5608

FROM MOAA & LEGISLATIVE

Letter to SECDEF Warns Against TRICARE Fee Hikes, Medical Billet Cuts

By: Karen Ruedisueli March 30, 2021

The Military Coalition (TMC), a group of military and veterans service organizations representing a combined 5.5 million-plus membership, urged DoD leadership in a March 8 letter to protect the military health system from proposals that threaten the health care benefit, medical readiness, and the pipeline of uniformed health care providers.

MOAA co-chairs TMC and many of its committees, including the health care committee.

The letter addressed three topics DoD leaders will consider as they undertake the FY 2022 administration budget request: medical billet cuts, funding for the Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences (USU), and, potentially, TRICARE fee increases as a means of reducing military health system (MHS) spending.

"The current pandemic has highlighted the risks of eliminating surge capacity within the medical system," said the letter, sent to Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin. "Proposed billet cuts risk compromising not only combat casualty care, but also DoD's ability to effectively provide healthcare and humanitarian support in times of crisis. Medical end strength reductions could also lead to access to care problems for beneficiaries if civilian medical systems lack capacity to absorb patient care moved out of military treatment facilities."

[\[READ THE TMC LETTER \(PDF\)\]](#)

Medical billet cuts were first proposed in the FY 2020 budget request. Since then, MOAA has highlighted the risks of such reductions to both readiness and beneficiary care. MOAA successfully advocated for a halt to medical billet cuts, including additional reporting requirements and congressional oversight, in National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) legislation for both [FY 2020](#) and [FY 2021](#). With TMC, MOAA is now urging the new administration to reconsider cuts to military medical end strength.

The letter also asked DoD leaders to maintain funding for USU, an essential accession source of uniformed services medical providers including clinical psychologists, nurse practitioners, and certified registered nurse anesthetists, in addition to physicians. USU was targeted for cuts during DoD's defense-wide review, a zero-based review of all organizations outside the military departments. Funding was reinstated with the FY 2021 NDAA thanks in part to [MOAA members' efforts](#) to raise awareness of the issue.

[RELATED: [Bipartisan Legislation Would Repeal TRICARE Select Enrollment Fee for Some Retirees](#)]

Although DoD has not requested TRICARE cost-sharing hikes since the FY 2018 administration budget request, fee increases remain a looming threat, particularly when DoD's budget is constrained. TMC's letter reviewed the series of TRICARE out-of-pocket cost increases implemented since 2018 and underscored the importance of fulfilling obligations to servicemembers, retirees, their families, and survivors by refraining from any further shift of military health care costs to beneficiaries.

MOAA will provide an update on proposals impacting the military health system when the budget is released in the coming days.

TAKE ACTION ISSUES ON MOAA WEBSITE 30 March 2021

These important issues require your immediate attention. Send your elected officials a MOAA-suggested message today!

- **[Urge Your Elected Officials to Support Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Reform Legislation](#)**

The Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Act, introduced by Sens. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) and Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.) and Rep. Mike Bost (R-Ill.) would create comprehensive toxic exposure reform to expand health care, improve the presumptive process, and ensure veteran input in the process about the critical conditions affecting the health and well-being of servicemembers, veterans, families, survivors, and caregivers as a result of exposures while in service.

- **[Urge Your Senators to Support Legislation to Repeal the TRICARE Select Enrollment Fee](#)**

Act now to urge your senators to support the TRICARE Select Restoration Act, which is an important first step to repeal the enrollment fee for grandfathered retirees.

- **[Urge your legislators to support concurrent receipt](#)**

Contact your representative and senators and urge them to support *The Major Richard Star Act*, which would provide concurrent receipt for servicemembers unable to complete 20 years of service due to combat-related injuries. Help ensure these men and women get their full service-earned retirement, as well as their disability compensation from the VA.

- **[Support Health Care for Children of Disabled Veterans or Veterans Who Have Died Due to a Service-Connected Disability](#)**

Did you know many adult children of veterans who are disabled or who died from a service-connected disability lose access to their parent's health well before the age of 26?

- **[Urge Your Senators to Support Legislation Extending TRICARE Coverage to Certain 'Gray Area' Retirees](#)**

The TRICARE Fairness for National Guard and Reserve Retirees Act (S. 829), introduced by Sens. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) and Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) and the House companion bill (H.R. 1997), introduced by Reps. Bill Johnson (R-Ohio) and Dean Phillips (D-Minn.) would ensure these "gray area" retirees who qualify for retirement pay before age 60 are eligible for the TRICARE retiree benefit.

- **[Ask Congress to Preserve Arlington National Cemetery and Eligibility for 20-Year Retirees](#)**

Help MOAA stay in the middle of this important conversation – Contact your representative and urge them to designate in the FY 2022 NDAA the next national cemetery as ANC reaches capacity.

PLEASE DONATE ITEMS TO THE PORTSMOUTH VOLUNTEERS FOR THE HOMELESS, INC (PVH) AT OUR APRIL 2021 MEETING

PACMOAA has helped support PVH since November 2011, normally on a monthly basis with donations of needed supplies. Some members have been donating through Amazon Smile during the pandemic. Please consider donating whenever possible. Every little bit helps!

Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless, Inc., is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 corporation governed by a 13 member independent Board of Directors. Working with over 25 houses of faith in Portsmouth and Chesapeake, and students from Virginia Wesleyan College. PVH normally provides nightly shelter for homeless persons from mid-November through the beginning of May each year. In response to COVID, **over the past 16 months**, the emergency shelter for homeless and vulnerable populations has been greatly expanded.

In addition to sheltering, PVH operates a 12 month Service Center where clients can shower, do laundry, receive their mail and telephone usage. Clients also meet with a case manager for support in becoming self-sufficient, Legal Aid, and receive referrals for mental health, substance abuse and employment counseling. PVH, Inc.'s early intervention with housing focused coaching and community partnerships has a proven track record of helping to move individuals from homelessness to housing.

Supplies Most Needed Items

- **Cleaning supplies like** disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes, bathroom cleaner, laundry detergent, etc.
- **Pandemic Protection Supplies for clients and staff**– Boxes or small personal size items like disposal gloves (non-latex), masks, hand sanitizers (large and individual size), etc.
- Always need small personal size personal care items like razors, toothbrushes, etc.

Donations are accepted at PVH 800 Williamsburg Ave (behind Social Services on the side of the Oasis building).

New hours of operation (Expanded in response to increased need during pandemic)

Service Center: Monday - Sunday, 7 AM - 6 PM

Shelter: Monday - Sunday, 6 PM - 6AM

Please call if you have any questions 399-0200. Donation tax receipts are provided.

Remember you can order items through Amazon Smile – please donate items to #TeamPVH on Amazon Smile.

Note: There is an increased incidence of homeless veterans especially women in our country now.

HEALTH RELATED ISSUES

COVID-19 VACCINE UPDATE: From the NMCP Website March 31, 2021

COVID-19 Immunization

UPDATE: Wednesday, March 31, 8:29 a.m.

As we continue to receive shipments of the COVID-19 vaccine, and we are now providing initial and second dose vaccinations to the following beneficiaries according to the DoD Population Schema:

SECOND DOSE

Please come to NMCP for your second dose IF it has been 21 days since you received your first dose AT NMCP.

FIRST DOSE

ALL beneficiaries 75 years and older.

If you are in this group, please call the COVID Call Center at (757) 953-6200 and select option # 2 TWICE, and then option # 1, to schedule an appointment, or you may self-book a vaccination appointment by visiting the Tricare Online Patient Portal at: <https://www.tricareonline.com/>. Appointments are limited.

Operational forces.

U.S. Fleet Forces will continue to coordinate with your command to schedule vaccinations for initial doses. NMCP will continue to communicate with operational commands to coordinate the availability of the vaccine.

If you are Active Duty, please DO NOT CALL or walk in without U.S. Fleet Forces coordination. Frontline Essential Workers. Please coordinate with your command's POC to schedule vaccinations for initial doses.

Currently, there is no vaccination timeline beyond those listed above. Information about future vaccine availability will be shared when available.

NMCP PHARMACY UPDATE

Beginning 1 February 2021 at the Scott Center Annex Pharmacy drive-thru hours will be **7:30 am to 5 pm Monday – Saturday** for refill pickup and pickup for new prescriptions initiated and processed via NMCP Pharmacy Call Center. **Call Center Hours are now 0730-1700 M-F, and 0730-1300 Sat, which is a significant reduction.**

TRICARE SUFFOLK PHARMACY HOURS: 0730-1500, M, T, Th-Su, W 0800-1500. Currently they only accept new paper scripts for controlled substances. Only electronic called in refill prescriptions (Auto Refill 953-6337) can be picked up there. Suffolk TRICARE Prime phone number: 757-953-4981

SURVIVING SPOUSE CORNER

Surviving Spouse Corner: Focusing on Finances After Loss

By: Pat Green March 26, 2021

The loss of a spouse has quite an impact. At first, you are busy dealing with grief and helping your family recover from the loss. Eventually, though, you must focus your energy on finances. You have lost your financial partner.

Your goal should be to live comfortably with as little financial stress as possible. Losing a spouse often means a reduction in family income. This requires some changes and hard decisions as you consider:

- **Where should I live?** Many factors are involved in this decision. Work, commute time, children, their friends, activities, and school proximity, health, safety, and other family responsibilities are all important.

- **What can I afford?** This is probably the most important consideration. If you and your spouse were conservative in spending, your living expenses and debt might be manageable. Do a budget analysis based on your current income and spending. Be aware of adjustments. Income might be down, but taxes might be up if your new IRS tax status is “single” (higher rates). Include new insurance costs for yourself to protect any dependents. Don’t forget to add in the expense of services your spouse provided, such as lawn mowing, painting, or handy jobs. Do the calculations. If you can stay put for a while, great!
- **How can I make changes to my current home?** It’s home, and you love it. You can freshen things up with some inexpensive changes like rearranging furniture, adding some fresh paint, buying a new bed or bedspread, and relocating photos and wall art.
- **What if a change of address is necessary?** Downsizing or moving might be the best option for your new financial circumstances or emotional state. Make a pro/con list of emotional factors and expenses. Be thoughtful about real estate commissions, state income tax, moving, and redecorating expenses as well as all those emotional pluses and minuses. Investigate whether spousal disability exemptions and entitlements are available at a new home or new location. Changing states can generate issues. Do your homework. Be diligent!

This is a lot to do and a lot to consider, but help and resources are available. There are excellent calculators and programs online to assist with mortgages, investments, budget analysis, and insurance decisions, including on MOAA.org. Find them at [MOAA.org/Finance](https://www.moaa.org/Finance).

[*Read past Surviving Spouse Corners.*](#)



Letter from 2017 Scholarship Winner John Walker

1 March 2021

Dear PACMOAA:

The purpose of this letter is to convey my gratitude to the Portsmouth Area Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America for the scholarship that you’ve given me, helping me attend Texas A&M and have the most impactful education thus far.

Finally making it to my senior year, I have now earned the right to wear the coveted Texas A&M senior boots! I have continued my studies towards a Bachelor’s of Science in meteorology, this time a hybrid of in-person and remote learning, and have had the opportunity to gain the most valuable learning experiences! I was able to participate in

three semesters of the National Weather Service’s VORTEX-SE research program, studying the origins and strengths of tornadoes to help better prepare and forecast for them. This type of research and the upper-level classes I am in now are the most interesting and practical classes that I have ever taken. My GPA has still continued to rise to the highest it has ever been! This year was even better than the previous, and I have been so blessed that this trend continued throughout my college career!

In Air Force ROTC, I have had the privilege and pleasure to command at both the flight and squadron levels. This semester, I am once again a flight commander in the and directly train and mentor 22 third-year cadets as they swiftly approach their summer Air Force training. I have the unique opportunity to use my expertise and experience from this training to mentor these outstanding cadets to perform at their absolute best. In the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets, I am privileged to be the officer in charge of housing, operations, and logistics for the First Brigade and the 214 cadets that it encompasses! This position has given me invaluable time at leading from the front as well as a much deeper understanding of the U.S. Army and its culture. Since my leadership position is in an Army ROTC brigade, I participate in nearly just as much extra-curricular Army training as I do in my own Air Force training.

For my future goals, I am steadily approaching the goal of becoming an Air Force pilot. This semester I have met the Air Force Rated Position Selection Board and am currently awaiting the results! The steadily increasing number of leadership positions that I have been privileged to hold have prepared me for the trials and tribulations I will face with not only my leadership education, but also with my career and lifestyle changes that await. A semester of

successfully being in charge of an entire building, I have seen first-hand the impacts that my leadership decisions could potentially have on people's lives, solidifying the principle of taking care of your people first and foremost. This leadership training, accompanied by the outstanding educational and practical experience that I've had in meteorology research, will allow me to achieve my goals, and I thank PACMOAA tremendously for helping me make these dreams a reality!

Thank you all dearly for the help in allowing me to attend such an amazing institution and be a part of such an incredible organization. I have had the experiences of a lifetime at Texas A&M, and have made more than a few lifelong friends. I never thought going to a prestigious university out-of-state would be possible, but the generosity of people like you can make a world of difference for someone like me. From the bottom of my heart, thank you and God bless!

Very Respectfully,
John Phillip Walker, 2021
First Brigade Staff
PACMOAA 2017Scholarship Recipient

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Faith

We're a rugged breed, us quads. If we weren't, we wouldn't be around today. Yes, we're a rugged breed. In many ways, we've been blessed with a savvy and spirit that isn't given to everybody.

And let me say that this refusal of total or full acceptance of one's disability all hooks up with one thing – faith, an almost divine faith.

Down in the reception room of the Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, over on the East River at 400 East 34th Street in New York City, there's a bronze plaque that's riveted to the wall. During the months of coming back to the Institute for treatment – two or three times a week – I rolled through the reception room many times, coming and going. But I never quite made the time to pull over to one side and read the words on the plaque that were written, it's said, by an unknown Confederate soldier. Then one afternoon, I did. I read it and then I read it again. When I finished it for the second time, I was near to bursting – not in despair, but with an inner glow that had me straining to grip the arms of my wheelchair. I'd like to share it with you.

A Creed For Those Who Have Suffered

I asked God for strength, that I might achieve,
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey...
I asked for health, that I might do great things.
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things...
I asked for riches, that I might be happy.
I was given poverty, that I might be wise...
I asked for power, that I might have the praise of men.
I was given weakness, that I might feel the need of God...
I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life.
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things...
I got nothing I asked for – but everything I had hoped for.
Almost despite myself, my unspoken prayers were answered.
I am, among men, most richly blessed!

Roy Campanella
From *Chicken Soup for the Soul*
Submitted by Bob Steorts, Chaplain

THAT'S A WRAP FOR APRIL!