



# 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 XXXXI Issue X LEARN MORE AT [PACMOAA.ORG](http://PACMOAA.ORG) DECEMBER 2022**

**REMINDER: Although **MOAA** and **PACMOAA** actively lobby legislatures for all US uniformed services members, we are nonpartisan and do not participate in political activities.**

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Greetings,

Merry Christmas! It's that joyous time again and I'm very excited. Our Christmas Gala is Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup> at Roger Brown's. As usual, LtCol Pratt and his Churchland MCJROTC students will be collecting for **Toys for Tots**. Let's fill their collection box this year! We will also be collecting items (listed on page 10) for the **Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless (PVH)**.

At our business meeting, we decided to end the "White Elephant" gift exchange. Participation had dwindled and we felt there was a general lack of interest. So, if you have resources you were going to put into the White Elephant, please use them to support Toys for Tots or PVH. I thank you in advance for your generosity.

I am elated (*you can't imagine how elated*) that CAPT Bruce Lalonde USN (Ret) was elected as your new president! Bruce will bring a wealth of experience and energy to the position and will lead PACMOAA to greater heights. Congratulations to Bruce and all who were elected to the PACMOAA leadership team.

I hope you had a great Thanksgiving. As we move from a time of counting our blessings into a time of joy and celebration, I want you to know that I appreciate all that you do. I'm truly blessed to know you and to serve our community with you. Merry Christmas!

**Please pray for peace and for the Ukrainian people. May God bless America!**

Bill Smith  
COL USA (Ret)



**ABOVE: CDR Ken App USN (Ret) giving the 3<sup>rd</sup> VP report at the Annual November Business Meeting**

PACMOAA  
LEADERSHIP

Please see Leadership pulldown



## CHAPTER NEWS

### DECEMBER CALENDAR

- 07 PEARL HARBOR DAY
- 08 PACMOAA Christmas Gala
- 16 Battle of the Bulge 1944
- 17 Wright Brothers
- 19 Hanukkah Begins
- 21 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Winter
- 25 CHRISTMAS
- 26 KWANZAA
- 26 Hanukkah Ends
- 31 NEW YEAR'S EVE

### HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

**Ron Fritz**  
**Hal Hostetler**  
**Bruce LaLonde**

### The December Christmas Gala Dinner

will be held on **Thursday, December 8<sup>th</sup>** at Roger Brown's Banquet Room,  
316 High Street, Portsmouth (757) 399-5377

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

#### *Special Buffett Menu*

*Harvest Salad with Raspberry Vinaigrette*  
*Cornbread & Honey Butter*  
*Roast Turkey*  
*Brown Butter Baked Ham*  
*Sweet Potato Casserole*  
*Baked Green Beans*  
*Cornbread Stuffing*  
*Mashed Potatoes & Gravy*  
*Apple and Pecan Pie*  
*Water, Tea, & Coffee*

**Cost is \$30** (includes gratuity, tax, & Tidewater Concert Band Donation).  
Cash bar available. Please make your reservation no later than **Sunday,**  
**December 4<sup>th</sup>** with Sherry Ferki at 757-922-7030 or by email at  
[navmedarmynurse@gmail.com](mailto:navmedarmynurse@gmail.com).

**A RESERVATION MADE IS A  
RESERVATION PAID**



**Left: MAJ Sherry Ferki Presenting  
The MOAA OUTSTANDING  
SERVICE AWARD to LtCol Robert  
(Bob) Steorts USAF (Ret)**

## MEMBERSHIP

### Membership Update December 2022

#### WELCOME ABOARD

CAPT Valerie Parker, USN (Ret) from Portsmouth

PACMOAA has 67 paid members with 5 new members this year. Recently I reviewed the archived webinar from the MOAA Roundtable in June 2022 on Recruiting for Councils and Chapters. Several attendees mentioned at least 50% of their new members came from personal invitations from members. Of our 5 new members, 2 came as guests of members and 2 were Surviving Spouses of PACMOAA members. Last year, out of 7 new members, 3 were guests of members and 2 were Surviving Spouses of PACMOAA members. Thus, if we're looking at new members to that had no relationship with PACMOAA before, over 50% each year came as guests of members. Each month, MOAA has a new list for each chapter. It includes 3 groups - MOAA members that opt to receive 2 emails/year from the local chapter, another one that lists address changes for members that are now in the chapter area, and finally, new MOAA members. This year, I've only received 1 response from any of those that I've contacted via email or letter and that was thanking me for the information!

As you encounter friends, neighbors, and/or new acquaintances that are eligible for membership, please tell them about PACMOAA and invite them to dinner (their dinner is ½ the regular charge for dinners). This continues to be our best source of new members!

Remember, surviving spouses of retired or active-duty military are eligible for membership also!! I will be happy to send you some copies of our recruiting brochure as well as bring extras to every meeting if that would be helpful. The Christmas Gala on 8 December is a great time to invite a guest to share the music, camaraderie and wonderful food!!

**Every member is a recruiter!!**

## PERSONAL AFFAIRS

### IN MEMORIUM

I was very sorry to hear of the death of June Leckrone, surviving spouse of longtime PACMOAA member CAPT Charles (Charlie) Leckrone, USCG (Ret). June moved to South Carolina to be near her daughter in 2021. We've missed seeing her smiling face at meetings and our thoughts are with her children. **Her obituary follows:**

Margaret June Leckrone, 92, entered into eternal rest on Saturday, November 5, 2022, in Summerville, SC. Much beloved by her family, friends, and neighbors, June never knew a stranger. She was always quick to offer a smile and an encouraging word. For her the glass was not simply half full, it was overflowing.

Born June 30, 1930, in Harrisburg Illinois, to Alvin and Opal Wilson Render. June received her BA in Music from McKendree College (University) in Lebanon, IL. in 1953. She married her college sweetheart, Charlie, and for 61 years they shared an adventure, raising a family and experiencing, as Coast Guard families do, having "sand in their shoes." After numerous tours of duty, traveling from coast to coast for over 32 years, following Charlie's retirement, they settled in Portsmouth

Though June's first love was her family, she was also devoted to her music (both singing, directing, and composing - performing at one time at Carnegie Hall in NYC), the United Methodist Church (active for many years at Centenary United Methodist Church and serving in Church Women United), flower arranging, gardening (serving in many positions within the Sterling Point Garden Club in Portsmouth). Outspoken in her love for our country, June never missed an opportunity to vote.

She was predeceased by her parents: Alvin and Opal Wilson Render and her brothers: Wilson and Ray Render;



Sisters: Meverine Render, Maxine Rude, and Carolyn Fortner.

She is survived by her children: the Rev. Susan (David) Copley, Phillip (Catherine) Leckrone, Joy (Marion) Hunter, David (Margaret) Leckrone, and grandchildren: Megan Copley; John (Kelsey), Michael and Timothy Leckrone; Samuel (Maddy) and Andrew (Kimberly) Hunter; Jeffrey, Thomas, and Kimberly Leckrone and by two great-grandchildren Eliam Leckrone and Ella Ruth Hunter.

The funeral will be held Saturday, November 12 at 11:00 a.m. at Centenary United Methodist Church in Portsmouth. A private burial will be held at A.G. Horton Memorial Veterans Cemetery, Suffolk at a later date. For further information contact Foster Funeral Home.

In lieu of flowers, memorial gifts, in thanksgiving for June's life, may be sent to Centenary UMC, McKendree University, or Wycliffe Bible Translators. Condolence messages may be mailed to Susan Copley, 17 Courtney Ave. Newburgh, NY 12550.

Published by James A. Dyal Funeral Home from Nov. 6 to Nov. 8, 2022.

## SURVIVING SPOUSE CORNER

### Surviving Spouse Corner: Finding a New Normal

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2022-news-articles/surviving-spouse-corner-finding-a-new-normal/>

By: Barbara Smith November 01, 2022

It's been a long time since I became a surviving spouse, and during that time, I've gone through many stages. None were easy, but all were necessary. No journey out of grief is straight forward. We all handle it differently, and it's how we deal with it that makes a difference.

We must choose to be positive and live or be unhappy the rest of our lives. I chose to be positive, but I also realized that I needed to find a purpose.

When my husband died at the age of 57, I didn't know where to turn or what to do. I became aware that my path forward was to do what I could to make sure no other survivor felt as alone and unprepared as I was. To that end, I joined my local MOAA chapter, took on the job as their surviving spouse liaison, was appointed to the national MOAA's Surviving Spouse Advisory Council, and became active in the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter.

[RELATED: [More About MOAA's Virtual Chapters](#)]

I also found not only a mentor but a dear friend because of a chance meeting in 2015. Patricia "Pat" Farnsworth shared her vast knowledge of surviving spouse issues, her wisdom, and her wonderful sense of humor. She encouraged me to do the best I believed I could be — and then pushed for more. Pat died on Oct. 14 at age 86. She was an inspiration to many and a friend to all.

We will never forget our loved ones. We will always miss them. But I have found peace and comfort in my new normal. I hope you find the same.

[Read past Surviving Spouse Corners.](#)

### Surviving Spouse Corner: Benefits of Pet Adoption <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2022-news-articles/surviving-spouse-corner-benefits-of-pet-adoption/>

By: Nancy Mullen November 30, 2022

According to the ASPCA, well over 6 million companion animals enter U.S. animal shelters every year and just under 1 million are euthanized each year. Thankfully, that number has been declining in recent years due in part to more publicity around adoption as well as ease of technology tools like social media and microchips that can help to reunite a lost pet with its family.

You might have thought about pet adoption and perhaps have some misgivings, and it is true that pet ownership is not right for everyone. After all, it can be a commitment of up to 20 years. Here are some adoption myths and why pet adoption might be right for you.

- *"Why adopt, not shop?"* Adoption is cheaper, and you can save a life. Look into your local pet rescues and animal control shelters. Many will offer low cost adoption days or assistance with adoption fees and spay/neuter costs. Buying a pup from a pet shop may encourage the use of "puppy mills" or overbreeding. True, there are very reputable breeders that take great care of their animals, but consider all the animals that currently need a loving home that you could provide.
- *"I can't get a purebred from a shelter."* You'd be surprised at what you can find through your local rescues and shelters. If you want a specific breed, reach out to your local rescue organizations and shelters, and fill out an application listing your preference.
- *"Shelter pets have behavioral issues."* Some do, some don't, and there is no guarantee of an animal's disposition even if you buy one from a breeder. Most rescues want to see a successful placement so they will try their best to match an animal to a potential family based on their breed and observed demeanor. Want an energetic pup? They have it. Want a cuddly cat? They have those, too. House-trained pet? Yep. No time for pet training? Many will offer that as well. Just remember that you and your shelter pet need an adjustment period to get used to a new routine.
- *"I'm older. What if the pet outlives me?"* First, as many of us know, tomorrow is not guaranteed and as such, regardless of our age we should all have a care plan for who will care for our pets when we no longer can. Second, consider adopting a senior pet or fostering through a reputable rescue.
- *"I can't afford it."* Yes, pets can be expensive. If this is a concern, check into long-term foster programs where costs may be covered in part or in full. You might also want to consider pet insurance. ([MOAA Insurance](#) even offers a plan.)

My two senior pups recently passed away, and when I was ready, I reached out to a few rescues in my area. I am now the dog mom to a 2-year-old, lazy, fully housebroken 45-pound, ridiculously cute, mixed-breed bundle of love and couldn't have asked for a better pup.

## MOAA & LEGISLATIVE

### The NDAA Can't Wait: Ask Your Lawmakers to Act Before Year's End

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2022-news-articles/advocacy/the-ndaa-cant-wait-ask-your-lawmakers-to-act-before-years-end/>

By: Brenden McMahon November 22, 2022

When Congress returns from its Thanksgiving holiday, there will be 12 days left this year with both chambers scheduled to be in session. Over those dozen days, legislators face an overwhelming agenda which includes, but is not limited to:

- Finalizing and passing the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).
- Passing a federal budget to fully fund the government, or passing [yet another continuing resolution \(CR\)](#).
- Increasing the national debt limit – failure here would degrade our nation's ability to operate even at reduced levels.
- Passing other legislation critical to the uniformed services and veteran communities.

From the beginning, the 117th Congress has been rife with political divisiveness, environmental uncertainties, appropriations and debt ceiling challenges, and ever-growing threats to the long-term viability of an all-volunteer force. Our elected officials face a nearly impossible agenda, and it is unclear whether they will be able to complete it all before noon on Jan. 3, 2023, when the new Congress is scheduled to begin.

From now through the remainder of this Congress, MOAA's top priority will remain the well-being of servicemembers, veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. We will do everything we can to ensure

Congress honors the oath that every servicemember takes when they pledge to serve and protect our country. That starts with passage of the FY 2023 NDAA.

**[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Pass the FY 2023 NDAA](#)]**

Below, find some answers to common questions about the upcoming lame-duck session.

**Q. What will happen if elected officials fail to pass critical legislation, like the FY 2023 NDAA, before the start of the 118th Congress?**

**A.** If any bill, including the NDAA, does not become law during the Congress in which it was introduced, it's considered "dead." If the FY 2023 NDAA doesn't pass before Jan. 3, 2023, it would need to be reintroduced under a new bill number and restart the entire legislative process in the new Congress.

If Congress fails to pass the necessary authorizations and appropriations, then the federal agencies overseeing the eight uniformed services will lack the authorizations or funding needed for the annual military pay raise, along with essential improvements to health care and other quality of life programs and benefits necessary for an all-volunteer force.

**[RELATED: [Star Act Not Included in NDAA Despite Strong and Growing Support](#)]**

**Q. Where does the NDAA and other critical legislation stand?**

**A.** Both chambers of Congress have been working on their respective versions of the 12 appropriation bills and the NDAA. Elected officials and staff in the House and Senate Armed Services Committees have been working on a conferenced version of the NDAA in closed-door sessions; it is unclear when we will see substantive floor activity.

The appropriation bills face two key issues:

- The looming expiration of the CR on Dec. 16, which could trigger a government shutdown.
- The mounting national debt, which could reach its \$31.4 trillion ceiling [earlier than expected](#).

**[RELATED: [What's Next for MOAA's Budget, NDAA Priorities as Midterm Elections Loom](#)]**

**Q. What else is MOAA hearing about the NDAA from Capitol Hill?**

**A.** Despite the behind-the-scenes work going on for the NDAA, public divisions remain. Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.), currently the House minority leader, told reporters Nov. 15 that the defense bill should be put on hold until the new year.

"I actually believe the NDAA should hold up until the first of the year, and let's get it right," [McCarthy said](#). He did not articulate areas he would like to see addressed before the bill is considered.

Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.), chair of the House Armed Services Committee, warned that deferring the NDAA would be disastrous for national security.

"If you kick it off four, five, six months, you are really damaging the United States military. So, I hope Kevin McCarthy understands that," [Smith said](#). "You are damaging the United States military every day past October 1st that you don't get it done, and certainly more so every day past January [1st]."

The final days of the 117th Congress will be anything but smooth sailing for both the NDAA and other critical legislation impacting the uniformed services and veteran communities.

**[RELATED: [Visit MOAA's Legislative Action Center](#)]**

**Q. What can I do to help?**

**A.** While MOAA and fellow advocacy groups continue discussions with lawmakers and their staffs, these actions won't be enough to see the NDAA over the finish line. Your elected officials need to hear from you, their constituents, to be spurred into action.

**Write to your legislators now** [using MOAA's Legislative Action Center](#) and urge them to pass the FY 2023 NDAA before the end of the 117th Congress.

## Thousands of Pharmacies Will Have a Chance to Rejoin the TRICARE Network

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2022-news-articles/thousands-of-pharmacies-will-have-a-chance-to-rejoin-the-tricare-network/>

November 16, 2022

*This article by Karen Jowers originally appeared on Military Times, the nation's largest independent newsroom dedicated to covering the military and veteran community. Editor's Note: MOAA has [fought recent cuts](#) to the TRICARE pharmacy network, which had a disproportionate impact on rural beneficiaries and the elderly. Learn more about those efforts [here](#), and share your pharmacy story [at this link](#).*

Nearly [15,000 independent pharmacies](#) will have a chance to rejoin the Tricare retail pharmacy network, according to officials with Express Scripts.

The move comes in response to the Kroger grocery chain's Sept. 30 announcement that its 2,200 pharmacies in 35 states would no longer participate in the Tricare provider network, officials said.

Express Scripts will send a notice announcing a December contract solicitation directly to the pharmacies that either declined the recent contract or are affiliated with a wholesaler that declined the contract on their behalf. If the pharmacy accepts the contract, it will be able to rejoin the [Tricare](#) network effective Jan. 15.

Until Oct. 24, there were roughly 55,586 retail pharmacies in the Tricare network but, as of that date, 14,963 dropped out. The reduction in pharmacies affects an estimated 400,000 Tricare beneficiaries, according to the National Community Pharmacists Association. [Lawmakers](#) and advocates have raised questions about the effect on beneficiaries, especially those in rural areas.

### **[RELATED: [2023 TRICARE Costs Announced](#)]**

“We constantly evaluate ways to improve access and choice for those we serve, so as a result of Kroger's recent notice that they will no longer participate in the Tricare pharmacy network, independent pharmacies that declined our previous invitation will be given another chance to consider participating,” said Tom Jenkins, Express Scripts' vice president of account management for DoD programs, in a statement provided to Military Times.

Beneficiaries who continue to use pharmacies that are no longer in the Tricare retail pharmacy network will pay full price for their medications, then file for reimbursement, which is subject to the deductible as well as a higher out-of-network cost share.

“Even without Kroger's participation, nearly all Tricare beneficiaries have an in-network pharmacy within a 15-minute drive of their home, but we are always working to provide more choice to our members and look forward to welcoming additional independent pharmacies back into the network,” Jenkins stated.

**Kroger announced that the Express Scripts drug pricing model is “unsustainable” for Kroger and customers** and that unless a new agreement is reached by Dec. 31, most Express Scripts customers around the country will no longer be able to fill prescriptions at its stores. According to the Tricare website, Kroger was still in the network as of Nov. 14.

### **[RELATED: [TRICARE Offering Special, Limited Program to Treat Lower Back Pain](#)]**

Reimbursement rates have been the key issue for the independent pharmacies, too. However, many of the community pharmacies never even received the proposed contract for the 2023 retail network, which Express Scripts sent by fax, according to the National Community Pharmacists Association. These pharmacies therefore had no opportunity to remain in the network. Express Scripts terminated contracts early for the pharmacies participating in the 2022 network — Oct. 24. While Tricare beneficiaries received letters about the change, many pharmacies learned about the change only from their patients.

Information was not immediately available from Express Scripts about whether any rates or terms will change in the new contracts being offered. More than 7,000 independent pharmacies accepted the proposed 2023 rates

earlier this year.

“Cigna/Express Scripts offered contract terms to these independent pharmacies that were far below medication acquisition costs, forcing most independent community pharmacies to make the difficult choice to reject the terms, with no opportunity to renegotiate,” wrote B. Douglas Hoey, CEO of the pharmacists association, in a letter to Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin.

### **Kroger officials echoed the same concerns.**

“Since February, Kroger has attempted on dozens of occasions to negotiate in good faith with [Express Scripts Inc.], seeking a more equitable and fair contract that lowers cost, increases access, and delivers greater transparency — but there has been little to no progress to date,” officials said in a statement announcing the termination of their agreement.

**[RELATED: [TRICARE and FEDVIP Open Season: Which Plan Is Best?](#)]**

“Kroger is doing everything possible to deliver greater value for our customers and navigate this ongoing period of record inflation. We do not believe Kroger customers should have to pay higher costs to increase Express Scripts’ profits,” said Colleen Lindholz, president of Kroger Health, in the announcement.

Earlier, Express Scripts officials told Military Times, “The terms and conditions offered to pharmacies represented our best and final rates, and aligned with the economics necessary to provide the value to the Tricare program and ensure beneficiaries have access to the best possible prices for their prescription drug needs.”

## **Star Act Not Included in NDAA Despite Strong and Growing Support**

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2022-news-articles/advocacy/star-act-not-included-in-ndaa-despite-strong-and-growing-support/>

By: Mark Belinsky November 15, 2022

Excerpts from article below:

Thanks in no small part to the grassroots work of MOAA members, nearly 400 members of Congress have signed on to co-sponsor the Major Richard Star Act, which would end the dollar-for-dollar offset of DoD retirement pay and VA disability pay faced by more than 50,000 combat-injured veterans. But unlike other popular defense-related measures, it has yet to be included in the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

Note: **As of 27 November 2022**, HR 1282 has 1 sponsor and 333 Co-sponsors including Elaine Luria, Bobby Scott and Don McEachin. SR 344 has 1 sponsor and 66 co-sponsors. **Sen Kaine still is not a co-sponsor!!!**

### **Who Is Against the Star Act?**

Some lawmakers believe we must cut personnel costs to pay for modernization. They miss the mark on protecting the all-volunteer force amid the current recruiting crisis and oppose any spending on personnel, even for combat-injured veterans.

**[RELATED: [What DoD Leaders and Lawmakers Should REALLY Learn From the War in Ukraine](#)]**

Financially conservative lawmakers typically agree that the offset – reducing earned retirement pay because of a combat injury – is an unfair tax, while even the most socially liberal lawmakers can agree it is important to support those injured in combat. Where problems arise is the so-called “pay-as-you-go,” or [PAYGO, rule](#).

PAYGO requires any bill including an increase in mandatory spending also must include a designated way to pay for that increase. This rule is the obstacle for a simple floor vote, but overcoming the rule is possible: Congressional leaders can agree to waive it, to designate cuts to spending elsewhere to cover the cost, or to increase revenue via tax or other methods.

A similar fight took place as MOAA led efforts to repeal the Survivor Benefit Plan-Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBP-DIC) offset, better known as the “Widows Tax.” **After decades of advocacy**, the PAYGO rule was waived as the repeal passed within the FY 2020 NDAA. Full repeal will take effect early next year.

**[RELATED: [The Military Coalition’s Letters to House and Senate Leadership Seeking Star Act Inclusion in the FY 2023 NDAA](#)]**

MOAA does not advocate for a way to pay for the Star Act, as we do not have the visibility on all the options available (as much as we'd like to). However, it's important to tell your elected officials not to place the cost for the Star Act on the backs of the uniformed community – by raising pharmacy co-pays, for example, or increasing processing fees for VA home loans.

## Make Your Voice Heard

MOAA outlined other talking points on the Star Act as part of [materials prepared for Advocacy in Action](#), our spring advocacy campaign. Some highlights:

- Retired pay is paid by DoD for completed years of service, and disability compensation is paid by the VA for lifelong injury. These are two different payments for two different purposes.
- Reducing retired pay because of a combat related disability is an injustice.
- No other federal system would reduce retirement pay due to disability.

The Star Act would provide concurrent receipt of retired pay and VA disability for those injured in combat and forced to retire before reaching 20 years of service. These combat-injured veterans retire early at no fault of their own. Their retirement pay is calculated by years of service and grade achieved – far less than a full retirement, had they reached the 20-year threshold.

Currently, those injured in combat and forced to retire early (under the authority of Chapter 61) have their retired pay reduced, like a tax, for every dollar of VA disability they receive.

Many combat-injured veterans were unable to work when they came home, and their spouse or loved one had to become a full-time caregiver, compounding their financial burden.

The FY 2004 NDAA acknowledged DoD is responsible for retired pay and the VA is responsible for lifelong disability compensation: Two different payments for two different purposes, as stated. Unfortunately, cost was a stumbling block –those who were injured in combat and forced to retire before reaching 20 years of service were left behind with that legislation, which authorized concurrent receipt for those who reach 20 years of service and have a VA disability rating of 50% or more.



It is time to correct that injustice.

Activate your networks and share [this call to action link](#) with MOAA members and other supporters. Only by keeping this issue at the forefront at the start of the 118th Congress can we build the momentum required to end this offset and move forward on achieving concurrent receipt for all veterans.

**Submitted by: MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret)**

## VCOC

First Quarter Meeting: January 18, 10:00am - 12:00pm, Zoom Virtual meeting

Second Quarter Meeting: April 12, meeting type TBD.

## ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

**Please see Addendum at end of this newsletter (pages 13-19)**

## COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

### PLEASE CONSIDER BRINGING DONATIONS TO PORTSMOUTH VOLUNTEERS FOR THE HOMELESS (PVH) TO THE PACMOAA CHRISTMAS GALA

PVH is “Still Serving” and has provided uninterrupted nights of their PVH COVID-19 homeless sheltering response since the pandemic began per PVH Executive Director, Darlene Washington.

Their Winter Night Shelter services evolved and transformed into year-round sheltering and extended Service Center operations with the help of state and city grants and corporate, church and individual donations.

You can contact PVH at 757-399-0200 for further info or go to their Facebook page. They are available if you have questions or want to learn more about how things are going.

**Our on-going PVH Service Center and Shelter material donation needs are listed below.**

- Client snacks – chicken/tuna salad packets; chips, etc. (no granola bars or hard items due to dental issues)
- Fresh fruit (oranges, peaches, plums, bananas)
- Disposable Gloves (non-latex), Toilet paper
- Room Deodorizers (spray/solid), Bleach (chlorine)
- XL Ziploc bags (10-gallon size), Kitchen Trash bags, Trash Can Liners
- Paper towels
- Personal items
  - Men's & Women's Shower Shoes and Body Wash (full size)
  - Body Lotion
  - Reader Glasses (various strengths) and Word Search Books

**Note:** PVH is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 corporation governed by a twenty-one (21) member independent Board of Directors. Before COVID, PVH provided nightly shelter for homeless persons from mid-November through May each year and provided a twelve (12) month Outreach Service Center where clients could shower, do laundry, receive their mail and use the telephone.

**PACMOAA had donated items to this most worthwhile organization since their Executive Director spoke at our meeting in October 2011. PACMOAA donations have fallen off this year, but the need is ongoing! Every little bit helps!**

### **PACMOAA MEMBERS ATTENDED 2022 VETERANS DAY CELEBRATION AT LAKE PRINCE WOODS**



Four PACMOAA members attended the event: Cpt Jim Jones, USMCR (Vet); MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret); LTC Frank Labrecque, USA (Ret) and CAPT Oran (Sonny) Chenault, USN (Ret) along with three spouses – Bruce Ferki, Jeanne Labrecque, and Jane Chenault. Jim, Sherry and Frank are pictured to the left.

After colors were presented by the Nansemond River HS AFJROTC, there was a short presentation by LPW and then a great motivational speaker, Darian Bryant, described his journey to becoming a motivational speaker. He was rapidly rising up the enlisted ranks in the Army, heading to E-8 when he developed a seizure disorder and was medically boarded out. Each veteran was given a certificate recognizing their service by LPW.

Refreshments and fellowship followed the program.

Sherry, Sonny Chenault (Charter member) and Jane Chenault pictured to the left.

Nansemond River HS AFJROTC right with Sherry Ferki.



**NMCP Pharmacy Update**November 1, 2022 via website at <https://portsmouth.tricare.mil/Health-Services/Pharmacy>**November 30, 2022**

## Transition to Digital Prescriptions



E-prescriptions are safer and quicker to process than hard copy (paper) prescriptions. Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Pharmacy will soon transition to only accepting E-prescriptions.

### What this means for you, our patrons:

As of 3 January 2023, hard copy (paper) prescriptions will no longer be accepted at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth or its Branch and TRICARE Prime Pharmacies.

Hard copy (paper) prescriptions for controlled substances will be accepted through 1 February 2023

**Please share this information with all of your healthcare providers.**

Starting 3 January 2023, all non-controlled prescriptions must be sent electronically from your Doctor's office.

The Doctor's office can E-prescribe to our pharmacy at:

**DoD PORTS VA NMC ePhcy (Pharmacy NCPDP/NPI Number is 4845371/1548673205)**

We will only accept hard copy (paper) prescriptions for controlled substances until 1 February 2023 at which point, all prescriptions must be submitted electronically.

Before presenting to the Pharmacy to pick up your medications, activate your new or renewed prescription by texting "get in line" to 1-833-217-2199.

**Please ask any pharmacy staff member for clarification or additional information.**

**Skip The Pharmacy Wait, Activate Your Script Ahead Of Time!**

**FEDVIP Open Season** runs from Nov 14<sup>th</sup> -Dec 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

Go to <http://www.benefeds.com> for information about Retiree Vision and Dental plans and rates for 2023.

## Activate Prescriptions by Text

**Want to skip waiting in line for new prescriptions?**

Now you can by activating new prescriptions from your phone! When your medications are ready for pickup, we will send you a text.

Simply text "**Get in Line**" to **1-833-217-2199** or scan the QR code below and send.



- When prompted, enter the patient's 10-digit DOD ID number.
- Review your information and receive your Q-number.
- Once your prescriptions are ready for pickup, you will receive a text. (Please allow 2 to 4 hours for processing)

**For same-day pickup during routine business hours, text "I am here" upon your arrival to the NMCP Pharmacy. A staff member will call your Q-number.**

**For pickup on another day during routine business hours, select a "Return for Pickup" ticket at the KIOSK and a staff member will call your ticket number. Please return to the pharmacy within 14 calendar days.**



Naval Medical  
Center Portsmouth

**PROGRAMS**

December 8<sup>th</sup> 2022 **CHRISTMAS GALA** with The Tidewater Concert Band. Please consider bringing a New Unwrapped Toy, for the USMCR Toys for Tots, and don't forget PVH Donations too (see above).  
 January 12<sup>th</sup> 2023 **Installation of New Officers-** VCOC President, CDR Linc Smith USNR (Ret)  
 February 9<sup>th</sup>, March 9<sup>th</sup>, April 13<sup>th</sup>, May 11<sup>th</sup>, & June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023 **TBD**



Submitted by:  
**COL Hal Hostetler, USA (Ret)**

**CHAPLAIN'S CORNER**

Christmas is that time of the year that we begin to get very busy shopping and buying, and preparing meals for our families. Perhaps at this time, we best should keep in mind a simple poem by Iris W. Bray about giving to others.

**Christmas Giving**

Christmas is for giving  
 And for showing that we care,  
 For honoring the Christ Child

With the loving gift we share.  
 The wise men gave of riches;

The shepherds, faith and love.  
 Each gift, in its own measure,  
 Was smiled on from above.

Let every gift be treasured;  
 Not always size or price  
 Determines the extent of love  
 And willing sacrifice.

Handsome gifts with festive trim  
 Bring smiles of sweet contents,  
 But modest gifts of humble means  
 Are oftentimes heaven sent.

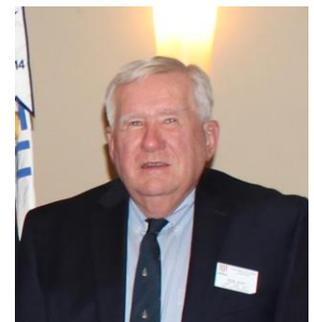
Whether it be large or small  
 Each gift will share in part  
 The message of true Christmas joy  
 If given from the heart!



Submitted by  
**CAPT Bob Brewer,**  
**USN (Ret)**  
**Chaplin**

Merry Christmas to All, & to All a Good Night  
 CDR Ken App USN (Ret) Salute Editor

**THAT'S A WRAP FOR DECEMBER 2022**



## ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

**10 November 2022**

### **PACMOAA Business Meeting Agenda**

Welcome	President Bill Smith
New People: Capt (R) Valerie Parker, USN	
Marine Corps 247 <sup>th</sup> Birthday	
Vets Day:	
What are we about	
Who are we	
Friends, neighbors, family	
Wounded, killed, injured	
Duty, Honor, Country	
Pledge of Allegiance	Bob Brewer
Prayer	Bob Brewer
Dinner	
The President called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.	
<b>Reports:</b> Please see attached	
President	Bill Smith
Club is healthy, Membership is strong, Financially sound	
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President/Programs	Hal Hostetler
Bill recommended in lieu of the Pollyanna gifts, give extra money to the Toys for Tots and/or Portsmouth Homeless at the December meeting.	
Members voted and it passed unanimously.	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President/Membership	Sherry Ferki
Bill thanked Sherry for doing so much in the Membership role. It is really challenging.	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Vice President/Communications	Ken App
Secretary	Kay Watkins
On the job learning MOAA language. Still learning the people in the chapter.	
Treasurer	Hans Sachse
There is a surplus on the monthly dinner charge that helps offset guest speakers, fees, etc. These expenses are built into the price of the dinner.	
Legislative Representative	Hal Hostetler
Ken added the state tax exemption for military retired pay this year is \$10,000 for ages 55 and up. It will increase each year. Bill added that the Chapter had a Zoom meeting with Congressman Bobby Scott. He agreed to co-sponsor 2 bills.	
Surviving Spouse & Personal Affairs	Sherry Ferki
Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) Representative	Ken App
Scholarship Committee	Sherry Ferki
Community Involvement	Sherry Ferki
If you go to meetings with elected officials virtually or in person, Memorial Day parade, attend Veteran's Day activities, etc. please let Sherry know.	
PACMOAA 40 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	Sherry Ferki
<b>Awards:</b>	
Col Marvin J Harris Award—Website	Bill Smith
Earned 4-star rating from MOAA. Banner will be pinned on.	
Col Marvin J Harris Award—Print Newsletter	Bill Smith
Earned 5-star rating from MOAA	
Bill thanked Ken for all of his work. He earned the awards for the organization.	

MOAA Levels of Excellence—Chapter Individual Awards

Bill Smith  
Sherry Ferki

Bob Steorts MOAA Outstanding Service Award  
Sherry read the certificate and enclosed card from MOAA that was provided for the award. Bob has been a wonderful resource to PACMOAA.

**Business:**

Election

Sherry Ferki

25 out of 66 members voted. 22 via email and 3 at the meeting.  
The slate was passed: President CAPT Bruce Lalonde, USN (Ret)  
3<sup>rd</sup> VP Communications Chair CDR Ken App, USN (Ret)  
Secretary Kay Watkins, Spouse  
Board of Directors position CAPT Robert Brewer, USN (Ret)  
Board of Directors position Mary Snyder, Surviving Spouse

Items from the membership

Bill Smith

There were no items from the floor.

Closing Remarks

Bill Smith

Great Year among many challenges.  
How can we get more involved? In the organization and individually you will notice that only 5 people gave reports. It is challenging to get volunteers. Please consider volunteering.  
Thank you for putting up with me these last 2 years.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:42 by Bill Smith

Next meeting: December 8, 2022, at 6:00 pm. Our Christmas Gala

Respectfully Submitted,  
Kay Watkins  
Secretary



**Left: Sherry Ferki with Bob and Gladys Steorts**



**Right: Bill Smith Opening the Annual Business Meeting**



**PACMOAA President, COL Bill Smith, with CAPT Bruce LaLonde, PACMOAA PRESIDENT ELECT**

**PACMOAA First Vice President Report, 2022  
(PROGRAMS)**

January	New Officers sworn-in by CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret), VCOC President
February	Portsmouth Mayor Shannon Glover
March	Sierra Lautman, Jewish Federation of Tidewater-Synagogue Attack in Pittsburg.
April	Surviving Spouse Presentation [Edith Smith/Zoom] Intro By Sherry Ferki
May	Program on Bee Keeping in America” by CAPT Kevin Knoop, USN (Ret)
June	Scholarship night with Elizabeth River Project speaker, Kayla Gradwell Churchland Color Guard attended.
July	Tri-area Sunday Brunch – MOAA Speaker, COL Rojan Robotham
August	No regular meeting
September	Ukrainian COL Hennadiy Kovalinko of NATO HQ, Norfolk
October	CAPT Wolfson, Norfolk Naval Shipyard Commander
November	Business meeting—Election of Officers
December	Christmas Gala with the Tidewater Concert Band

Submitted by,  
Hal Hostetler  
COL, USA, RET

**Legislative Objectives for 2023**

I. National

- A. 4.6% Pay Raise (Not meeting inflation)
- B. Basic needs allowance for Junior Enlisted military.
- C. Temporary BAH increase for high cost of living areas.
- D. Opposition to physical and mental health care billets cuts.
- E. Concurrent receipt and Richard Star Act

II. Virginia

- A. Progressive tax reduction on Military Retirement pay
- B. Reduce Interment costs for spouses of veterans at Veteran Cemeteries
- C. Rifles to be allowed as part of ceremonial teams
- D. Job protection for National Guard and Reserve members called-up for duty
- E. Support of person who’s spouses died “in line of duty.”
- F. Promote hiring of Guard and Reserve members
- G. Free National Guard State Park admission.
- H. Virginia National Guard Income Tax Exemption

Submitted by,  
Hal Hostetler  
COL USA RET

**Second Vice President’s report  
Membership Report 10 November 2022**

Current Paid members:	66 – Includes 6 Life members and 3 Honorary
Regular Members:	57
Surviving Spouses:	09
New members this year:	04– Frank Labrecque, Sara Grigg, Teddy Lyons, and Bill Coburn

Deaths this year: 05 – Harry Miller, Richard Grigg, Bob Pomeroy, Jack Lyons and Steve Turner – need to make donations in memory of Jack and Steve. Also June Leckrone, Surviving spouse of longtime member CAPT Charlie Leckrone, USCG (Ret) who died in Oct 2014, died on 5 Nov 2022. She relocated to SC to be near her daughter last year.

Other losses: 04 – 2 moved, 2 didn't renew

Note: Started year with 71 members

Recruiting efforts this year:

- Emails and/or letters to monthly Near Real Time report members - potential new member, changed address and opt into email. Only 1 response – thanking me for info. Will follow up with her.
- Joint Recruiting Event at Patriot's Colony – Still checking on – new marketing person at Patriots Colony

Other recruitment ideas discussed at last board meeting:

- COs Dinner meeting – I mentioned it to CAPT Wolfson and she thought it was a good idea. Probably need to look at next Oct to give time for planning.
- Attending area installation retirement ceremonies

Please invite friends/neighbors to attend. The Christmas Gala is a great event to invite someone to.

Please let me know of any suggestions you have to improve membership.

**MAJ Sherry Ferki USA (RET)**

## COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT 2022

**3<sup>RD</sup> PACMOAA Objective** – Includes JROTC, Scholarship, Meetings with elected officials (virtual or in person), Memorial Day parade, Attendance at Veterans Day activities, etc.

**For Advocacy in Action 2022, PACMOAA Legislative Team** (Sherry Ferki, Bill Smith, and Hal Hostetler met with Representative Bobby Scott on 5 May 2022 and discussed the MOAA 3 Advocacy in Action items – Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 1282), Masking mental Health Care Affordable for TRICARE Beneficiaries (Stop the Copay Act – H.R. 4824)) and to support A Minimum of 4.6% Pay Raise Across the Ranks. The next day, Congressman Scott signed up as a co-sponsor for both HR bills!

**Annual Scholarship Dinner** recognizing scholarship winner and his Mom along with JROTC Color Guard.

**PACMOAA members participated in several car washes** the Churchland MCJROTC held to raise funds for their activities.

**Portsmouth Mayors Committee for Military Affairs** – Irv Lindley is President and Karl Wilson is PACMOAA Rep. Usually meets monthly except for July and August and November and December.

**Portsmouth's Annual Memorial Day Parade** – PACMOAA participated again this year after a 2-year hiatus due to COVID with 2 cars to include Bob and Nell Wall and Bob Brewer and Bill Smith.

## THIRD Vice President Communications Report

**Salute Newsletter:** 3 versions, Express, Online, and B&W mailed. **Express Advantages:** Full color, pictures, Layout highlights, Digital Links

**Website: Lots of info and Hotlinks : Homepage links;** Join MOAA, MOAA Take Action, MOAA Home Page, MOAA 2022 Goals, JLC 2022 Goals, Naval Hospital COVID page, "Find your Legislators" which

changes in 2023, MAP To Roger Brown's, PACMOAA – Who can Join, Join now, or Contact Us. You can also read past PACMOAA Salute Newsletters

**Facebook- Publishes** Updates on Pharmacy, COVID and Happenings.

**Recruiting Brochure:** Updated yearly or as required

**Master Roster:** Maintains and updates. Use for Directory and Master Email Lists

**Master email:** Updated as required

**Directory:** Updated as required. Published Semi-Annually or as Required

### VCOC Representative

Acts as PACMOAA representative to Virginia Council of Chapters which meets nominally 4 times a year, January, April, July, and October. I was present at all meetings, one in-person (April), and 4 Virtual (Had an additional meeting in August due to not having a Quorum in July).

The JLC nominated and the VCOC voted unanimously Congresswoman Elaine Lauria, and Delegate Kathy Tran from Fairfax, as the Federal and State 2022 Legislators of the Year respectively.

### Scholarship committee/JROTC Medals: Sherry Ferki

- **Continued support of scholarship program with donations ideally allows PACMOAA to award 2 scholarships/year.**
- 1 scholarship awarded this year at June meeting as only 2 students applied and 1 w/incomplete application
  - Howard Brian Link III from Great Bridge HS. One of last years winners, Jade Lewis was also from Great Bridge HS. Howard is attending VMI and doing well.
- MOAA Certificates and Medals awarded this year to 12 cadets –7 by CAPT Rick Titi at ceremony for all Chesapeake JROTC groups and at Lakeland HS in Suffolk; 2 by COL Bill Smith at Churchland and I.C. Norcom in Portsmouth; and 3 were dropped off at the schools to be awarded by staff at Woodrow Wilson HS, Nansemond River HS, and Smithfield HS.
- 2 JROTC groups covered by PACMOAA did not have awards this year or did not respond to PACMOAAs emails /calls.

**REMINDER:** Dues info will be in January newsletter. Many members add extra money to dues for scholarship.

### PERSONAL AFFAIRS CORNER ANNUAL MEETING REPORT 2022

- Lots of overlap with Personal Affairs and Surviving Spouse Issues
- **Planning ahead for your survivors is essential.**
  - MOAA has several publications that are great tools to help collect the important documents/information you need to have available.
  - *2021 Personal Affairs Guide: A Personal Inventory for Peace of Mind*
  - *2021 Survivor's Checklist.*
- Many PACMOAA members having health issues so please keep our members in your thoughts and prayers.
- Shirley Barker and Bob Parker miss being with PACMOAA members and would like to hear from members. Both are longtime PACMOAA member sand were very active for many years. Shirley recently moved to assisted living in Newport News and bob is in Annandale.

- 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.
- Addendum -We are all familiar with the need to check credit card statements often for fraud but I experience and issue with my TRICARE EOB, a charge for DME equipment that I never ordered or received. BE sure to check all medical EOBs often also. DEERS rep sated everyone should check DEERS info at least yearly to make sure it is accurate.

## SURVIVING SPOUSE LIAISON ANNUAL REPORT 2022

- PACMOAA has 9 surviving spouses, 4 widowed in past 2 years.
- Surviving Spouse Corner published on MOAA website every month and included in most newsletters. **Many articles have valuable info for all spouses!!**
- Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter is a valuable resource to surviving spouses
- Virginia Military Widows Property Tax Waiver Facebook group instead of Virginia Military Widows: SBP-DIC Offset. Focused on increasing eligibility from KIA to Line of duty...
  - 2022 JLC Objective: To expand tax relief for Surviving Spouses of Military Service Members to include “Died in the Line-of-Duty”. Related to real estate tax for surviving spouse of a veteran who was determined by US VA to have a 100 % service-connected permanent and total disability. This was HB 957 passes and Gov Younkin signed it into law on 7 April 2022. At this time, giving the tax relief is at the discretion of the local communities.
- MOAA’s Surviving Spouse Page includes sections like Surviving Spouse Corn; Surviving Spouse FAQs and Resources; and Health Care: How You and Your Family Can Access These Critical Benefits. <https://www.moaa.org/content/topic-and-landing-pages/i-am-a-surviving-spouse/>
- Webinar this year on *Preparing a Spouse for Survivorship* (2022) <https://www.moaa.org/content/benefits-and-discounts/transition-and-careers/transition-center-webinars/preparing-a-spouse-for-survivorship/>

**Sherry Ferki, Personal Affairs Officer and Surviving Spouse Liaison**

**Home number: 686-4650 Cell: 630-5608**

## PACMOAA 40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY PLANNING COMMITTEE

Committee made up of Sherry Ferki, Ken App, and Dolly Cherrington (Historian).

Sherry and Ken met on 10/5/2022, Dolly was unable to participate.

- Sherry elected Chair. Ken will update/change slide show.
- Reviewed 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary slide show along with script.
- Noted slides that needed to be deleted and/or updated.
- Discussed need for many pictures of current members
- Invite all Past Presidents and/or their surviving spouses. I have spoken with Oran “Sonny” Chenault, the only surviving charter member, about discussing his memories of the beginning of PACTROA and encouraged him to attend the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration.
- Make special arrangements for members that cannot drive at night.
- Facilitate including all members that cannot attend to join via Jitsi.
- Memorabilia will be displayed around the room.

**40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on 13 April 2022. Be sure to mark on your calendar.**

TREASURERS REPORT

**PAC MOAA Balance Sheet (2022)**

9-Nov-22

as of

**Operating Funds**

Beginning Balance (1 Jan 2022):

ABNB-99 (check)	\$4,615.38
Unrcd dep	
Unpd chks/debits	-\$80.92
Check Ledger Bal	\$4,534.46
ABNB-0 (saving)	\$2,482.17
ABNB-21 (CD)	\$2,074.89

Ending Balance (2022):

ABNB-99 (check)	\$5,265.51
Unrcd dep	
Unpd chks/debits	-\$49.00
Check Ledger Bal	\$5,216.51
ABNB-0 (saving)	\$1,900.94
ABNB-21 (CD)	\$2,087.45

Total \$9,091.52

Total \$9,204.90

Income:

Dues	\$1,236.00
Dinners	\$5,150.00
Other	\$1,379.00
Other	
Int/Div	\$13.33
Total	\$7,778.33

Expenses:

Admin	\$886.69
Dinners	\$4,683.05
Salute	\$512.30
VCOC/Meetings	\$53.60
Entertainment	\$52.48
Other	\$919.83

2022 Dues pd in 2021 -\$761.50

2023/4 Dues pd in adv \$204.50

Total \$7,107.95

Total Bal + Inc = \$16,312.85

Total Bal + Exp = \$16,312.85

**Scholarship Funds**

Beginning Balance (1 Jan 2022):

ABNB-2 (mm)	\$5,435.71
Unrcd dep/deb(net)	
Savings Ledger Bal	\$5,435.71
ABNB-23/24 (CD)	\$5,307.75

Ending Balance (2022):

ABNB-2 (mm)	\$5,011.27
Unrcd dep	
Savings Ledger Bal	\$5,011.27
ABNB-23/24 (CD)	\$5,353.60

Total \$10,743.46

Total \$10,364.87

Income:

Donations	\$1,519.50
50/50	\$295.50
Other	\$0.00
Int/Div	\$56.41
Total	\$1,871.41

Expenses:

Scholarship	\$2,250.00
Other	\$0.00
Total	\$2,250.00

Total Bal + Inc = \$12,614.87

Total Bal + Exp = \$12,614.87

Total PACMOAA Funds Balance = \$19,569.77