

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 XXXXII Issue IV LEARN MORE AT PACMOAA.ORG APRIL 2023

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



Team PACMOAA:

---Looking forward to our 40th anniversary celebration on April 13th at Roger Brown's. The evening will be filled with heartfelt conversation, honor all past and present members of PACMOAA and recognize the noteworthy achievements since 2018. Wear your best, bring your favorite story and a big appetite. There will be a special gift for all attending---So clear your calendar and reserve your seat soonest.

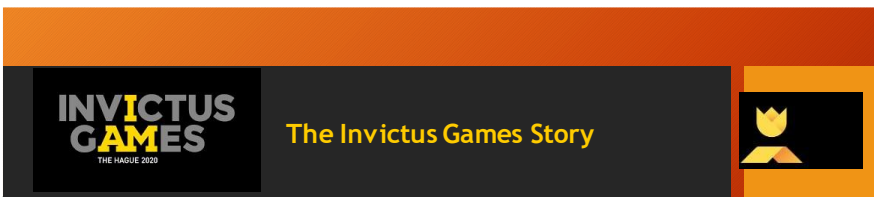
Last month's presentation by Col Don Paschal USA (Ret), regarding the "Invictus Games" was both inspiring and charged

with the passion of our wounded veterans who are driven to overcome their life's challenges through sports. It was a very uplifting discussion.

Anchors aweigh,

Bruce

CAPT USN (Ret)



Following a visit in 2013 to the ~~United~~ Warrior Games, Prince Harry was inspired to create an expanded international version. The inaugural Invictus Games took place in London in the fall of 2014 and attracted more than 450 competitors from 13 nations. The second Invictus Games took place in May 2016 in Orlando, Florida, and built on the excitement of the London Games with more than 500 competitors from 15 nations. The third Games were hosted by the city of Toronto and drew over 550 competitor nations. In 2018, Sydney, Australia hosted 18 nations at their Invictus Games. The 2020 Games in The Hague, Netherlands were twice postponed due to the COVID pandemic and are now rescheduled to be held April 2022. The Invictus Games demonstrate soldiers' and veterans' indefatigable drive to overcome and the power of sport on their journey to recovery.



Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud
Under the bludgeoning of chance
My head is bloody, but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Honor of the shade
And yet the menace of the years
Finds and shall find me unafraid

It matters not how stail the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll,
I am the master of my fate,
I am the captain of my soul.

About Adaptive Sport

Adaptive sport (or parasport) is competitive sport for individuals with disabilities. Adaptive sport closely resembles the sport played by able-bodied athletes, but with some modifications to the rules and equipment to better meet the needs of participants. In forming competitive teams, disabilities are generally classified by broad groups, such as physical, cognitive/developmental delays or both, allowing participants to compete against players with the same skill level.

Adaptive sport is often incorporated into the rehabilitation program of ill, wounded or injured persons. Adaptive sport competitions like the Invictus Games help currently serving members as well as veterans in overcoming their physical or mental health illness or injury. Through adaptive sport, these men and women:

- Develop a sense of belonging.
- Show increased self-esteem.
- Create an outlet for excess energy.
- Foster a sense of camaraderie with other wounded service members.
- Experience an improved quality of life.

"These Games shine a spotlight on the unquarable character of servicemen and women and their families. They highlight the competitors' "INVICTUS GAMES spirit." These Games have been about seeing

competitors sprinting for the finish line with everything they have and then

turning around to clap the last person in. They have been about teammates choosing to cross the line together. These Games have been a display of the very best of the human spirit."

- Prince Harry, established the Invictus Games Foundation



PACMOAA
LEADERSHIP

See Leadership Pulldown



CHAPTER NEWS

APRIL

Month of the Military Child Hotlink to a previous Salute Newsletter

- 01 April Fool's Day
- 02 Palm Sunday
- 05 [Gold Star Spouses day](#) /Passover begins at Sunset
- 06 Persian Gulf War Ends 1991
- 07 Good Friday
- 09 Easter Sunday
- 09 National Former POW Recognition Day
- 12 VCOC 2nd Qtr. Meeting, George C. Marshall House, Leesburg, VA, & Virtual 1000-1200
- 13 **PACMOAA 40th Anniversary Dinner Celebration**
- 14 [US Air Force Reserve Birthday \(1948\)](#)
- 18 Tax Day - Doolittle Raid on Tokyo (1942)
- 22 **Actual PACMOAA 40TH Anniversary/** Earth Day
- 23 [US Army Reserve Birthday \(1908\)](#)
- 26 MOAA Advocacy in Action In person and Virtual
- 29 Arbor Day

HAPPY APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Scotty Bruce
Bettye Hussey
Doug Weller

The APRIL ANNIVERSARY Dinner

will be held on **Thursday, April 13th**, at Roger Brown's Banquet Room, 316 High Street, Portsmouth (757) 399-5377

Sign in, Social Hour, View Memorabilia & Appetizer begins at 6 PM
Dinner Served at 7:00 PM.

Appetizer – Charcuterie Board

Buffett Menu

Harvest Salad with Assorted Dressings
Slow Roasted Brisket
Baked Salmon with Basil Sherry Cream Sauce
Mashed Potatoes and Gravy
Green Beans and Roasted Mixed Vegetables
Cake Celebrating the 40th Anniversary
Cornbread and Honey Butter
Water, Tea , & Coffee

There will be a Special Remembrance Gift to ALL Attending

Cost is \$30 (includes gratuity & tax). Cash bar available. Please make your reservation no later than **Sunday, April 9th** with Sherry Ferki at 757-922-7030 or by email at navmedarmynurse@gmail.com

A RESERVATION MADE, IS A RESERVATION PAID

If anyone needs a ride to the April dinner meeting, we would be happy to give them a ride. Call Sherry to arrange 757-922-7030.

ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM

PORTSMOUTH AREA CHAPTER

OF

MOAA

40TH ANNIVERSARY

CELEBRATION DINNER

April 13th, 2023



Program will include:

Colors presented by Churchland HS MCJROTC
 Invocation
 Star Spangled Banner
 Pledge of Allegiance
 Narrated Slide Presentation of PACMOAA since 1983
 Special Recognition of:
 Charter Member & Spouse/Surviving Spouses
 Past Presidents
 Remembering our Deceased Members & Spouses

MEMBERSHIP

Membership Update April 2023

PACMOAA had 59 paid members as of 1 April 2023, that includes our 1 new member this year, 6 life members and 1 honorary life member. At the MOAA Chapter Roundtable I attended via Zoom on 30 March, it was stressed that MOAA has 315,000 NOT in chapters!! Most of us have friends/ neighbors that are retired or former military. Our 40th Anniversary Celebration would be a wonderful time to invite them so they can have a good overview of the chapter and the many activities we participate in.

In addition to the benefit of having the multi-year payment system, it is easy to become confused about if your dues are due this year. I am sending our reminders via email, mail and phone calls to clarify if anyone still owes their dues for 2023. There are only 7 members from last year that have not paid their dues yet. If you are not sure if you've paid or not, please contact me at 757-630-5608 or navmedarmynurse@gmail.com. You can also contact our treasurer, Hans Sachse, at hsachse@earthlink.net.

This was in the last membership update, but I think it is a very valid point. Membership is an issue for all organizations now and it was pointed out at a recent meeting I attended that maybe we're emphasizing the wrong

thing when we talk to potential members. The VCOC Legislative Rep. was at the state capital frequently when the most recent General Assembly session met. He is also involved every year in the MOAA Advocacy in Action sessions with national legislators. He noted that legislative advocacy for our BENEFITS should be the emphasis of our recruitment strategy. **Ask the question, "Do you want to have benefits when you retire or to keep your benefits if you are already retired?"**

Many of the younger potential PACMOAA members do not want a social club but to belong to organizations that give back to the community. Thus, focusing on: 1) legislative advocacy for military benefits that include all Uniformed Services, National Guard and Reservists, family members and Surviving Spouses and; 2) Community Service should be our enticement to interest fellow officers and Surviving Spouses to join PACMOAA and MOAA. **Every member of PACMOAA needs to be a recruiter for us to thrive!**

I will be happy to send you a copy of our recruitment brochure and will bring some to each meeting.

Sherry Ferki
MAJ USA (Ret)

Guidelines for Paying PACMOAA Dues or **Dinner/Scholarship Online**



Members need to create and/or login to their PayPal account.

From the Account Overview page, click the Send button. If prompted for whether the money will be sent to a business or friend, enter "friend". Then Type PACMOAATreasurer@gmail.com in the block where it says "name, @username, email, or mobile" and click "next". Enter the amount to transmit and add "For PACMOAA Dues" in the note section and click "continue". Review the information, including the bank account or credit card you want the funds to come from. Press "Send payment now" when

everything looks correct.

PERSONAL AFFAIRS

APRIL 2023

This year has been difficult for many of our members and their families. In addition to Nell Walls death, 3 of our longtime members have been in the hospital and rehab recently. All have been members for 25 -37 years and would love to hear from their PACMOAA friends. For more information about Shirley or Bob Parker, please contact me.



LTC Shirley Barker USA (Ret) is in rehab again after an injury. Most of you know her from her many years at the registration table taking your payment. Cards can be mailed to her at:

Newport News Nursing and Rehabilitation Center
Room 236
12997 Nettles Drive
Newport News, VA 23602



CAPT Bob Parker, USNR (Ret) is still in rehab. He would love to hear from his friends at PACMOAA. His mailing address is:

345 Gallows Rd
Annandale, VA 22003



LtCol Bob Steorts USAF (Ret) has been in the hospital and rehab several times and is at home now with nursing care. Cards can be mailed to his home address:

5871 Harbourview Blvd. Apt.310
Suffolk, VA 23435

If you want to visit, please call Gladys first at 757-639-3198

Please keep these members and their families in your thoughts and prayers and let me know if you or any of our other members could use any assistance. Take care.

Submitted by MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret)
Personal Affairs and Surviving Spouse Liaison

Ruby Nell Wall <https://www.sturtevantfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Ruby-Nell-Wall?obId=27533384> April 4, 1935 - March 18, 2023 *Adapted for PACMOAA newsletter*



CHESAPEAKE- Ruby Nell Baxley Skipper Wall died peacefully in her home in her sleep on Saturday, March 18, 2023, just two weeks shy of her 88th birthday. Nell was born on April 4, 1935 in Marion, South Carolina, the daughter of Lee Roy Baxley and Emma Liza Ammons Baxley.

She graduated from Centenary High School. She attended the University of South Carolina for two years with her future husband, Robert Milton Wall. Nell pinned on his Ensign Bars when he graduated in 1958 with a BSME and Commission in the U.S. Navy. They were married on June 11, 1958 in Marion, SC.

Nell lived in several different states, as her husband was moved during his three years on active duty. When he transferred to the Naval Reserve, they moved to Florence, SC, where he worked for DuPont for three years. They moved to Midland, Michigan where he worked for Dow Chemical Co. Their only daughter, Catherine Maryann,

was born there. By the time Cathy was five years old, they were all active with snow skiing.

After nine years in Michigan, Nell, Robert and Cathy moved to Calhoun, GA when he was transferred to the Dow plant in GA. Nell was active in the Girl Scouts with Cathy, while Robert was there for four years. She moved to Medina, Ohio pulling a small boat they bought in Michigan, when Robert (Bob) was transferred to a Dow facility in Ohio.

Getting tired of cold weather, they moved to Chesapeake, VA when Robert took early retirement from Dow, and got a job as an engineer with NNSY in Portsmouth. Nell and Robert built/contracted a house in Stonebridge Landing, where they have lived for the past 41 years. Their daughter Cathy attended Western Branch High School, and played sax in the band, until her sudden death from cancer while she was a senior. Cathy graduated posthumously.

Nell had the opportunity to visit many states and countries with her husband: from skiing in Colorado and Pennsylvania, to sightseeing in France, Scotland, Holland, Denmark, England, the Netherlands, and Austria, while visiting with her son, Lonnie Skipper and his family when he was stationed with the Army in Germany.

Nell's hobbies included gardening, flower arranging, and boating with Robert. They were members of the Coast Guard Auxiliary for 30 years. Nell was a "Master Gardener" and a member of the Green Meadow Point Garden Club. For many years she was in charge of flowers and arrangement at Calvary Baptist Church in Portsmouth, where they were members since 2004.

Nell is survived by her husband of 65 years, son Lonnie and his wife Shelly and their daughter Stephanie.

The family received friends on Thursday, Mar. 23, from 6-7 PM at Sturtevant Funeral Home, Portsmouth. At least 7 PACMOAA members/spouses visited with Bob and their family on 23 March. A Celebration of Life service was held on Friday, Mar. 24, at 11 AM at the funeral home chapel and several PACMOAA members and

spouses attended it. Burial was in the family plot at Rose Hill Cemetery, Marion, SC. In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations be made to Calvary Baptist Church, 2117 Glasgow St., Portsmouth 23704.

Note: Nell and Bob attended many meetings over the years and always enjoyed dancing at the Christmas Gala!

From www.SturtevantFH.com

SURVIVING SPOUSE CORNER

Overview of MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter (MSSVC02) Meeting

21 March 2023

Every other month, MSSVO2 has a speaker to alternate with a social event. This month's speakers included:

- Lt. Gen. Kelly, USAF (Ret), President & CEO of MOAA
- Lt. Col Mark Belinsky, USA (Ret), Director, Currently Serving and Retired Affairs

Lt. Gen. Kelly gave an overview of MOAA- approximately 350,000 members; 45,000 surviving spouses that make up 13% of MOAA membership; 353 chapters, 6 virtual chapters; 34 councils; and only 38,000 MOAA members in chapters! He thanked the surviving spouses and council members for their great legislative advocacy efforts to finally get the widow's tax repealed. It was a great achievement, the culmination of about 20 years of efforts. He also noted he wanted to hear perspectives from all different groups of members to help guide MOAA in their efforts, "My door and email are always open to hear your perspectives".

On 29 March, MOAA will be hosting a Congressional Reception to thank the Legislators and share MOAA priorities for 2023.

1. The importance of taking care of those that are serving and those that served! 86% of new recruits come from existing military families. Those that served are "influencers" to encourage new recruits. This is the 50th Anniversary of the all-volunteer force.
2. There is continued erosion of health care benefits. Currently focusing on pharmacy reductions that significantly impact a small portion of the military community, often those with limited resource including nursing home residents and rural residents.
3. Currently serving members housing benefits were decreased 5 % with sequestrations. Inflation significantly increases this issue.

The Advocacy in Action will be in-person this year after 3 years virtually and Mark Belinsky will discuss that shortly.

Questions included several members discussing issues with DFAS. One surviving spouse had \$9000 suddenly taken out of her husband's bank account that only had \$100 in it so the money was taken from her account. No notice or explanation was given. Similar problems occurred with several attendees at the meeting. Lt Gen Kelly and then the MSSVC02 Chair requested specific info be sent to them so they can try to assist.

Lt Col Mark Belinsky gave a legislative updated and discussed several issues:

1. Remarriage Bill or Love Lives On Act introduced in 2022 and now re-introduced. Remarriage Facebook Group – **Love Lives On Act of 2023**. The purpose of bill is to allow surviving spouses to retain many of their spouses benefits should they remarry, like commissary, etc.
2. Caring for Survivors HR 1083 and S414. Goal to bring DIC up to 55% like with other federal programs. Now 43%.
3. DFAS Recruitment Pay - HR 221 & S1669 in 2022. Had good support. Has not been re-introduced as working with DOD on this issue. DoD is looking at it and how to fix it.

Gen. Kelly said to send questions per problems to MOAA Government Relations to help them keep track of number of problems and try to help. Mickey Costello said to send info to Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter at mssv02@gmail.com.

Some resources from group that may be helpful include – TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors) at 1-800-959-8277 and Surviving Spouse Advisory Council at ssacouncil@moaa.org or suzanne@moaa.org.

Mark Belinsky – Advocacy in Action 2023

Already mentioned by Gen Kelly. Focus on protecting all volunteer force with specific issues:

1. Improve housing
2. Fixing pharmacy prescription network <https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/46203/>

Information papers will be available on the MOAA website shortly. If unable to visit Washington, can still have virtual visit as in past 3 years or call legislators. When calling, if unable to speak with legislators, can ask for appointment with legislator's legislative assistance or veterans assistance aide – may have different name of each legislators office. Staff are very powerful but often young and may need more specific info.

Mark also asked everyone to go to MOAA Legislative Action Center at <https://moaa.quorum.us/> and act on:

1. **Expand National Cemetery Act** – MOAA wants to act before Arlington runs out of space and cannot protect current benefits. Good long-term solution. <https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/43785/>
2. **Caring for Survivors Act** – Discussed earlier HR 1083- referred to committee on 3/20/23. Mark reminded everyone that this will probably takes some time, like repealing the “Widows Tax”.
3. **Love Lives On Act** – not reintroduced yet.
4. **DFAS Recruitment Pay** - Mark will update us on his next visit per status.

Discussion included reminder that Congress is very concerned for budget and debt ceiling. Facebooks groups for specific bills keep you updated. It was stressed that try to edit/personalize emails you send to legislators – you can delete or add info to MOAA generated letters.

Some VA questions came up including VA Aid and Assistance program. One member mentioned that looked at Medicaid eligibility. Cory Titus and Renee Campos in MOAA government Relations Department work with VA a lot and are good resources.

Local Agency on Aging mentioned as a resource. Locally Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia at <https://www.ssseva.org/> or call at 757-461-9481.

Next meeting social get together. Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter has a program meeting every other month with a social on alternating months.

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

PACMOAA Surviving spouse Liaison and VCOC surviving spouse Liaison.

MOAA & LEGISLATIVE

MOAA President Delivers Unifying Message on Capitol Hill in Support of All Ranks, All Services <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2023-news-articles/advocacy/moaa-president-delivers-unifying-message-on-capitol-hill-in-support-of-all-ranks,-all-services/>
By: Tony Lombardo March 30, 2023

The future of the all-volunteer force depends on support today for our currently serving and veteran populations, said MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret), in an address to members of Congress, their staffs, and representatives from fellow veteran's service organizations.

MOAA hosted a March 29 reception on Capitol Hill to welcome the 118th Congress and give lawmakers a chance to meet Kelly, who [took over as MOAA's CEO in January](#). Kelly brought a message that while the association may be officer-based, MOAA's members recognize the need and responsibility to serve the entire uniformed services community, to include all branches and ranks, spouses, families, survivors, and caregivers.

“Serving the broader community certainly lets us see the importance of taking care of all who are currently serving, all who have served, and the importance of honoring and matching the commitment that those who volunteer and raised their hand made,” Kelly told the crowd.

Veterans and currently serving members will be the ones advising future generations on whether they should serve, Kelly said.

[RELATED: [MOAA Files Court Briefings to Protect Servicemembers' Financial Rights](#)]

Rep. Brandon Williams (R-N.Y.), a former Navy officer who served aboard nuclear submarines, said he spent his morning meeting with the sub fleet's junior officers of the year. He capped the day by attending MOAA's reception.

"There is nothing like being in the company of veterans," he said. "Since the day I stopped wearing the uniform, I miss the association with other veterans. So, one of the benefits of being in Congress is it's a great excuse to remake those ties."

Rep. Marc Molinaro (R-N.Y.) met with Gen. Gary North, chairman of MOAA's Board of Directors, at the March 29 reception. (Mike Morones/Staff)

Gen. Gary North, USAF (Ret), MOAA's board chairman, noted we "learn so much from each other" when lawmakers, veterans, and advocates can gather like they did March 29.

"We are in a challenging time in our world," North told the audience. "And so, whether it's the balancing of cost, whether it's the balancing of equipment, whether it's international relationships, those are very important. ... What's really important is how we make that balance work, and it's our people. And that is what MOAA represents."

The March reception served as a lead-in to [MOAA's Advocacy in Action campaign](#). In less than a month, MOAA leaders from across the country will visit Washington to meet with members of Congress to [advocate for two legislative issues](#):

1. Restoring Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to 100

Our servicemembers give 100% in service to our country, and they should not have to carry the additional burden of paying higher housing costs not covered by their allowance. Please help relieve stress on our military and help support recruitment and retention to sustain a strong all-volunteer force. [Read more about the issue here.](#)

2. Reversing Cuts to the TRICARE Pharmacy Network

These reductions to the retail pharmacy network, announced in late 2022, have created barriers to accessing prescription medications, particularly for the elderly, rural families, and those with serious medical conditions such as cancer, epilepsy, and multiple sclerosis. [Read more about the issue here](#), and [contact your legislators](#) via MOAA's [Legislative Action Center](#).

[RELATED: [MOAA Hosts Dinner to Support Crisis Relief Program](#)]

Col. Rojan Robotham, USAF, a member of MOAA's board of directors, said she valued having events like this to bring together varied viewpoints and experiences.

"I think it's really great for MOAA to host events like this and to bring in other members of the military community," she said. "We really need fellowship together. We need more conversations, storytelling about the struggles we're having, but also the potential solutions to those struggles."

[MOAA's Advocacy Campaign to Target TRICARE Pharmacy Cuts, Housing Costs](https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2023-news-articles/advocacy/moaa-advocacy-campaign-to-target-tricare-pharmacy-cuts,-housing-costs/)
<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2023-news-articles/advocacy/moaa-advocacy-campaign-to-target-tricare-pharmacy-cuts,-housing-costs/>

By: Dan Merry February 15, 2023 *Excerpts from article below:*

The path to protecting the all-volunteer force amid a [generational recruiting crisis](#) begins with a simple message: We will honor the promises made to those who serve.

As MOAA begins its plans to return in-person to Capitol Hill for its yearly spring advocacy campaign, we've identified two critical issues where we are falling short on key promises. Issues where small changes will mean big improvements to the lives of servicemembers past and present. Issues where the DoD can begin to rebuild trust with all groups and stem the erosion of earned benefits.

Issues where members like you can make a difference.

Join MOAA's Advocacy in Action this April as we send a clear message to lawmakers: Now is not the time to trim critical programs at the expense of those who need help the most:

- As servicemembers face skyrocketing rents and mortgage payments, it's time to reverse cuts to the Basic Allowance for Housing, restoring the benefit to cover 100% of these expenses.
- As TRICARE Pharmacy users deal with drug shortages and high drug costs, it's time to restore the thousands of brick-and-mortar pharmacies, including many locally owned shops in rural areas, to keep this crucial benefit strong.

[TAKE ACTION: [Help MOAA Fight Cuts to the TRICARE Pharmacy Network](#)]

At the end of April, MOAA will send teams of state council leaders to Washington, D.C., to meet with their legislators on the Hill. With those leaders will be members of MOAA's Board of Directors and headquarters staff — a contingent of 225 people with sights on contacting every one of the 535 congressional offices.

We want to make the most of this opportunity to return to the Hill but we cannot rely solely on these visits — we need your help to increase our voice. You can make a remarkable difference from home before or after our AiA event.

NOTE: For those that cannot travel to D.C., virtual visits as PACMOAA has done the past 3 years, in-person visits at legislators local office, or phone calls are fine!

[GET INVOLVED: [How to Make Your Voice Heard](#)]

More details on our primary goals for Advocacy in Action this year:

1. Restore Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to 100%

Our servicemembers give 100% in service to our country and they should not have to carry the additional burden of paying higher housing costs not covered by their allowance. Please help relieve stress on our military and help support recruitment and retention to sustain a strong all-volunteer force.

Background:

- In 2005, Congress eliminated servicemembers' out-of-pocket (OOP) housing expenses, setting BAH at 100% of rental and utility costs.
- The 2015 NDAA, responding to budget pressures under sequestration, allowed DoD to reduce the rate to 95%, which was phased in 1% each year from 2015 to 2019. The [DoD Budget Overview for FY 2015](#) noted this reduction of BAH would save the DoD \$5 billion over five years.
- According to FY 2023 DoD tables, an E-5 with dependents will pay \$1,332 a year OOP, on average. The average O-3 with dependents will pay \$1,596 a year. Examples of higher ranks for those who served a 20-year career find a retired E-7 with dependents will have paid \$30,240 in housing costs, and a retired O-5 with dependents will have paid \$42,320.

It's important to understand that DoD's compensation strategy segments pay to help minimize tax liability for the member, and eventual retirement calculations favoring the government. As such, basic pay is typically set lower than for civilian counterparts with Basic Allowance for Subsistence and BAH separately allocated to specifically cover those costs in a mutually beneficial manner.

When 95% BAH does not cover housing and utility costs, which have skyrocketed based on inflation rates, the already lower basic pay or subsistence portions of the compensation package are forced to cover the difference. This leaves some military families stressed in other family budget areas such as food, clothing, child care, retirement planning. Etc. Military families should not have to prioritize and choose one necessity over another.

[RELATED: [BAH Rates for 2023](#)]

2. Reverse TRICARE Pharmacy Cuts – See [RELATED: [MOAA Leads Effort to Reverse Pharmacy Cuts](#)]

How do these reductions in BAH and pharmacy support impact recruiting for our all-volunteer force?

All services are experiencing challenges with recruiting. The eligibility pool continues to shrink and the propensity to serve remains low, exacerbated by more than 54% of parents who do not recommend their child for military service. Military families are more inclined to recommend service; but in a 2021 poll, the [Military Family Advisory Network](#) found 62.9% of military or veteran families would recommend the military — down from 74.5% in 2019. Looking forward, [Brookings reports](#) a decline in birth rates that will likely not correct itself: in 2007, for every 1,000 women of childbearing age, roughly 70 gave birth; in 2020 that number was 56. No one should be surprised in 15 years that the pool of eligibles will be even smaller.

MOAA and other like-minded associations continue to be concerned about the continued erosion of service-earned benefits and the impact on recruiting. Making the servicemember cover 5% or more of their housing costs to save money for other DoD programs does not help servicemembers manage their finances and does not help the recruiter's position with prospective recruits who hear about eroding benefits directly from their influencers. Additionally, changes in access to health care, enrollment fees for retirees, reduced access to pharmacies, and attacks on COLA won't compel retirees to encourage someone to join the military.

These challenges, and others you know from your experiences, must be addressed by Congress through a strategic lens focusing on the recruiting process. In that effort, we must educate our legislators to understand this foundational question, "Are we, as a nation, keeping our promises to those who raised their hand to serve in the uniformed services?"

In addition to the two topics above regarding BAH and pharmacy access, coupled with a clear focus on recruiting as the most essential pipeline to our nation's all-volunteer force, MOAA will prepare comprehensive fact sheets to articulate these issues, which we will leave with the congressional offices during our AiA visits. These fact sheets will also be available to all MOAA members via our website to help in any engagements you might be able to arrange while your legislators are home.

Add Your Voice to the Cause

Get involved and make sure your interests are addressed. Because the larger our voice is, the greater our impact will be.

Here's Why the TRICARE Pharmacy Cuts Could Threaten All Beneficiaries

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2023-news-articles/advocacy/heres-why-the-tricare-pharmacy-cuts-could-threaten-all-beneficiaries/>

By: Karen Ruedisueli

March 22, 2023

MOAA continues efforts to restore the TRICARE pharmacy network by including the issue as part of our spring [Advocacy in Action \(AiA\) event](#), where more than 200 MOAA members will visit congressional offices to generate support for MOAA's legislative priorities.

With the new TPharm5 contract, the TRICARE pharmacy network has been reduced by nearly 25% – from about 55,000 locations last year to 42,000 locations as of February 2023. The cut was driven by reduced network requirements within the contract – a cost-savings measure.

[NEW ADVOCACY IN ACTION REQUEST: [Help MOAA Fight Cuts to the TRICARE Pharmacy Network](#)]

Many independent pharmacies report contract terms that would not even cover their costs to procure medications, forcing them to choose between leaving the network or serving TRICARE beneficiaries at a financial loss.

Most beneficiaries won't be immediately impacted by this cut – healthy families in metro areas still have plenty of options for occasional medication needs and common maintenance medications, including the TRICARE Home Delivery program. However, the narrowed pharmacy network diminishes TRICARE protections in the event of serious illness or injury or more complex needs, needs due to aging – in this way, it presents a threat to all beneficiaries.

There are approximately 66,000 retail pharmacies in the U.S. Less than a year ago, there was an 83% chance a beneficiary's pharmacy would be in the network. Now, that sits at 64%, and it could drop to 53% based on minimum contract requirements.

[SHARE YOUR STORY: [Have the TRICARE Pharmacy Cuts Affected Your Care?](#)]

Network cuts also disproportionately impact rural communities, which tend to have a lower presence of large chain drug stores and are more often served by independent pharmacies and Walmart, which left the network in December 2021. Many rural residents must drive past Walmart and their community pharmacies to get to a network pharmacy for acute medication needs.

TRICARE's narrowed network also falls short of a key benchmark – FEP Blue, the Blue Cross Blue Shield plan that covers two-thirds of Federal Employee Health Benefit Program (FEHBP) participants. FEP Blue boasts more than 55,000 pharmacies in its national network, and TRICARE benefits should be on par with the benchmark set for civilians who serve in the federal government.

Advocacy in Action messaging will present the pharmacy network reduction in the context of a series of TRICARE cuts that have eroded the benefit in recent years, including an unprecedented TRICARE Select enrollment fee, a higher catastrophic cap, medical encounter copays that have doubled in many instances, and a new pharmacy formulary Tier 4 that eliminates coverage for certain drugs approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The military health care benefit is an obligation our nation has incurred to sustain the all-volunteer force. Fulfilling this obligation is particularly important during the current recruiting crisis when our nation needs key influencers, including current and former servicemembers and their families, to endorse military service. Cutting the TRICARE benefit for those who have served for decades not only betrays uniformed services retirees, it also risks reducing their likelihood of recommending service to the next generation.

Take part in MOAA's Advocacy in Action campaign by contacting your lawmakers today -- even if you've already contacted them on this issue using previous links to our Legislative Action Center, you can still [click to add your voice again](#) as part of AiA efforts. Keep up with new details on this and other legislative efforts at [MOAA's Advocacy News page](#).

Submitted by: MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret)

Overview of MOAA Chapter Roundtable on Advocacy in Action (AiA)

I participated in the monthly chapter roundtable on 30 March 2023. Five MOAA Chapter Affairs and Government Relations members participated. **Frank Michael** (Program Director, Council and Chapter Affairs) was the MC and speakers included him, **Jim Carmen** (VP Council and Chapter Support), and **Dan Merry** (VP, Government Relations).

Updates were given - continued delay in implementation of the **new committee module** (CM) (instrumental in membership activities), reminders on different awards and grants, and leadership training activities. The plan is to train membership chairs to be able to use the new system once it is online.

The **Advocacy in Action** position papers were not available on the website as of 1 April but should be available at <https://www.moaa.org/content/take-action/advocacy-in-action-2023/> soon. Several comments Dan Merry made were very helpful. He stressed that only 18% of members in Congress have served so we need to train and educate the legislators on issues related to benefits. To be effective with AiA, making meaningful progress and establishing relationships are essential. Contacts with legislators may be in person, virtually, via phone or emails. Trying to find some common ground helps establish rapport. It can be as simple as liking the same football team.

Less than 1% of bills presented in the last Congress were passed and some AiA issues have been worked on for some time like the Richard Starr Act! Another tip was to “make sure your message is manageable, trainable and repeatable”. It needs to be easy to understand. It is important to focus on the 2 AiA topics that were discussed in

detail in article “MOAA President Delivers Unifying Message on Capitol Hill *in Support of All Ranks, All Services.*”



Please continue to send in the postcards in the MOAA magazine and send emails when sent Action Alerts by MOAA. **The April issue of Military Officer contains letters to: “Tear Out, Sign, Stamp and Mail In”:** to the Senate Majority and Minority Leaders, Speaker of the House, and Minority Leader of the House.

Reminders are in almost every PACMOAA newsletter about current issues that you need to **Take Action** on. *Please continue to send in letters and emails!*

Submitted by MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret)

2nd VP/Membership Chair and active in AiA campaign past 3 years

VCOC

VCOC 2023 DATES to REMEMBER

Second Quarter Meeting: April 12, meeting: In person and virtual George C. Marshall House, Leesburg VA

Annual Congressional Appreciation Luncheon: Date, times and location TBD

Third Quarter Meeting: July 12, 10:00am - 12:00pm, meeting type TBD

Fourth Quarter Meeting: October 11, 10:00am - 12:00pm, Biennial Luncheon, meeting type TBD

Submitted by CDR Ken App, USN (Ret)

COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

Update From Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless (PVH) Executive Director from Mid-March 2023

In March of 2020, the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, PVH made the decision to continue operating. We transitioned swiftly and adeptly into our current contingency operations with no interruptions in services for our clients.

Over this time, we have been able to expand our service delivery to ensure our homeless brothers and sisters have access to basic, protective needs.

Under our “Service Center-to-Shelter” operational model, we provide 24-hour support and services, including—

- Service Center hours of operations expansion.
7AM-6PM, 7-days a week. (Formerly Monday-Friday 8AM-2PM, no weekends).
- Temporary, stationary facility for night sheltering.
No more weekly rotations to different locations. We now provide year-round night sheltering instead of six (6) months of shelter.
- Client coaching and navigation based on barrier assessments with referrals to partner agencies for housing, mental health and substance use treatment opportunities.

Our "more than a shelter" approach includes creating barrier assessments when individuals enter shelter and working with them to begin to address their barriers and move toward housing and self-sufficiency.

It is our goal to continue to operate our new service delivery model until circumstances no longer permit. Your donations and support help us achieve this goal and we are touched by your desire to help. Thank you for partnering with us.

For all the people who can't tell you personally what a difference you're making in their lives, I say, Thank you!

Please feel free to use as you deem appropriate and let me know if you need something else or something different.

Again, thank you for your support!

Best,

Darlene

Darlene Washington

Reminder: As you can see from the message above, PVH has provided assistance to the homeless since the pandemic began. PACMOAA has supported this organization since they first spoke to our group in 2011. Please consider bringing a donation to our April 40th Anniversary Celebration meeting. Cash or items listed in our Dec 2022 newsletter like disposal gloves (non-latex), toilet paper, personal items (men’s and women’s body wash – full size), etc.

Note: PVH is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 corporation governed by a twenty-one (21) member independent Board of Directors.

Pharmacy Services Update

from NMCP website on 3/27/23 The outpatient pharmacy at NMCP and the Outpatient Pharmacy Call Center (757-953-0258) has expanding their hours of operation to Monday - Saturday from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. The Branch Health Clinic pharmacy hours will remain the same.


Pharmacy Instructions

Naval Medical Center Portsmouth and Clinics



New Prescriptions

All prescriptions must be submitted electronically by your provider.
Some exceptions apply. Ask your pharmacy representative for more information.

<p style="text-align: center; color: #0056b3; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">Cell Phone</p> <p>Activate your prescriptions using Q-Anywhere during your selected pharmacy's work hours.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Text “get in line” to (833) 217-2199 or scan the QR Code and follow the prompts.</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;">  <p style="font-size: small;">You will receive a text message when your prescriptions are ready for pickup.</p> </div> <p style="text-align: center;">Text “I am here” upon arrival at the pharmacy you selected and listen for your number.</p>	<p style="color: #0056b3; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">No Cell Phone</p> <p>Call the Pharmacy Call Center at 757-953-0258 during your preferred pharmacy’s work hours and follow the prompts to talk with a representative.</p> <p>All pharmacies can be reached between 8 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. Monday– Friday.</p>
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For more information please visit the NMCP Pharmacy Website at <https://portsmouth.tricare.mil/Health-Services/Pharmacy> or call (757) 953-0258.

<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Refill Prescriptions</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0; text-decoration: underline;">Call The Refill Line</p> <p style="font-size: 1.1em; margin: 5px 0 0 0;">(757) 953-6337</p> <p style="font-size: 1.1em; margin: 0 0 0 0;">TOLL-FREE (866) 285-1008</p>	<p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Renew Prescriptions</p> <p style="font-size: 1.2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0; text-decoration: underline;">Contact your provider</p> <p style="font-size: 0.9em; margin: 5px 0 0 0;">If your current prescription has no refills remaining, you must contact your provider for a prescription renewal.</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0 0 0 0;">March 6, 2023</p>
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Month of the Military Child

Month of the Military Child is observed each **April** to honor and celebrate military children and youth for their service, commitment, and sacrifice in support of the Army's mission. The observance reiterates the Military’s commitment to provide quality care and positive youth development for a bright future. The April 2023 observance has the theme, **“Honoring the Past, Treasuring the Present, Shaping the Future”**



Naval Medical Center Portsmouth Visitor and Masking Policy

At Naval Medical Center Portsmouth (NMCP), the safety of our staff and patients is our highest priority.

As we continue to monitor our local COVID-19 trends, we will continue to update our visitor and masking policies.



Patients are permitted healthy visitors only (Visitors must be free from fevers, coughs, and shortness of breath).



Patients and visitors, ages 2 and older, are required to wear a face mask if you have:

- Suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection or other respiratory symptoms (e.g., runny nose, cough, sneezing, fever).
- Been in close contact with a COVID-19 infected person within the last 10 days.
- Been advised by a medical provider or public health authority to wear a mask.



Visitors must wash their hands or use hand sanitizer when entering and exiting patient rooms.

- In-person visitation is not permitted for COVID-19 confirmed patients.

- End-of-life situations will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

March 21, 2023



Above: President Bruce LaLonde giving the Service Bear to Bob Brewer

PROGRAMS

- April 13th** PACMOAA 40TH Anniversary Celebration!!! Mark Your Calendars!!!
- May 11th** CAPT Tim Thompson, USN, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, Pharmacy Dept Head
- June 8th** Scholarship Awards Dinner – Tentative - Local University ROTC Professor of Military/Naval Science
- July 16th (Tentatively)** Joint Brunch with Hampton Roads and Peninsular Chapters, Location TBD



Submitted by:
COL Hal Hostetler, USA (Ret)

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

With the beginning of the season of spring and the budding of the trees, the blooming of flowers and the approach of Easter, I am reminded that we need to be thankful for the wonders of nature that our God has given us that renews this time of the year. To help us to remain grateful, I offer a verse from the Cantic of Daniel (3: 19).

Prayer of The Three Young Men (vs:52-60)

Let the earth bless the Lord.
Praise and exalt him above all forever.
Mountains and hills, bless the Lord.
Everything growing from the earth, bless the Lord.
You springs, bless the Lord.
Seas and rivers, bless the Lord.
You dolphins and all water creatures, bless the Lord.
All you birds of the air, bless the Lord.
All you beast, wild and tame, bless the Lord.
You sons of men, bless the Lord.



Submitted by
CAPT Bob Brewer,
USN (Ret)
Chaplin



CDR Ken App, USN (Ret)
Salute Editor

THAT'S A WRAP FOR APRIL 2023

MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

Please fill out the form below if any contact information has changed and submit it to Sherry Ferki or Ken App.

PACMOAA MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM 2023

FULL NAME: _____ NICKNAME: _____

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

STATUS: Active Retired Former Surviving Spouse

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

HOME PHONE: _____ CELL PHONE: _____

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

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

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

<u>Please circle payment plan you select:</u>	Discount	15%	20%
			<u>Best Value</u>
Membership Category	1 Year	2 Year	3Year
Retired/Active/Vet Regular (Voting Member)	\$25.00	\$42.50	\$60.00
Surviving Spouse (Voting Member)	\$20.00	\$34.00	\$48.00
Active Duty (Non-Voting Member)	\$5.00	\$8.50	\$12.00

Mail payment to: PACMOAA at PACMOAA, PO Box 5353 in Portsmouth, VA 23703

Or pay via PayPal:

From the PayPal Account Overview page, click the Send button. If prompted for whether the money will be sent to a business or friend, enter "friend". Type PACMOAATreasurer@gmail.com in the block where is says "name, @username, email, or mobile" and click "next". Enter the amount to transmit and add "For PACMOAA Dues" in the note section and click "continue". Review the information, including the bank account or credit card you want the funds to come from. Press "Send payment now" when everything looks correct.

DATE: _____ SIGNATURE: _____