



The Salute Online



Monthly newsletter of the Portsmouth Area Chapter, an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America, serving Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Suffolk, Smithfield, Franklin, and surrounding counties, Virginia, since 1983. Dinner meetings are the Second Thursday of each month except July and August. Although MOAA and PACMOAA actively lobby legislatures for all US uniformed services members, we are nonpartisan and do not participate in political activities.

VOLUME XXXXIII Issue X

LEARN MORE AT PACMOAA.ORG

DECEMBER 2024

The Mission: PACMOAA supports the Military Community through legislative advocacy, mentoring youth, and community involvement.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Bruce LaLonde CPA
Capt. (Ret) USN
757-241-3026

PACMOAA Family: As we close out 2024 with our Christmas dinner on Dec 12th, I'd like to thank the fantastic and always supportive PACMOAA leadership team for a wonderful year. During our November business meeting we elected our Board for the next two years and took time to reflect on our accomplishments --highlighted with PACMOAA earning 2 Five Star Communications awards and the 2023 Five Star Level of Excellence Award.

Let's get ready for 2025 , by ending 2024 with 2 hours of festive holiday music and an amazing buffet meal at Roger Brown's...Anchors aweigh...Bruce

Right: CAPT LaLonde presents the Leadership Bear to Mrs. Mary Snyder



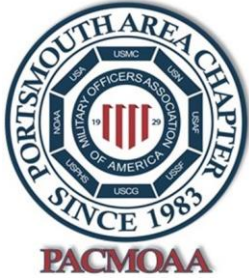
Below L-R The 2025 Leadership Team: COL Irv Lindley, CDR Scott Dickinson, CDR Mike Riley, CDR Ken App, MAJ Sherry Ferki, COL Bill Smith, CAPT Bruce LaLonde, Mrs. Mary Snyder, CDR Hans Sachse, & CAPT Bob Brewer. CDR David Von Rump is not pictured



Pictured above are the MOAA awards recently received, MAJ Sherry Ferki (center) is holding the 14th Consecutive Five Levels of Excellence Award, with CDR Ken App & Mary Snyder are holding the Five Star MOAA Communications Awards for Newsletter and Website.

PACMOAA LEADERSHIP

See Pulldown



CHAPTER NEWS

DECEMBER

- 07 PEARL HARBOR DAY
- 09 FEDVIP Open Season Ends [BENEFEDS | Federal Benefits Enrollment \(FEDVIP, FLTCIP, FSAFEDS\)](#)
- 12 PACMOAA Christmas Gala** – See next page
- 16 Battle of the Bulge 1944
- 17 Wright Brothers
- 21 1st Day of Winter
- 25 CHRISTMAS
- 26 Hanukkah
- 26 KWANZAA
- 31 NEW YEAR’S EVE

HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Ron Fritz Hal Hostetler, Jr
Bruce LaLonde Lois Yandle

The December Christmas Gala

will be held on **Thursday, December 12th** at Roger Brown’s Banquet Room, 316 High Street, Portsmouth (757) 399-5377

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

Buffett Menu

- Harvest Salad*
- Slow Roasted Brisket*
- Baked Salmon w/Sherry cream sauce*
- Mashed Potatoes and Gravy*
- Roasted Veggies*
- APPLE PIE AND PECAN PIES**

Tea, Sweet Tea, Coffee, Lemonade and Water
Corn Bread and Honey Butter

Cost is \$30 (includes gratuity & tax). Cash bar available. Please make your reservation no later than **Sunday, December 8th** with Sherry Ferki at 757-922-7030 or by email at navmedarmynurse@gmail.com.

A RESERVATION MADE IS A RESERVATION PAID

Right: scan the QR Code to find out more about PACMOAA



Above: Angela Wilson, CWO Karl Wilson, Mrs. Brenda Hostetler



PACMOAA TODAY.
PACMOAA, a five star level of exce...
www.pacmoaa.org

DECEMBER PROGRAM

THE CHRISTMAS GALA 12 December 2024



Sounds of Time Band “based out of Tidewater VA is an exciting Las Vegas Style Musical Tribute Vocal group / "BAND" honoring music from the 50's through the 90's. With their incredible vocals recreating songs of the era. costume changes and stage presence you are teleported back to a nostalgic magical time where Legends like Frank Sinatra, Johnny Cash, Marty Robbins. Patsy Cline, Frankie Valli, Ray Charles and yes, Elvis Presley dominated the music scene”

<http://www.youtube.com/@soundsoftimeband5655>.

The band is made up of retired or former military men and they always end with a patriotic song!

NOTE: The band will play for 2 hours and will play a variety of music including Christmas music. They will start playing at 7 pm.



Toys for Tots -The Churchland MCJROTC have participated in our annual Christmas Gala for many years. The cadets join us for dinner along with their lead instructor, LtCol Paul Pratt, USMC (Ret).

Please bring new, unwrapped toys, **WITH BATTERIES** if required.



Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless (PVH) – Donations are collected at every meeting. See article in November newsletter and page 10 for more information.

Picture to left from Christmas 2023 with PVH Executive Directive Director, Darlene Washington.

MEMBERSHIP

WELCOME ABOARD

Cpt. Sacha Fountain, USAF (Ret) and her husband Champ from Carrollton

PACMOAA currently has 64 paid members, 50 regular members and 14 surviving spouses. We will start collecting dues in January 2025. If you're not sure if you owe any money, please contact our treasurer, Hans Sachse, or me. A dues renewal/membership application form is attached at the end of the newsletter. Feel free to share this application with potential new members.

At the MOAA Monthly Chapter Roundtable session on 21 November, the update on MOAA's transition to a new membership data system was that it is progressing well and should be accessible within a week or two!! The membership data system includes a monthly report on new MOAA members that are potential chapter members. The previous MOAA system was closed at the end of March.

As has been mentioned frequently, membership is essential for a chapter to function effectively! PACMOAA, as do many of chapters in the Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC), has many older members that are having health

Please Memorize the **VETERAN CRISIS HOTLINE Dial 988 then press 1**

issues. Currently, the primary way potential members in PACMOAA's area find out about our chapter is by word of mouth. Inviting an eligible colleague, friend, or neighbor to a dinner meeting is a great way to introduce them to PACMOAA. Potential members can attend a dinner meeting for ½ the usual price. *Please consider inviting potential members to our Christmas Gala.* This is a great way to share the camaraderie of our group with others. Remind them that MOAA keeps them updated on national issues, PACMOAA provides updates on state and local issues, including pharmacy issues!

Twice a year PACMOAA can send a request to MOAA for an email blast to be sent out to potential chapter members inviting them to a specific chapter meeting. I requested one to be sent out for our October meeting as this topic "Every Life Needs a Battle Plan" applies to all of us! Unfortunately, I had only one response and that person wasn't able to attend the meeting. Another blast will be sent out for our January meeting when CAPT Jim Carman, USN (Ret) from MOAA will visit.

I bring membership brochures to each meeting and can mail you some if that would be helpful.

REMINDER: Many members include donations for our **SCHOLARSHIP FUND** with their dues and/or dinner payments and this can be done **in-person, via mail, or online.** The students are very appreciative of any assistance they can obtain to help with their college expenses!

Reminder per Guidelines for Paying PACMOAA Dues/Meals/etc. 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". 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/ SURVIVING SPOUSE

IN MEMORIUM

LTC George R. Van Laethem, USA (Ret)



CHESAPEAKE—George Richard Van Laethem, 72, passed away peacefully on October 26, 2024. He was born in Ensley, Alabama to the late Fernand and Jane Van Laethem.

A proud Army "brat" who traveled the world with his parents, George graduated from W.T. Woodson High School in 1970 and matriculated to Virginia Military Institute (VMI). Completing VMI, he was commissioned in the US Army as a Field Artilleryman in 1974. He defended our country for 20 years, serving with distinction. Retiring in 1994, George continued to serve our country as a Joint Forces Command defense contractor.

George settled his family in Chesapeake, VA. There he began a different kind of service that involved mentoring young people. He loved coaching softball and soccer, eventually becoming the JV Girls Soccer Coach at Western Branch High School. He also served on Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, ensuring citizens young and old had a wide variety of activities and resources at their disposal. George also spent 12 years on the Planning Commission for the City of Chesapeake, where he championed controlled and sustainable growth.

Officially retiring in 2013, George spent his remaining years traveling with Anna; visiting his grandchildren; volunteering with the Republican Party of Chesapeake; enjoying a chili dog at Ray's Doghouse on Saturdays; and then watching the University of Alabama play football. He enjoyed all things Crimson Tide. Roll Tide Roll!

Devoted to his family and friends, loyal without question and a great patriot, George will be greatly missed.

He is survived by his wife of 43 years, Anna; his daughter Ashley Hyman (Alan); and two grandchildren, Tripp and Amelia.

A funeral service was held 3:00 p.m. Friday, November 1, at New Creation United Methodist Church, 4320 Bruce Rd., Chesapeake. The family will receive friends an hour prior at the church. A reception followed the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Women's Soccer team at VMI, in care of the VMI Keydet Club, P. O. Box 932, Lexington, VA 24450. Condolences may be registered at BWFosterFuneralHome.com.

From [Obituary | George R. Van Laethem of Chesapeake, Virginia](#) | [B.W. FOSTER FUNERAL HOME](#)

George was a PACMOAA member for 10 years. Our thoughts and prayers are with Anna and her family.

IN MEMORIUM

Margaret "Peggy" Moran



Funeral info on Margaret Moran from funeral home website is incorrect per her son. The funeral will be on December 16th, 2024 at 1100 at Church of the Resurrection in Portsmouth, located at 3501 Cedar Lane, Portsmouth 23703. No other info that I know of is available.

Mrs. Moran was the surviving spouse of CAPT Eugene "Gene" Moran, USCG (Ret) and she joined PACMOAA after his death. Gene joined PACTROA shortly after the chapter formed in 1983 and died in 2010. When MAJ Ferki first joined PACTROA in 2000, Gene was very active in the chapter and served as a board member multiple times. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family.

Surviving Spouse Corner: A Season to Be Grateful

November 05, 2024 By Susan Collins, Surviving Spouse Advisory Council member

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/member-spotlight/surviving-spouse-corner-a-season-to-be-grateful/>

The holidays are filled with special family times that include beautiful memories. These memories can be sweet and make you all warm inside, but they also can cause sad emotions relating to the loss of a loved one.

As Thanksgiving approaches, it can be beneficial to focus effort and energy on what you are grateful for in your "new life" since the loss of a loved one. I am grateful for:

- The enduring and unwavering support of my family, friends, and community — as a military surviving spouse, these are near and far.
- My good health that allows me to support my family and grandchildren as they grieve and help others as well.
- Being able to enjoy every new day. To be able to walk daily and enjoy meeting people, nature, trails, lakes, the ocean, sunrises, and sunsets.
- Beautiful memories and our legacy that I can pass down to my children and grandchildren.
- The strength and all the beauty life has to offer.
- My resilience to persevere.
- My faith. I look forward to meeting my spouse again.
- All life's experiences. These experiences, whether they are good or bad, shape us throughout this life. They keep us alive.

As the holiday season approaches, I wish everyone good health and happiness and a wonderful Thanksgiving that is shared with family, friends, and great memories.



Submitted by:

Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret)
PACMOAA Personal Affairs Chair & Surviving Spouse Liaison,
VCOC Surviving Spouse Liaison

MOAA & LEGISLATIVE

DoD Agency Names Top Priorities for State-Level Family Support in 2025

By: Kevin Lilley November 06, 2024 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/spouse-and-family/dod-agency-names-top-priorities-for-state-level-family-support-in-2025/>

The DoD agency responsible for working with state lawmakers on policies to support military families made few changes to its list of top priorities for 2025, continuing its focus on MOAA-backed efforts involving childcare, health care, and economic concerns.

The [Defense-State Liaison Office](#)'s 10 key issue areas for the new year:

- Access to quality family childcare
- Spouse employment and economic opportunities
- Concurrent juvenile jurisdiction
- State support for families with special education needs
- Open enrollment flexibility
- Defining "armed forces" in state policy
- Military family anti-discrimination status
- State response to military interpersonal violence
- Military representation on state boards and councils
- Remote drivers license and vehicle registration renewal

The last item is the only new one for the 2025 list. Thirty-six states already allow license extensions for residents in military service, according to [a DSLO fact sheet](#), but more could be done to eliminate the need for in-person registration or renewal, which could involve "significant travel costs, consuming valuable vacation time, or missing school days."

How You Can Help

MOAA does not advocate at the state level, but the association has a long track record for supporting military families via its national lobbying efforts. The House version of the must-pass FY 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) [includes several MOAA-supported provisions](#), such as improved employment flexibility for military spouses working in the federal government, expanded child care options for military spouses seeking employment and more locations for the In-Home Child Care Pilot, and expansion of the Basic Needs Allowance to support more military families at or near the federal poverty line for their region.

[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Support the Junior Enlisted Pay Increase in the House NDAA](#)]

Want to do more? Consider [joining your local MOAA chapter](#) and becoming active in state-level legislative advocacy, or connect with your [DSLO regional liaison](#) to learn more about priorities in your state.

Please Memorize the **VETERAN CRISIS HOTLINE Dial 988 then press 1**

Find out more about the DSLO priorities in this year and previous years, including discussion points and best practices, [at this link](#).

NOTE: The DSLO Priorities for 2025 were reviewed at the MOAA State Legislative Forum on 15 October. I will be happy to share the slide show they presented. Contact Sherry Ferki at navmedarmynruse@gmail.com if interested.

What the Year-End Legislative Sprint May Mean for Your Pay and Benefits

By: Kevin Lilley November 26, 2024 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/advocacy/what-the-year-end-legislative-sprint-may-mean-for-your-pay-and-benefits/>

The 118th Congress will return to Capitol Hill the week of Dec. 2 and is set to end its work on or before Dec. 20. Lawmakers in this lame-duck session have a long list of tasks left to accomplish in that short span, many of which will affect the pay and benefits of those who serve and have served, their families, and their survivors.

As legislators and their staffs scramble, MOAA will continue its work across multiple channels to preserve service-earned benefits and strengthen military readiness. While this will take many forms – from [supporting new legislation near the end of the session](#) to pushing [older bills past the finish line](#) – three key priorities are taking shape as the year winds down.

Here's a look at these areas, what the outcomes might mean for you in the coming year and beyond, and how you can support MOAA's efforts. Keep up with the latest on all these issues and more at [MOAA's Advocacy News](#) page.

The NDAA

What: The annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) serves as a vehicle for many MOAA-backed legislative priorities, and the FY 2025 version is no exception. The House-passed version includes:

- A 15% pay raise for junior enlisted servicemembers, in addition to the 4.5% pay boost for all ranks – a meaningful step toward [strengthening the current and future force](#).
- A restoration of the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to cover 100% of housing costs, albeit for a single year; an expansion of the Basic Needs Allowance (BNA) to reach more lower-income servicemembers; and a review of Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) rates aimed at assisting military families.
- TRICARE updates such as adding pregnancy as a Qualifying Life Event ([QLE](#)) under a pilot program, and improvements designed to [align family planning benefits with commercial plans](#).
- [Family support](#) ranging from more in-home child care locations to better benefits for DoD child care employees to flexibility for federally employed military spouses seeking to keep their position during a PCS move.

[RELATED: [MOAA Leads Effort to Address Military Spouse Employment Challenges in Federal Workforce](#)]

So What: The first NDAA passed Congress in 1961, and an annual bill has passed every year since. But the final form of this year's legislation is far from clear – the full Senate did not vote on its version and likely will vote on a compromise bill instead. MOAA will remain active in these negotiations, ensuring lawmakers do not strip or weaken critical provisions as part of any rushed compromise.

Now What: MOAA members should remain engaged with their representatives on the many important issues that make up the NDAA. MOAA's Legislative Action Center offers several prewritten messages that can be

sent with only a few clicks and convey your feelings as a constituent; these messages can be personalized for a greater impact:

- [Support a Substantial Pay Raise for Junior Enlisted](#)
- [Support a TRICARE Pregnancy QLE Pilot Program](#)
- [Pay Full Housing Costs for Servicemembers](#)

The Budget

What: Continuing a trend lasting decades, Congress did not pass a budget before the end of the fiscal year and instead put forth a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the federal government running. That resolution runs out Dec. 20 – just before the end of the congressional session – meaning lawmakers will need to pass a full budget by that point, pass another CR ... or allow the government to shut down.

So What: A shutdown would prove disastrous for servicemembers who'd work without pay, and for veterans and retirees seeking care and benefits from agencies which would be working with only the most essential personnel available. But a follow-up CR comes with its own long list of problems – misaligned funds leading to waste across DoD and other departments, a full stop on new construction that could benefit quality of life programs, and potential disruptions to training and other military activities which would denigrate mission readiness.

[RELATED: [Readiness, Benefits Remain Under Threat Despite Short-Term Budget Fix](#)]

Now What: By passing full DoD and VA appropriations as part of a comprehensive (if overdue) FY 2025 budget, lawmakers can show their true commitment to supporting our servicemembers and veterans. MOAA will continue its work with the 118th Congress on this issue and stands ready to press the 119th Congress to move faster on these critical budget bills to avoid uncertainty and confusion for the wider uniformed services community.

The Dole Act

What: Many of Congress' year-end legislative priorities will take the form of omnibus bills, and the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act ([H.R. 8371](#)) is a prime example. The Dole Act, supported by MOAA and more than 50 other organizations, represents a bipartisan bundle of veteran and caregiver benefit improvements that will provide a lifeline to some of those who need one the most – especially those who rely on VA benefits as their main source of support. Already long delayed, MOAA's work to move the bill forward recently saw some success with [overwhelming House passage Nov. 18](#).

[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Support the Dole Act](#)]

So What: The bill includes upgrades to all manner of support systems: Pilot programs designed to expand VA-provided assisted living options, improved at-home care for aging veterans, multiple improvements to caregiver support programs, and more important changes for homeless veterans, VA employment programs, survivor benefits, and suicide prevention efforts. Bottom line: The 118th Congress has yet to pass meaningful, wide-ranging veterans legislation since it was sworn in nearly two years ago, and veterans and their families cannot afford to see this bill fail to reach the president's desk.

Now What: Unlike the must-pass NDAA and the looming shutdown, the Dole Act risks falling off the legislative radar during a busy year-end session. MOAA needs your help in keeping it top of mind for your legislators – [send a message today](#) on behalf of millions of fellow servicemembers, veterans, and caregivers who will (or soon could) benefit from these critical program improvements.

VCOC AND JLC

Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) will have its first Quarter Virtual Meeting on Tuesday, January 14th.

Ken App
 CDR USN (Ret)
 PACMOAA Legislative Representative

COMMUNITY

PACMOAA MEMBERS ATTENDED SEVERAL 2024 VETERANS DAY CELEBRATIONS

LAKE PRINCE WOODS



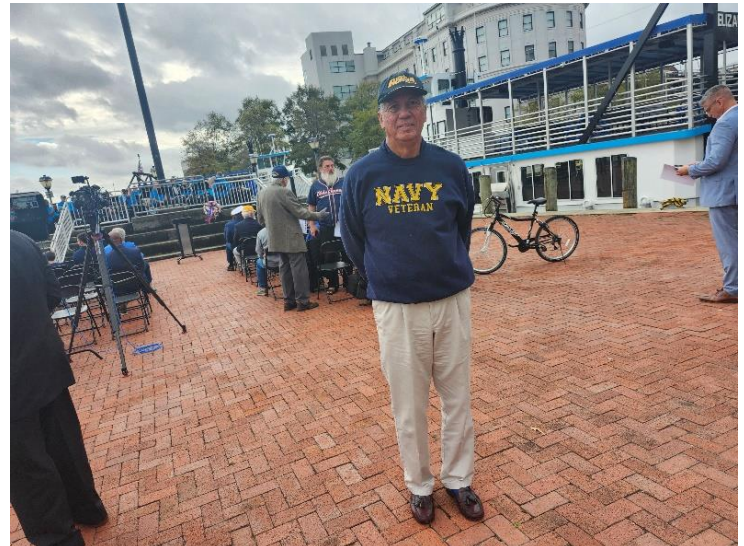
Three PACMOAA members attended the event on 11 November: MAJ Frank Labrecque, USA (Ret) : CPT Jim Jones, USMCR (Vet): and MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret) along with two spouses – Bruce Ferki and Jeanne Labrecque. Frank, Jim, and Sherry are pictured to the left. Jim wore the Continental Marine Uniform that he had worn to the 249th Marine Corp Anniversary Celebration the day before.



After colors were presented by the Lakeland HS AFJROTC, there was a short presentation by LPW and then Dr Belinda Moss, USAF (Ret) presented a very meaningful and uplifting Veterans Day program. She stressed the importance of **Honoring our Veterans** and that **We All Matter!** Several distressing facts she mentioned from Medical News Today were that 20% of veterans experience depression and 11 % of veterans have suicide ideation or attempts. She also provided multiple resources that I am happy to share if anyone is interested. Refreshments and fellowship followed the program.

98-year-old veteran at Lake Prince Woods with Dr Belinda Moss and Sherry Ferki to the left.

PORTSMOUTH



ABOVE LEFT: CAPT Bruce LaLonde, USN (Ret) Spoke at the Portsmouth Catholic Regional School Veterans day ceremony, picture is with Donna Henry, Principal. **ABOVE RIGHT:** He attended City of Portsmouth Veterans Day Remembrance ceremony.

Please Memorize the **VETERAN CRISIS HOTLINE Dial 988 then press 1**

PLEASE CONSIDER DONATING TO PORTSMOUTH VOLUNTEERS FOR THE HOMELESS (PVH)

As you are considering ways to continue your support, here is a list of our on-going needs.

Toilet Tissue	Paper Towels	Cleaning Products Chlorox Foaming Spray Scrubbing Bubbles Spray
3-ply Facial Masks	Non-latex Disposal Gloves	Liquid Antibacterial Hand Wash
Kitchen Trash Bags	Outdoor Garbage Bags	Lysol Room Sanitizing Spray

Artful Living at Lake Prince Woods

An award-winning senior living community in Suffolk offering a continuum of services:

- Residential Living
- Transitional Rehabilitation
- Memory Support
- Home health and Hospice
- Assisted Living

Lake Prince Woods

 EveryAge Senior Living™

Call us today!

757-923-5500

LakePrinceWoods.org



Thank you Lake Prince Woods for being a PACMOAA Sponsor

FEDVIP 2025 OPEN SEASON

11 November – 9 December 2024

2025 FEDVIP Prices Announced

By: Paul Frost October 08, 2024 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/health-care-and-earned-benefits/2025-fedvip-prices-announced/>

You can compare available plans on the [Federal Employee Benefit portal, BENEFEDS.](#)

PROGRAMS

January 9th, 2025 CAPT Jim Carmen USN (Ret), CAE, MOAA Vice President, Council/Chapter Member Support, will install new Officers and present an Update on MOAA

13 February 2025 Dr. John Joyce, President of Non-Profit Support Portsmouth Public Art

13 March 2025 Lindsey Jones, Advocate for the Chesapeake Bay Naval, Maritime, and Transportation Museum and leading point of information for Portsmouth Early Maritime Leaders

Below: CDR Scott & Heather Dickinson



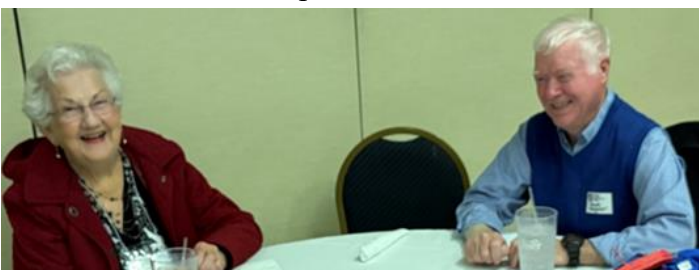
Below: CAPT Bruce LaLonde with COL Irv & Dottie Lindley, & CDR Mike Riley



LEFT: CAPT Valerie Parker, PACMOAA outgoing Secretary, taking notes at the Business Meeting.



Right: COL Bill Smith, Immediate Past President, tabulating Votes for the Leadership Team Elections



Above: Lois Yandle and Chuck Waggoner



Above right (from front center CW): Cindy & CAPT Bob Brewer, COL Bill and Karen Smith, David and Sharon Watkins (Bruce's brother-in-law & sister), & Teresa Wilfong

PACMOAA BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES appear on page 14-15. They will be mailed separately to regular mail recipients.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

As we prepare our hearts and homes for the joyous celebration of Christmas, it's essential to remember the true essence of this blessed season—gratitude, love and fellowship. A special message was found on Christianpure.com titled “Warm and inspiring Christmas messages” which I present for our reading.

Lord infuse us with Your spirit of generosity that we may seek every opportunity to give as a chance to serve You. Help us understand that in giving, we receive, and in sharing our lives become richer. Grant us the wisdom to recognize the needs of those around us, the courage to act, and the joy that comes from bringing comfort to another soul.

May our acts of kindness ripple through the world, spreading light where there is darkness, hope where that is despair. Let our generosity be a testament to Your boundless love, a beacon of the true meaning of Christmas. Amen.



Submitted by
CAPT Bob Brewer,
USN (Ret) Chaplin



CDR Ken App, USN (Ret)
Salute Editor

THAT'S A WRAP FOR DECEMBER 2024

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

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

PACMOAA MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM 2024

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 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: _____

PACMOAA BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES**November 14, 2024****Roger Brown's Restaurant, 1830-2030**

The November business meeting was held at Roger Brown's Restaurant, Portsmouth, and was called to order at 1830. Following the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer, President Bruce LaLonde welcomed all in attendance and invited everyone to enjoy dinner prior to kicking off the Annual Business meeting.

Reports

Treasurer's Report, CDR Hans Sachse, USN (Ret): Presented a financial overview, noting that we are in good shape and are financially sound! A copy of his report/balance sheet is available upon request.

Membership Report, MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret) provided this and following reports:

Current membership: 65. We have 49 regular members (7 new this year), and 16 Surviving Spouses. Sadly, six members passed away this year: Martha Anderson, Dick Yesensky, Lynn Terry, Doug Weller, Sonny Chenault and George Van Laethem. Detailed listing of members available upon request.

Recruitment (Sherry): It's important to the future of our organization for all of us to continue to promote our organization and recruit new, younger members to take on future leadership roles.

Programs (Sherry): Eight program meetings were conducted in 2024. Sherry provided a slideshow depicting highlights of events our members participated in, such as the Portsmouth Mayor's Military Affairs Committee, Portsmouth Memorial Day Parade, Joint Chapter Annual Brunch, USCG Change of Command ceremony, Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless, and Community Outreach. In January 2025, we look forward to the installation of our new leadership team by a MOAA staff member.

Scholarship/JROTC (Sherry): This year we awarded and presented two \$1500 scholarships to JROTC graduates, selected from eight applicants.

Legislative Report (Sherry):

MOAA priority bills – (1) MOAA, **The Military Coalition Target Gap in TRICARE Coverage for Alzheimer's** A promising drug to treat Alzheimer's (Leqembi, not covered by TRICARE Prime or Select, only partially covered by TRICARE for Life, Covered by VA for more than a year! And (2) **Take Action: Ask Your Lawmakers to Back the Dole Act** 5 Nov 24 Discussed in newsletter and several emails.

2024 JLC objectives/ achievements - Tax exemption for Surviving spouses to also Include Died on Active Duty. Constitutional amendment passed by about 93% in Nov to include Killed in the Line of Duty (as determined by DoD). 2 related to VA National Guard not passed.

Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Program (VMSDEP) Update - Numerous articles in newsletter and emails sent to members since March per the backdoor changes to the (VA Military Survivors and Dependents Program – VMSDEP) - Two groups evaluating VMSDEP program and making recommendation on how to make it sustainable. (1) JLARC (Joint Legislative Audit & Review Commission) released their report around 7 Oct. Friends of VMSDEP (3,000 members now) very concerned with report findings. (2) The Governor's Task Force to Preserve VMSDEP had the 2nd meeting on 17 October and discussed the JLARC study report. One comment was out of 87,000 yearly exemptions, only 7,000 due to VMSDEP tuition waiver. Why were the military/veteran, survivors', the only waivers addressed? Also, the study was based on questionable data – counted every student that used 1 semester of benefits as utilizing 8 semesters! Members will review JLARC findings carefully and submit their recommendations.

Personal Affairs/Surviving Spouse Liaison (Sherry):

Sherry reminded us that TAPS (Tragedy Assistance Program For Survivors) is a wonderful resource for anyone that has experienced the loss of a military member. Contact at 800-959-TAPS (8277) 24/7, can chat online, or at taps.org. Additionally, she stressed the importance of reviewing and updating your spouse's information to ensure it is current, in the event of your death. Also, a reminder that spouses/family members can participate in the "Red Flag" wreath laying at Albert G. Horton Memorial Cemetery in Suffolk.

Joint Leadership Council (JLC), Mary Snyder:

2025 Initiatives: (1) Verification of Veteran Status (arrests, jails, and prisons) (2) Stop Unscrupulous Firms from Exploiting Veterans (3) Virginia National Guard Tuition (4) Suffolk State Veterans Cemetery Expansion, and (5)

Women Veterans Day. We will continue to report on these items as they move forward in 2025.

Third Vice President/Communications Report, CDR Ken App, USN (Ret):

Salute Newsletter: 3 versions, Full color Salute Express & Salute Online, and B&W Salute which is mailed.

Express Advantages: Full color, pictures, Layout highlights, Digital Links, emailed which costs nothing and has no page limits.

Website: Lots of info and Hotlinks: pacmoaa.org Newsletter has a QR code on page 2 which takes you directly to the website.

Homepage links; Join MOAA, MOAA Take Action, MOAA Home Page, MOAA Goals, JLC 2023 Goals, Naval Hospital COVID page, "Find your Legislators" which changes in 2025, interactive MAP with directions from YOUR Location to Roger Brown's, PACMOAA – Who can Join, Join now, or Contact Us. You can also read past PACMOAA Salute Newsletters from 2015 to the present.

Facebook- Publishes more current Updates on Pharmacy, COVID and Happenings. [Still looking for additional Facebook members.](#)

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 Annually or as Required.

MOAA Leadership JROTC Awards: Orders Certificates, Award Folders, MOAA Leadership Medals and Velour Pouches. Prints PACMOAA info on the certificates for Awards Ceremonies.

Still looking for additional help with any of the above jobs, including taking pictures at meeting.

VCOC Representative – CDR Ken App, USN (Ret)

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 4 Virtual meetings as were CAPT Bruce LaLonde and MAJ Sherry Ferki (VCOC Treasurer & Surviving Spouse Liaison). Mrs. Mary Snyder Legislative Rep was present at three virtual VCOC Meetings in 2024.

The JLC nominated, and the VCOC voted unanimously for Executive of the year for their help in getting VEMSDEP changes revoked. There were no Federal and State Legislators of the Year voted on.

New Business:

Members were polled for their preference on length and type of music/songs for our Annual Christmas Gala. PACMOAA received three awards as recognition of superior performance. Our leadership team accepted **two Five Star Communications Awards for our Newsletter and Website**. We also were recognized with the 14th consecutive **Five Star Levels of Excellence Award**. Great job everyone and thank you for your hard work this past year! Mary Snyder was recognized with this quarter's "Good Service Award" and takes home the President's bear!

Nominating Committee: Congratulations to our elected/re-elected slate of officers 2025-December 2026:

President – CAPT Bruce LaLonde

First Vice President for Programs & VCOC Legislative Representative – Mrs. Mary Snyder

Third Vice President/Communications & VCOC Representative – CDR Ken App

Board of Directors: CDR Mike Riley and CDR David Von Rump

Secretary - **VACANT, *please consider volunteering for this important role.***

President's closing comments:

Our annual Christmas Gala will be held here at Roger Brown's Restaurant, Thursday, December 12th – please consider attending and bringing a guest. Donations for Toys for Tots and Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless will be collected! Enjoy your family and friends during the upcoming Thanksgiving holiday, and I hope to see you at our Christmas Gala.

Minutes submitted by:

CAPT Valerie Parker, USN (Ret) PACMOAA Secretary