



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 XXXXIV Issue IV

LEARN MORE AT PACMOAA.ORG

APRIL 2025

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



PACMOAA family:

Those who attended the March meeting were treated to an excellent briefing by local historian Lindsey Jones on the Barron family -who were instrumental in the shaping of the maritime foundation in Portsmouth/Hampton Roads.

At the 10 April dinner meeting we will be hosting CAPT Derrek Burrus, USCG, Coast Guard Base Portsmouth- Commanding Officer-- who be sharing the challenges and opportunities he is facing today ...please come and bring a plus one or a potential new member.

By the time you receive this newsletter, Teresa and I will have taken the train to Washington DC to observe the cherry blossoms. I will make sure to bring home

movies of our trip to our dinner...Anchors aweigh...Bruce

UPDATE FROM THE PORTSMOUTH MAYOR'S MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE (PMMAC) 20 March 2025

Today's PMMAC meeting was quite disheartening...with cutbacks initiated at all facilities and directives for Govt employees to report to work the following challenges were discussed by the Coast Guard, Shipyard and Hospital Commanders:

- Expect more time to get unto bases
- Expect some facilities to be shortening hours
- With the USNS Comfort deploying from April to August expect hospital staffing issues--especially Radiology
- Anticipate on base parking to be an issue
- All outside the gate involvement by active-duty personnel will be closely scrutinized
- Cutbacks at the VA facilities will only compound present conditions
- On base military will be used to maintain grounds

We will keep our eyes open and our ears open to bases concerns affecting our membership.

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

PACMOAA President, CAPT Bruce LaLonde, USN (Ret)
welcoming CDR Duane Close USN (Ret) to PACMOAA



VETERAN CRISIS HOTLINE Dial 988 then press 1

PACMOAA
LEADERSHIP

See Leadership Pulldown



CHAPTER NEWS

APRIL

Month of the Military Child

- 01 April Fool's Day
- 05 Gold Star Spouses day /
- 06 Persian Gulf War Ends 1991
- 09 National Former POW Recognition Day
- 10 PACMOAA 42nd Anniversary Dinner Meeting**
- 12 Passover begins at Sunset
- 13 Palm Sunday
- 14 US Air Force Reserve Birthday (1948) – Submarine Force Day
- 15 VCOC Second Quarter Meeting, Virtual 1500-1700 - Tax Day
- 17 PACMOAA Board of Directors Virtual Meeting 1400-1600**
- 18 Doolittle Raid on Tokyo (1942)
- 18 Good Friday
- 20 Easter Sunday
- 22 Actual PACMOAA 42nd Anniversary/ Earth Day**
- 23 US Army Reserve Birthday (1908)
- 26 Arbor Day

HAPPY APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Scotty Bruce Bettye Hussey
Gladys Steorts

The April Dinner Meeting

will be held on **Thursday, April 10th** 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**Italian Salad**Lasagna**Baked Catfish**Roasted Veggies**Ranch/Garlic Mash Potatoes**Cheese Cake**Garlic Bread**Tea, Sweet Tea, Coffee, Lemonade and Water*

Cost is \$25 (includes gratuity & tax). Cash bar available. Please make your reservation no later than **Sunday, April 6th** 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



Left: Speaker Lindsey Jones and his wife, responding to a quip by President CAPT Bruce LaLonde USN (Ret).



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

SPEAKER**Captain Derrek W. Burrus**
Commanding Officer USCG Base Portsmouth

Captain Derrek Burrus currently serves as Commanding Officer, Coast Guard Base Portsmouth, providing a variety of mission support services in the fifth Coast Guard District, including: administration and personnel management, medical and dental care, work-life support, procurement, supply, housing, facilities maintenance, naval engineering, computer and electronics support, and morale and recreational services.

Prior to this assignment, Captain Burrus served as the Chief of Contingency, and Deployable Logistics for the Operational Logistics Command where he oversaw integrated logistics support to Coast Guard operators across the organization for various contingencies including hurricanes, wildfires, and earthquakes. Captain Burrus' other assignments included Executive Assistant within the Deputy Commandant for Mission Support (DCMS) front office, Executive Officer for the Operations System Center, Logistics Department Head for Sector Honolulu,

various assignments within the Information Technology community, Search and Rescue Controller and Damage Control Assistant on the Coast Guard Cutter Bear.

Captain Burrus is a native of South Mills, NC. He entered the Coast Guard in 1997 while attending Elizabeth City State University. After graduating with a degree in Computer Science he attended OCS and received his commission in September 1999. He holds a master's degree in information technology from the University of Maryland University College. He is a level I Acquisitions Program Manager and Level III Logistics Section Chief. His military decorations include 2 Meritorious Service medals 3 Commendation medals, 2 achievement medals and the Commandant's Letter of Commendation.

He is married to the former Felicia Saunders of Camden, NC and has three children, the oldest of which also serves in the Coast Guard.

MEMBERSHIP**MEMBERSHIP UPDATE AND RENEWAL REMINDER APRIL 2025****WELCOME ABOARD**

CDR Duane Close, USN (Ret) and his wife Aline from Virginia Beach

PACMOAA has 68 paid members now with only 1 person that still needs to pay dues for this year. That is much better than in April of 2024 when only about 80% of members had renewed their membership!! Each newsletter has a dues renewal/membership application attached at the end. This can be used by the member that still needs to renew their membership and for all PACMOAA members to use when recruiting new members. A single sheet overview of PACMOAA is also attached on page 16 of the newsletter that can be used for recruiting. As I've mentioned in the past, **we need everyone to be a recruiter. Maintaining and/or increasing membership is essential** for a chapter to survive and thrive.

Membership is PACMOAA's top priority and is necessary to ensure continued legislative advocacy and community involvement! PACMOAA membership helps us advocate on a state level with the General Assembly while MOAA membership contributes to advocating with Congress! As you all know, PACMOAA membership and MOAA membership are not the same. **Both need Dues to continue operating.**

At the MOAA Council and Chapter Affairs Virtual Workshop for New Leaders on 5 March, emphasis was placed on the need for more paid members. MOAA continues to enroll new members, which is great in terms of getting

information out to a larger group of people, but a fair number are join with the free basic membership. That gives them online access for general info and legislative updates but not for many of the other services MOAA provides. One of the services that many members are not aware of is that if the MOAA member has a *Premium or Life membership, it transfers to their spouse upon their death.* This provides ongoing support and resources for the Surviving Spouse! For the Premium member, membership transfers for the remaining paid timeframe, which may be up to 3 years. For Life members, their Surviving Spouse will have Life membership also.

Many members think MOAA dues primarily pay for the monthly magazine but that is a small part of MOAA's costs. MOAA has **10 lobbyists** that are continually working for our benefits in addition to their marketing expenses, admin fees, etc. In today's environment, those lobbyists are even more important! If 10-20% of all chapters and unaffiliated members are basic MOAA members, that significantly impacts the revenue stream. Several times a year, MOAA has specials for members that want to move up to Premium or Life membership.

Your dues enable PACMOAA to pay for things like the newsletter; speaker expenses; VCOC dues and expenses; admin expenses like name tags, printing, postage; and entertainment like the Sounds of Time band that performed at our Christmas Concert.

Effective membership was addressed at the MOAA Council and Chapter Affairs Virtual Workshop for New Leaders on 5 March:

- Create a nonpartisan, welcoming community – PACMOAA endeavors to always do this.
- Convey the value of membership – Stressing the important of advocating with legislators to maintain the earned benefits of veterans in our state and nation are an important part of the value of membership
- Recruit, retain, and recognize members – An ongoing mission of our chapter.
- Communicate relevant information effectively – This is done through the monthly newsletter, the website, Facebook, emails per relevant legislative issues and local events, and phone calls to keep members without email updated.
- Host meaningful events – Primarily accomplished through monthly program meetings. Please let the leadership team know if you have any suggestions for good speakers or events.
- Promote national paid members – A work in progress.
- Build camaraderie and lasting connections – Welcoming new members and potential new members at meetings warmly, keeping in touch with them via email, and being able to spend time with our colleagues and friends

Thank you for any assistance you can provide in helping to increase our membership so we can accomplish the PACMOAA Goals of Membership, Legislative Advocacy, and Community Activities/Service!

Reminder per Guidelines for Paying PACMOAA Dues 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

Surviving Spouse Corner: Building a Surviving Spouse Liaison Program

By: Lt. Col. Roy Yenchesky, USA (Ret) March 3, 2025 [MOAA - Surviving Spouse Corner: Building a Surviving Spouse Liaison Program](#)

Did you know you don't need to be a surviving spouse to fulfill the responsibilities of a surviving spouse liaison (SSL). Any member of your chapter — a surviving spouse, a retired, former, or active duty servicemember, or a military spouse — can be the SSL. Key attributes include a sincere desire to be helpful as well as an ability to recognize the impact of what the position entails.

The SSL should have the temperament to keep his or her emotions in check and be able to overcome administrative obstacles. While leadership positions in chapters often change on an annual or biennial basis, due to the development of relationships and the evolving nature of military benefits, a longer tenure can be beneficial for the SSL. (I am starting my seventh year and still learning.)

[RELATED: [More Surviving Spouse Resources From MOAA](#)]

Here are some additional tips:

Exercise active listening techniques. When asking questions, keep them pertinent and relative. Try to stay on point and ask only questions that need answers. You do not want to probe, but you still need information to prevent being surprised later.

Use checklists. Several checklists are available to assist with your role. Find one with which you are comfortable and use it consistently. Record the answers and do not rely on memory, because the consequences of forgetting something are too great. Suspend actions that you need to follow up on, and do not miss deadlines. MOAA's [Preparing for the Loss of a Military Spouse](#) publication is a valuable resource.

[RELATED: [More Survivor Publications From MOAA](#)]

Know the people who have authority: This can include casualty assistance officers (CAOs), VA veterans service officers, Honor Guard OICs/NCOICs, grief counselors, and Social Security office staff. Visit these individuals and get to know them on a personal level.

Offer your assistance: When notified of a death, send a sympathy card offering condolences on behalf of the chapter, explain your position as the SSL, and offer to help. If requested, develop an assistance plan, taking into consideration the survivor's schedule, and make appointments and escort the survivor to the various agencies. For example, when visiting the CAO, it is helpful to have an extra set of ears taking notes, recording suspense's, and ensuring the CAO does not overlook any details. Try to avoid inserting yourself where you are not wanted. Some members have adult children who know everything and really do not want any help. That is OK.

Seek education opportunities: I have treated being the SSL like any other credentialed vocation. It requires continuing education, such as regional workshops, virtual meetings and training sessions, and veterans' resources with information relevant to surviving spouses. I am an active participant on our chapter executive committee. I make short presentations at our chapter meetings where I get to engage our members to emphasize that now is the time to prepare to be a surviving spouse. Once a year, I provide a program at a chapter meeting on a surviving spouse topic.

Most important, remember that the SSL is a meaningful and rewarding position. You are providing a valuable service that is not offered anywhere else.

Note: The April edition of the Military Officer Magazine has an article addressing Surviving Spouses: *Your Benefits- Surviving Spouse Help* on page 36. I don't remember seeing an article for Surviving Spouses in the magazine before!



Submitted by: Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret)
PACMOAA 2nd VP/Membership Chair
Personal Affairs Chair and Surviving Spouse Liaison
Cell 757-630-5608

MOAA & LEGISLATIVE

AiA – MARCH CHAPTER LEADERS VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE

Before the review of Advocacy in Action (AiA) began, Lt Gen Kelly, USAF (Ret), MOAA President and CEO spoke for a short time. He gave an overview of the environment and MOAA's focus. In this dynamic environment

with many daily changes, MOAA needs to remain NON-PARTISAN and stay true to our mission – *preserve and protect the earned benefits of the community*. He recognized that the MOAA staff and members are reflective of the country with differing views about many issues.

General Kelly stressed that 2 danger areas exist:

1. **Engaging when we shouldn't.** For example - Political or social issues not related to mission like the firing/removal of senior military personnel. This is **NOT part of MOAA's mission** so MOAA will NOT engage in this issue.
2. **Not engaging when we should.** For example -Issues that do impact benefits like removal of veterans and/or military spouses from federal jobs. MOAA has been quick to advocate for veterans and military spouses with recent firings.

Even though there are 5 key issues being addressed in AiA, Gen Kelly stressed that members need to be prepared for changes in environment. Reminding legislators that MOAA has 350,000 members but represents 22 million members of the military community. He reviewed 4 core issues to mention even though they are not the priorities being addressed with 2025 AiA. They include protect service earned health benefits, protect pay earned through service, prevent burdensome delays in VA claims, and protect and defend military spouses in federal government. There will be a press release detailing these core issues on the day of the AiA visit.

After Gen Kelly spoke, program updates were reviewed and then a detailed review of the plan for AiA with a detailed review of each of the 5 issues being addressed. Again, they are listed with link in the “MOAA Articles Correlating with 2025 Advocacy in Action Issues” later in the newsletter.

You can access the archived video of this meeting at <https://www.moaa.org/content/chapters-and-councils/chapter-and-council-webinars/march-2025-council-and-chapter-virtual-roundtable/> and/or download the pdf of the presentation slides.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MARCH MUSNAVC MEETING ON ADVOCACY IN ACTION (AiA)

The MOAA Uniformed Services Nurse Advocates Virtual Chapter (MUSNAVC) held its monthly meeting on 19 March and had Karen Ruedisueli, the MOAA Director of Health Affairs and Military Coalition Health Care Committee Co-Chair as our speaker. Before she spoke, there was a brief business meeting. MUSNAVC now has 529 members covering all states and 218 Congressional Districts.

Karen noted that this year the process for Advocacy in Action (AiA) is different than in the past. There will be 5 key priorities addressed but each group will only address 3 of the issues and the visits will be more targeted to those legislators that serve on the committees dealing with each specific issue. This breakdown is detailed in a later article in this newsletter titled “MOAA Articles Correlating with 2025 Advocacy in Action Issues”.

Most of her presentation focused on the DoD issue of improving access to health care. The information below comes from some of Karen slides and also sections of the MOAA article “ADVOCACY PLAYBOOK: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT MOAA'S KEY ISSUES” March 28, 2025 [MOAA - Advocacy Playbook: What You Should Know About MOAA's Key Issues](#)

“Why it matters: DoD and Congress have acknowledged longstanding problems with access to care within the Military Health System (MHS), yet beneficiaries lack a consistent, effective, and well-understood system for reporting access challenges and getting help navigating the MHS.”

“KEY FACTS:

- The new MHS stabilization strategy seeks to recapture 7% of beneficiary care back to military hospitals and clinics that are struggling with staffing challenges.
- TRICARE policy prohibits beneficiaries from changing TRICARE plans to move care to the civilian network except during the annual open enrollment season or after qualifying life events. **Note:** TRICARE is less flexible per changing plans than before 2018.

- Challenges related to the new TRICARE West Region contract underscore the need for more effective beneficiary assistance with barriers to access.”

“**THE ASK:** MOAA urges Congress to pass legislation establishing an MHS digital access assistance platform to:

- Help military families navigate the MHS by routing their issues to the appropriate contacts for assistance.
- Improve oversight and accountability of the MHS by providing visibility to access problems.
- Ensure fixable systemic MHS barriers to access are addressed.”

There was detailed discussion per FY2026 NDAA process and timing including that SASC (Senate Committee on Armed Services) met last month and was looking at the issue of MHS instability. Adequate funding for MHS is essential.

As mentioned earlier, Karen is the Military Coalition Health Care Coalition Co-Chair. The Military Coalition (TMC) is very important, is comprised of 32-35 organizations, and can mobilize quickly to “stop things in their tracks”. This organization is similar to the Virginia Joint Leadership Council (JLC).both represent a large number of organizations that work together to achieve the end goal.



After Karen spoke, the MUSNAVC President discussed our Legislation Early Push at: <https://www.musnavc.org/gallery> listing health related issues that MOAA is not advocating on at this time. There are currently 7 issues listed, like National Plan to End Parkinson’s Act, and Healthcare Fairness for Military Families Act. There are also links to the MOAA Legislative Action site as well as many additional helpful links.

Both above articles submitted by:
Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret)
Retired Army Nurse and member of MUSNAVC

New Resource Available: askDFAS Tips Video

From DFAS Retiree Newsletter March 2025

https://www.dfas.mil/Portals/98/Documents/RetiredMilitary/Newsletter/DFAS%20Retiree%20Newsletter%20March%202025.pdf?ver=t51uxpeHZodr6NI0CQT_Rg%3d%3d

DFAS Retired & Annuitant (R&A) Pay is proud to announce that we have a new “askDFAS Tips” video available for you on the DFAS YouTube channel!

The video is called “*askDFAS Tips: A Simple Way to Manage Your Retired or SBP Pay Account.*” In less than 5 minutes, the video provides a helpful overview of the askDFAS online tools available for retirees and Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) annuitants to submit a form, make a change to a pay account, or ask a question.

Learn the Ropes

Last year was a big year for askDFAS. DFAS R&A Pay spent a lot of time building a great new experience to make managing your retired pay account easier. Perhaps you read some of the articles we published last year to help you understand the new, streamlined online tools available to you. If not, there is no better time than now to get acquainted with the tools on askDFAS.

The askDFAS Tips video is your guided tour to the “Ask Retired Pay” module of askDFAS. To submit a request, you must fill out an online ticket. But don’t miss some of the other helpful features. There is a bank of Frequently Asked Questions that may answer your question before you even submit a ticket. We’ve also added some explanations to help direct your requests.

You Asked, We Listened

We travel around the country (and the globe!) to speak to you, our valued customers. We hear your feedback and do whatever we can to bring your requests to life. The online tools found on askDFAS are a perfect showcase.

For example, the askDFAS Tips video describes new ways to submit requests and questions regardless of where you are located. Now, you and your loved ones can enter requests online 24/7. This is especially valuable for

overseas customers, and for those in the midst of painful seasons of loss who may not be able to call DFAS during our business hours.

Help Us Help Retirees and SBP Annuitants

The askDFAS Tips video concludes with a demonstration of how to fill out an askDFAS ticket and submit a request, inviting you to join the thousands of your fellow retirees and SBP annuitants who are already using these handy tools.

If you haven't yet used askDFAS, we have plenty of other resources on the DFAS Quick Tools webpage to help. And speaking of the Quick Tools webpage, that's the place to find the askDFAS Tips video. Check it out now: <https://www.dfas.mil/raquicktools>

Many YouTube content creators end their videos by saying "leave us a like and subscribe." Well, here at DFAS R&A Pay, we're simply asking you to help us spread the word by sharing the video with other military retirees or SBP annuitants who can benefit from these helpful tools.

News From Our Partners: Real ID Act and NextGen ID Card

From DFAS Retiree Newsletter March 2025

https://www.dfas.mil/Portals/98/Documents/RetiredMilitary/Newsletter/DFAS%20Retiree%20Newsletter%20March%202025.pdf?ver=t51uxpeHZodr6Nl0CQT_Rg%3d%3d

Provided by Air Force

Passed by Congress in 2005, the REAL ID Act enacted the 9/11 Commission's recommendation that the Federal Government "set standards for the issuance of sources of identification, such as driver's licenses." The latest information indicates the Department of Homeland Security will start Real ID Act enforcement on 7 May 2025. This will affect what forms of ID/documentation people can use to access certain federal facilities, board domestic commercial flights or individuals visiting military installations.

Even after the Real ID Act is in effect, there is **no** change for military base access for individuals (military retirees/dependents/surviving spouses) who already possess military, or DoD issued credentials; non-DoD personnel without base access credentials will be the largest demographic affected by REAL ID requirements. If you don't have the NextGen ID card, but an "old style" ID card (DD Form 2, DD Form 1173, DD Form 1173-1 or DD Form 2765 (blue, pink or tan ID)) you will still be able to access a base for now!

It's important for military retirees/dependents/surviving spouses to know, at some time in the future, these old forms of ID will **not** be valid to access a military installation, and you will **need** issuance of the NextGen ID card. This will be true even if your old ID card has an INDEF expiration date on it - the ID will still be **invalid**. DoD has not specified a date when this will happen, and we have no idea how much advance warning you will get before you must have the NextGen ID card.

Based on this, we strongly encourage everyone with an old-style ID card to get a NextGen ID card now!

There are several ways to make an appointment to get a new ID card. **(1).** You can visit the RAPIDS ID Card Office Locator website to find the closest office and either call them to make an appointment or **(2).** schedule your own appointment using the website. <https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/> To make an appointment using this site select the "ID Card Office Locator & Appointments" block. **(3).** You **may** be able to renew your ID card online and have it mailed to you, no waiting in line! You select the "Family ID Cards" block on the website at the link above. Below are the requirements to renew a card online:

- Sponsor must be a CAC holder or have a DoD Self-Service Logon username/password
- Must be requesting a renewal of an active USID card
- Sponsor and Cardholder must have email addresses listed in DEERS that they have authorized DoD to use for contacting them
- Sponsor's personnel status must extend at least 30 days into the future
- Cardholder has a photo saved in DEERS taken in the last 12 years
- Cardholder's mailing address is present in DEERS and is in United States or Overseas.
- USID cards cannot be shipped to PO Boxes

If you have an old-style ID card, you can get the new NextGen ID at any time - do it now!

Bill Offers Parity, Protection for Coast Guard Members Nearing 20-Year Mark

By: Kevin Lilley March 24, 2025 [MOAA - Bill Offers Parity, Protection for Coast Guard Members Nearing 20-Year Mark](#)

Coast Guard members nearing 20 years of service would have the same protection from forced separation already afforded those in the other armed services under a House bill introduced March 18.

The Coast Guard Separation Parity Act ([H.R. 2200](#)) would prevent the service from involuntarily separating enlisted personnel with more than 18 years in uniform but less than 20, mirroring language already in place for the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Space Force. The measure ensures those whose term of enlistment expires during that time frame will reach the 20-year mark and receive the additional retirement benefits available at that milestone. Exceptions can be made for legal reasons, as with the other armed services.

[MORE FROM MOAA: [Details on Our Spring Advocacy Campaign](#)]

“MOAA’s support for this bipartisan bill is another example of our work for the entire uniformed services community – not just DoD, and not just officers,” said Cory Titus, MOAA’s director of Government Relations for Currently Serving Affairs. “All who serve have the right to the same professional protections offered to their brothers and sisters in uniform – this bill makes a much-needed change for these Coast Guard members who’ve dedicated so much of their lives to their nation.”

Navy veteran Rep. Jen Kiggans (R-Va.) introduced the legislation alongside Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-Hawaii). The bill is “about fairness,” Kiggans said in [a press release announcing its introduction](#), adding that it will “ensure these servicemembers are not forced out just before reaching retirement eligibility.”

Tokuda cited the [Coast Guard’s response to the 2024 Lahaina fires](#) in her statement of support for the legislation.

“Every day, the Coast Guard stands ready to defend our country and assist mariners in need,” Tokuda said, “and we must never forget to take care of them, too.”

[RELATED: [Fighting for Better Unaccompanied Housing: Why It Matters, and How You Can Help](#)]

Joining MOAA in support of the legislation are Blue Star Families, Concerned Veterans for America, the Navy League, Veterans for Mustangs, and With Honor. Learn more about the bill [at this link](#).

Keep up with MOAA’s other legislative priorities by visiting our [advocacy news page](#) and by registering at our [Legislative Action Center](#).

Not Just for Veterans: Check Out These 7 VA Medical Breakthroughs

March 26, 2025 [MOAA - Not Just for Veterans: Check Out These 7 VA Medical Breakthroughs](#)

Editor’s note: This article by Blake Stilwell originally appeared on [Military.com](#), a leading source of news for the military and veteran community.

When someone at the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) messes up, it usually makes national news. When the VA is found to be either [consistently more efficient](#) than private health care or [generally outperforming private hospitals](#), however, it generally turns fewer heads.

Many might ask why it's important to notice when the VA does what it's *supposed* to do. With the VA facing more than 83,000 job cuts this year, it's important to remind not only veterans, but also lawmakers, health officials and the American population at large just how much the country -- and the world -- benefits from the work of the department's doctors and researchers.

Here are a handful of medical breakthroughs the world received from work done by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

1. PTSD Treatments

Veterans might be more prone to post-traumatic stress disorder given the work they do, but [PTSD](#) isn't something with which only veterans struggle. The American Psychiatric Association (APA) first codified PTSD as a distinct mental health issue in 1980. By 1989, the VA established the National Center for PTSD.

[RELATED: [The Push for a More Perfect PACT Act](#)]

The VA has been at the forefront of many proven PTSD treatment options, including [Cognitive Processing Therapy](#) since 2006. Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) was first developed in 1987, but was [in the VA system by 1990](#). Dr. Edna Foa developed Prolonged Exposure (PE) therapy between 1987 and 1991, and the VA [began using it in 2006](#). These three PTSD therapies are the current "[gold standard](#)" for treatment.

2. Nicotine Patches

While some [iconic photos of U.S. troops smoking](#) cigarettes have surfaced over the years, anyone who served knows the military and the VA are constantly imploring members to quit using tobacco. The VA's dedication to smoking cessation runs so deep, in fact, that when the VA created the transdermal nicotine patch in 1984, [VA researchers tested it on themselves](#) to prove it was safe.

3. Pacemakers

There are many conditions that might cause one's heart to beat abnormally, from birth defects and atrial fibrillation to, of course, any kind of hardening of the arteries. A pacemaker is an implantable device that uses electrical pulses to keep the heart from beating too slowly. It's a pretty simple concept, so simple that the idea of a pacemaker [dates back to the 1880s](#). But it wasn't until 1960 that [researchers at the Buffalo VA](#) first implanted one into the heart of a 77-year-old man, prolonging his life for another decade. Their design became the first commercially produced pacemaker ever.

4. CT Scans/MRIs

Dr. William H. Oldendorf was a professor of neurology and psychiatry at the UCLA school of medicine who wrote the first paper on cross-sectional scanning of the brain with X-rays. He even received the first patent for a scanner based on his research, but found very little interest in the technology. His work, done with the West Los Angeles VA Medical Center, laid the groundwork for [nuclear imaging such as CT scans and MRIs](#).

[RELATED: [Are You One of 1 Million Veterans Eligible for Increased GI Bill Benefits?](#)]

5. Coronary Bypass Surgery

There's a reason the Houston VA Medical Center is named for [Dr. Michael DeBakey](#). He was a World War II veteran, founding doctor of the VA and pioneering cardiovascular surgeon who first used Dacron grafts to repair blood vessels, helped develop the use of artificial hearts and pioneered angioplasty. More importantly, he was one of the earliest doctors to perform a coronary bypass, now [the most common heart surgery in adults](#).

6. Liver Transplants

The "father of transplantation," [Dr. Thomas E. Starzl](#), was a transplant surgeon and research scientist in the VA system for more than 50 years. He performed the first successful liver transplant on May 5, 1963. Others had attempted the operation before, but no patient had previously survived the procedure.

On top of performing the first liver transplant, Starzl was the first doctor to consistently perform kidney transplants that resulted in long-term survival due to his use of post-operative immunosuppressants and steroids. He would spend his career working on anti-rejection medications to increase transplantation survival rates.

7. Radioimmunoassay

Dr. Rosalyn Sussman Yalow, physicist and researcher at the Bronx VA Medical Center, received the Nobel Prize in medicine in 1977. Her work with fellow VA scientist Dr. Solomon "Sol" Berson created radioimmunoassay, a method of using radiolabeled molecules to measure tiny amounts of substances in the blood. It began as an attempt to treat adult-onset diabetes, but instead found a way to tag and measure hormones such as insulin. Immediately, the technique showed that Type 2 diabetics had more insulin instead of less in their blood, when at the time the medical community believed the opposite. It also became helpful in diagnosing hyperthyroidism and Hepatitis B.

MOAA Articles Correlating with 2025 Advocacy in Action Issues

Advocacy in Action 2025: Updated article on March 28 discusses all issues with links to very detailed issue papers- “Advocacy Playbook: What You should Know About MOAA’s Key Issues”
<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/advocacy/advocacy-playbook-what-you-should-know-about-moaas-key-issues/>

MOAA will have teams divided between 2 tracks: one addressing the DoD Track and one the VA Track. All groups will address promoting the Military Spouse Hiring Act.

Military Spouse Hiring Act - Military Spouses Can’t Wait: Add Them to the Work Opportunity Tax Credit 18 March 2025 By: Jen Goodale <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/advocacy/military-spouses-cant-wait-add-them-to-the-work-opportunity-tax-credit/>

HR 2033 - 34 cosponsors, none locally S 1027 Introduced by Sen Kaine and 14 cosponsors including Sen Warner. As of 3/26/25

[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Support Military Spouses](#)]

Department of Defense (DoD) Track

Unaccompanied Housing Improvements - Fighting for Better unaccompanied housing: Why It Matters, and How You Can Help By: Cory Titus 17 March 2025

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/advocacy/fighting-for-better-unaccompanied-housing-why-it-matters,-and-how-you-can-help/>

TAKE ACTION: [Ask Congress to Address Hazardous Unaccompanied Housing Conditions](#)]

Military Health System (MHS) Access to Care – Improve Access to Health Care for Military Families With a Digital Access Assistance Platform

Issue Paper: Military Health System Access [mhs-access issuepaper as of 03.27](#). TAKE ACTION: [.pdf](#) No bill associated with this but attempting to get it added to 2026 NDAA.

Or

Department of Veterans’ Affairs (VA) Track

“Ending the Wait” Report Priorities – Ending the Wait for Toxic-Exposed Veterans: The Push for a More Perfect PACT Act <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/health-care-and-earned-benefits/from-military-officer-magazine-the-push-for-a-more-perfect-pact-act/>

Read the Report: *Ending The Wait For Toxic-Exposed Veterans*

<https://www.dav.org/ending-the-wait/>

TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Deliver Toxic-Exposed Veterans the Care They've Earned](#)]

Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act – Caregivers Sacrifice for Our Veterans- Now Congress Must Support Them <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/advocacy/caregivers-sacrifice-for-our-veterans-%E2%80%93now-congress-must-support-them/>

Issue Paper: Veteran Caregivers https://www.moaa.org/uploadedfiles/content/take_action/2025-aia-participant-documents/veteranscaregiving_issuepaper_as_of_03.27.pdf

HR 2148 Introduced 3/14/25, 1 cosponsor, none from VA ; S 879 Introduced 3/6/25 with 1 cosponsor, none from VA. As of 3/26/25.

TAKE ACTION: Ask Your Lawmakers to Honor Veteran Caregivers

<https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/113746/>

Submitted by Sherry Ferki, MAJ. USA (Ret) - PACMOAA Assistant Leg Rep

VCOC AND JLC

Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) next meeting will be VIRTUAL on Tuesday, April 15, 2025 and scheduled from 1500-1700.

Submitted By: Ken App
CDR USN (Ret)
PACMOAA VCOC Representative

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

VCOC LEGISLATIVE REPORT & JLC UPDATE

On March 24, 2025, Governor Glenn Youngkin completed action on 916 bills sent to him during the 2025 General Assembly session. The Governor signed 599 bills, amended 159 bills, and vetoed 157 bills. The Governor returned the budget, HB 1600, to the General Assembly with 205 amendments and eight line-item vetoes. There were five JLC Initiatives this year; four of the five passed for an 80% success rate. Listed below is the status of those initiatives as provided by Col. Monti Zimmerman, USAR (Ret), VCOC 3rd VP for Legislative Affairs and LtCol John Down, USAF (Ret) MOAA Representative to JLC.

JLC 2025-01 Verification of Veteran Status

Passed on February 24 and approved by the Governor on March 21. Made part of the powers and duties of the Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services in identifying incarcerated veterans.

JLC 2025-02 Stop Unscrupulous Firms from Exploiting Veterans

Also known as Veterans Services Protection Act, **FAILED** House Rules Committee on February 17. The JLC may possibly consider this again as an initiative for 2026. Note there is a 2024 bill in Congress (federal) addressing the same issue.

JLC 2025-03 Virginia National Guard Tuition

Passed and approved by the Governor on March 24. Becomes effective July 1, 2025.

JLC 2025-04 Suffolk State Veterans Cemetery Expansion

Approved and is part of the Governor's budget for 2026. This provides \$1M for land acquisition to support expansion to meet projected future needs.

JLC 2025-05 Women Veterans Day

Approved by the Senate by voice vote. This day will be recognized annually on June 12th.

Background information and complete details of each initiative can be found on the JLC website.

<https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/about-us/boards-foundations/joint-leadership-council-of-veterans-service-organizations>

Mary L. Snyder, PACMOAA VCOC Legislative Representative

PROGRAMS

Please mark your calendars NOW for the remaining Dinner Meetings listed below.

10 April 2025	CAPT Derrek Burrus, USCG, CO US Coast Guard Base Portsmouth
8 May 2025	LTC Frank Labrecque, USA (Ret) -VA Health Care System vs VA Disability
12 June 2025	Annual Scholarship Dinner
13 or 20 July 2025	Joint Brunch - Location To Be Determined
11 September 2025	TBD
9 October 2025	TBD
13 November 2025	Annual Business Meeting
11 December 2025	Christmas Gala

MEMBER IN THE SPOTLIGHT**COL HAL HOSTETLER, USA (Ret)**

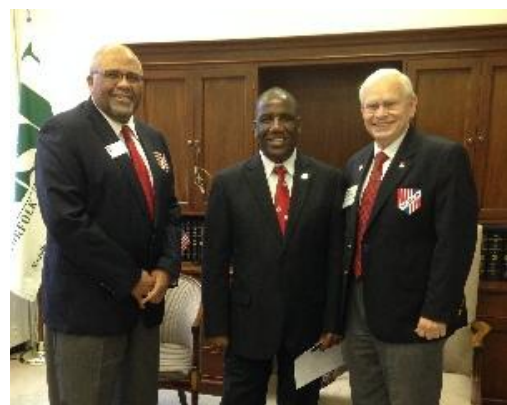
Hal was born in South Dakota but grew up in Portsmouth where he and his beloved wife, Brenda, were high school sweethearts. He graduated from Cradock High School and then attended and graduated from Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. Brenda also attended Moody Bible Institute, but they could not be married until after Hal graduated from VMI. Hal graduated from VMI, married Brenda, was commissioned as an Army Officer, and left to attend paratrooper school within a very short time frame. He also holds Master and Doctorate degrees from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville. In between semesters at the Seminary, Hal volunteered for a TDY assignment "Operation Just Cause" in 1990 to capture Noriega.



Picture at left: " Hal and Brenda at the 2020 PACMOAA "Christmas Concert".

Hal's Military background includes Active, Guard, and Reserve Army Duty. After going to paratrooper school Hal graduated from Army Airborne School, served with the 82nd Airborne, and then graduated from Army Ranger School before going to Vietnam. Hal remembered the commander being impressed with him being a graduate of Ranger School and thus assigned him as a combat tracker while in the 4th Infantry in Vietnam. The term "seek on" was the command given by the combat tracker to his war dog to start tracking. After a 1-year tour in Vietnam, Hal was transferred to the 101st Airborne Division at Fort Campbell for Leadership Training there. While serving as a missionary in Panama, Hal was reactivated to teach at the Army School of the Americas, training Latino allies. Later he was also a tactics instructor with the KY Army National Guard OCS for 3 years at Fort Knox, and served Army Reserve tours with SOUTHCOM Panama, and 5th Corps Germany

before retiring COL INF in 1998. In addition to being a graduate of Army Airborne and Ranger schools, Hal graduated from the Command and General Staff College, and the Army FAO (Foreign Area Officer) course. His military life has been interspersed with service to God as a church minister and missionary having served as a lay leader, ordained minister, and Missionary in Latin America and the Caribbean.



Hal has been a PACMOAA member since 2005, shortly after his return to the US in 2003. He has served as 1st VP/Program Chair, Secretary multiple times, member of Board of Directors, Legislative Representative and Assistant Legislative Representative, Assistant VCOC Representative, PACMOAA representative to the Portsmouth Mayors Military Affairs Committee, and President. **Picture to the left:**

Hal and Karl Wilson meeting in Richmond with legislator. Hal often met with state legislators with other VCOC members in Richmond and with national legislators when they were in town to advocate for veterans. While serving as Program Chair and throughout his time as a PACMOAA member, Hal has facilitated the presentation of many interesting programs. Several examples include an amazing program

on "War Dogs (the Combat Team Tracker Program) by Frank Merritt, whose wife is the author of the tracker book "Seek On" in 2012, and Ukrainian Col Kovalenko who discussed current events in Ukraine in September 2022 from a NATO perspective. Hal also served as the Nominating Committee Chair for 4 years and participated in numerous JROTC activities: e.g., JROTC Award Ceremonies.



Picture at left: Hal receiving thank you from LtCol Paul Pratt for participating in 2nd Annual Senior Leadership Camp Awards Ceremony. Another role Hal assumed has been the PACMOAA "Entertainer" for many years – playing with the Tidewater Concert Band at our annual Christmas Gala, singing duets and solos, providing a dramatic reading of "The Night Before Christmas" while in appropriate costume, and performing as Gen George C. Patton, delivering a typical monologue while in uniform at one of the Annual Joint Summer Brunches. *On a personal note:* Hal and I have worked closely over the past 20 years: e.g., he served as my secretary for 4 of my 6 ½ terms as President and I served as secretary for his term as President! Brenda graciously assisted us as Hal's secretary.

Hal has been active in Calvary Baptist Church as a Bible teacher, men's fellowship leader, and in the music ministry as well as a member of the Tidewater Concert Band, normally performing twenty to thirty times per year. The Tidewater Concert Band performed at PACMOAA's Annual Christmas Gala for many years.

Picture at right: Hal and Brenda with family on Thanksgiving 2024. Hal and Brenda have been married for 57 years and have 2 wonderful children, both born in military hospitals, and 3 grandchildren. At many Valentine Day dinners, Hal bought red roses for all the ladies in attendance and made a special presentation to Brenda with her rose. Several times over the years, he serenaded Brenda at concerts. As mentioned in several Personal Affairs columns over the past few months, Hal has been having some serious medical issues. When this interview occurred on 12 March, he was still having significant mobility issues and receiving PT at home. Hal and Brenda enjoy having visitors, but with frequent Dr visits and therapy sessions it is best to call before going to visit. Submitted by: Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret)



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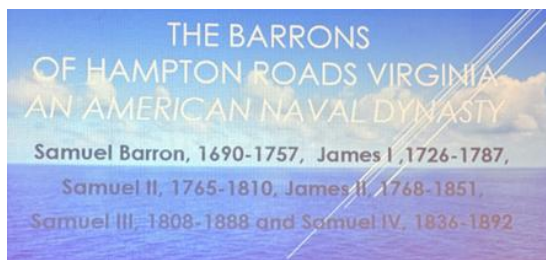


CAPT LaLonde introducing Prospective new member, CAPT Jim Hoffower, USN (Ret)

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



Left: After Lindsey Jones presentation on the Naval Dynasty of the Barron's, CAPT Bruce LaLonde presented Mr. Jones with a WORLD FAMOUS PACMOAA MUG!



Right: CDR Mike Riley receiving the PACMOAA Leadership Bear from CAPT Bruce LaLonde



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

As we see the spring season, I am inspired by the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

For Flowers That Bloom

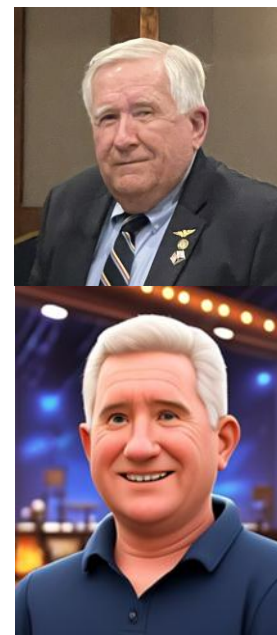
*For flowers that bloom about our feet;
For tender grass, so fresh, so sweet;
For song of bird, and hum of bee;
For all things fair we hear or see,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!*

*For blue of stream and blue of sky;
For pleasant shade of branches high;
For fragrant air and cooling breeze;
For beauty of the blooming trees,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!*



Submitted by
CAPT Bob Brewer, USN (Ret) Chaplain

CDR Ken App, USN (Ret)
Salute Editor
Editor's Avatar>



That's a WRAP for APRIL

THE PORTSMOUTH AREA CHAPTER OF



PACMOAA

MOAA is the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. It is a **nonprofit organization** that advocates for a strong national defense but is politically **nonpartisan**. The association **supports and advocates for government policies that protect the earned benefits of military members** (Active Duty, Reserves, National Guard, and Retirees) **and their families**.

You can make a difference by joining your local **MOAA** chapter (**PACMOAA**).

PACMOAA celebrated its **40th anniversary** in April 2023 and participates in numerous community activities:

- **Monthly newsletter** (The Salute) except June/July & Aug./Sept. issues.
- **Facebook group** set up in January 2020.
- **Monthly program/dinner meetings** at Roger Brown's Restaurant & Sports Bar in Portsmouth (except in July & August).
- July is the **annual joint brunch** with other local Chapters of **MOAA**.
- **Recognition** of superior members of **JROTC units** in **14 local High Schools**. Certificates and medals are given to students by a member of the **PACMOAA Leadership Team** at **JROTC Award Ceremony**.
- **Scholarship Award** for local student(s) going to college ROTC and presented at annual Scholarship recognition program/dinner meeting in June. One to two \$1500 scholarships are presented each year!
- Participation in **community activities** like parades, especially the **annual Memorial Day** parade in Portsmouth with **PACMOAA** banner on cars.
- Participation in **Toys for Tots** program at the annual Christmas Gala.
- **Donations** to the **Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless**, and to **local JROTC unit** to help raise funds for their participation in activities like drill meets with other JROTC units.
- **Membership in VCOC (Virginia Council of Chapters)**, which is very active in state legislative issues.
- **One of the VCOC Leadership Team is a PACMOAA member!**
- **Participate in recognizing federal and state legislators for their efforts for Virginians.**
- Very involved with **MOAA Advocacy in Action** since 2020.
- **PACMOAA** has been recognized as a **5th Level of Excellence Chapter** for the **14th year** in a row and received **Col Marvin J. Harris Communication Award** at **Five-Star level** for **Print newsletter 4th year & Website for 3rd year** in 2024!! These are the highest awards MOAA presents to chapters.

Access more information on **PACMOAA** at www.pacmoaa.org 3/28/25

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

PACMOAA MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM 2025

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%
Membership Category	1 Year	2 Year	<u>Best Value</u> 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: 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.

DATE: _____ SIGNATURE: _____