



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 V

LEARN MORE AT PACMOAA.ORG

MAY 2025

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

NEWS FLASH

PACMOAA has been recognized as a **MOAA 5th Level of Excellence Chapter** for the **15th** year in a row and received **MOAA's Col Marvin J. Harris Communication Award** at **Five-Star** level for **Print newsletter 5th** year & **Website for 4th** year in 2024!! These are the highest awards MOAA presents to chapters!

FROM THE PRESIDENT's DESK



PACMOAA family:

The April dinner was highlighted by a personal and focused briefing by Capt Derrek Burrus (Commanding Officer- Coast Guard Base Portsmouth) who invited us to aggressively use the services available on the base.

I'm overwhelmingly proud to have welcomed CDR Duane Close, CAPT Jim Hoffower, and CAPT Martin Snyder to our membership. They already have enriched our meetings which added to the camaraderie of our gatherings.

Please make a strong effort to join us on June 12th for our annual "ROTC" scholarship recognition dinner with a Local JROTC Unit Presenting Colors. We expect to have several representatives from our associated 14 high schools and will be awarding two scholarships. Let's support these schools by honoring their achievements. Anchors aweigh.

Bruce

Bruce LaLonde CPA, CAPT USN (Ret) PACMOAA President, 757-241-3026

RIGHT: After Presenting CAPT Burrus with a Certificate of Appreciation & the World Famous PACMOAA Coffee Mug. ALL USCG Personnel and Surviving Spouses posed for this group Picture.



Left: CAPT LaLonde presenting the Leadership Bear to LCDR Bob Wall.

Right: CAPT LaLonde with new Members, CAPT Martin Snyder, and CAPT Jim Hoffower



VETERAN CRISIS HOTLINE Dial 988 then press 1

PACMOAA
LEADERSHIP

SEE LEADERSHIP BUTTON



CHAPTER NEWS

MAY

National Military Appreciation Month

Presentation of MOAA Medals to JROTC Cadets this month. See Chart pp8-9

- 01 Silver Star Service Banner Day/ Loyalty Day
- 05 Cinco de Mayo
- 08 V-E DAY 1945 - PACMOAA Dinner Meeting 1800
- 09 MILITARY SPOUSE APPRECIATION DAY Friday before Mother's Day
- 10-18 Armed Forces Week Second Sat. Thru 3rd Sun. in May (not official)
- 11 **MOTHER'S DAY** Second Sunday
- 13 Navy Nurse Corps Established 1908
- 15 Women's Army Auxiliary Corps (WAAC) Established 1942
- 17 ARMED FORCES DAY Third Saturday in May
- 22 National Maritime Day
- 22 NOAA CORPS Birthday (1970)
- 26 Memorial Day 142nd Portsmouth Memorial Day Parade

HAPPY MAY BIRTHDAYS

Dan Akeredolu Janet Boschen Robert Bowlin
Sarah Grigg Martin Snyder Mary Snyder

May Dinner Meeting

will be held on **Thursday, May 8th** 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*Slow Roasted Shaved Prime Rib**Catfish Bites**Roasted Corn/ Green beans**Red Bliss Mashed**Banana Pudding**Cornbread**Tea, Sweet Tea, Coffee, Lemonade and Water*

Cost is \$25 (includes gratuity & tax). Cash bar available. Please make your reservation no later than **Sunday, May 4th** 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: COL Irv and Dottie Lindley, Betsy Freeman, CDR Mike Riley, and CDR Hans Sachse



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

SPEAKER**May 2025 Speaker and Program**

LTC Frank Labrecque has had a distinguished career spanning over four decades. He served as the Executive Director of Human Resources, Student Records, Technology, and Pupil Transportation for Newport News Public Schools from 1999 to 2017, and as Director of Transportation for Williamsburg James City County Public Schools from 1994 to 1999. Alongside his wife, Jeanne, Frank owned and operated the Coffee Beanery at Patrick Henry Mall from 1991 to 1998.

Currently residing at Lake Prince Woods, Frank coordinates speakers for the LPW Veterans group and has presented on topics such as “Elon Musk: Unleashed Influence,” a historical account of a WWII veteran aboard the destroyer “Merciless

Melvin,” and a motivational talk, “You Are Where You Belong.”

Frank began his career in the US Army, serving as an infantry officer from 1973 until 1994, retiring as a Lieutenant Colonel. He holds a Master’s degree and a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies in Industrial Psychology, as well as a BS in Physical Education. A published author under the pseudonym Scion Fra, Frank’s book, “Proxima b, Interstellar Voyage”, earned 2nd place in the CIPA EVVY book award. He is also an Eagle Scout and a standout high school football player. Frank is a Life Member of MOAA and has been a PACMOAA member for almost 3 years.

Title. “Unlocking the VA: Benefits you may be missing.”

Brief Overview: Thirty years after retiring, I recently discovered the valuable benefits that the VA offers.

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

CAPT Jim Hoffower, USN (Ret) and his wife DeeAnn from Portsmouth

CAPT Marty Snyder, USN (Ret) and his wife Judi from Chesapeake

PACMOAA has 72 paid members now with 5 new members and only 1 person that still needs to pay dues for this year. Many of PACMOAA’s Charter members were medical personnel and we still have a significant number with 4 physicians, 3 surviving spouses of physicians, 6 retired or former military RNs and 1 surviving spouse RN as well as several spouses that are RNs, 1 pharmacist and a spouse that was a pharmacist, and several medical service corps officers!

Since **membership** is **PACMOAA’s top priority** and we **need all members to be recruiters**, each newsletter has a dues renewal /membership application attached at the end. This can be used by the members that still need to renew their membership and for all PACMOAA members to use when recruiting new members. A single sheet overview of PACMOAA will also be attached at the end of the newsletter that can be used for recruiting.

PACMOAA finally has access to the new Committee Module which list chapter members and potential members but the learning curve for this “updated” version is steep and not as use friendly as the previous version. Word of mouth and members inviting friends/colleagues is still the most effective method of obtaining new members.

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, Donations for Scholarships or for Dinners 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 or the appropriate title” 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.

Submitted by: Sherry Ferki MAJ USA (Ret) Membership Chair

PERSONAL AFFAIRS/ SURVIVING SPOUSE**Surviving Spouse Corner: Improve Your Mental Skills With These Brain Exercises**

By: Pat Green April 1, 2025 [MOAA - Surviving Spouse Corner: Improve Your Mental Skills With These Brain Exercises](#)

Most of us have noticed a mental decline in a close friend or family member. Perhaps they don't seem as sharp, witty, or speedy as they once were.

You might wonder whether others are noticing this with you as well.

Mental decline is not just a phenomenon of aging. Stress, emotions, and poor diet and sleep reduce cognitive skills and affect all ages.

If you have had a stroke or a brain injury, or if you are concerned about a perceived mental decline, speak to your family doctor. If the doctor recognizes an issue, a neurologist can provide a detailed cognitive skills evaluation.

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

Physical health and emotional health correlate with mental health. If you are consumed with grief or anxiety or dealing with a disease, deal with that first. If serious grieving extends more than two years, seek grief counseling for help. Complicated grief is seen in 9% of widows ages 60 to 75. A smaller percentage of men are affected.

If you want to improve your mental skills, try adding mental strengthening exercises into daily activities, such as:

- **Recall.** Practice memorizing names, phone numbers, vocabulary words, baseball standings, NCAA March Madness lineups, or TV program schedules. Look at a magazine photo for a few seconds, close your eyes, and try to recall items in the photo.
- **Analysis.** Read a newspaper article. Set it aside, then try to write a recap or summary of the article. Try to remember the who, what, when, where, and why.
- **Spatial.** Rearrange a linen closet, pantry, or garage. Look for the most pragmatic and yet economical use of space. Do the same exercise with drawers in kitchen, bed, or bath. While you're at it, set aside some donation items and throw out expired items.
- **Social.** Have a conversation every day. If you live alone, this might be a challenge. Practice small talk at the checkout line of stores. Initiate a phone call or an invitation. This is a must. Accept any invitations you receive. Try to remember a joke you can tell at your next social event.
- **Focus.** Stay focused on whatever activity you are engaged in. It might be a conversation, gardening, dancing, chores, or workouts at the gym. Focus on listening, strength, the number of repetitions, muscles involved, posture, and breathing. Be in one with your thoughts. Meditation and prayer are very good options of mental focus.

- **Fun and games.** This can be all manner of social get-togethers. But there are some good solitary options. Jigsaw puzzles provide color and form discernment. Manipulation of the pieces is also good hand-eye coordination practice. Sudoku uses number grids, but it is not a math game. It is a logic exercise. Start with easy grids, and progress to expert status. Using computer sites, you can play Bridge, Gin Rummy, or Hearts with robots. These games require a memory of cards played and the counted.

Send Us Your Feedback

We'd love to hear from you. Please let us know if this article was helpful by sending an email to sscomm@moaa.org.

MORE SURVIVING SPOUSE CORNER ARTICLES

Surviving Spouse Corner: Resources for Caregivers

By: Cheryl Toland April 25, 2025 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/member-spotlight/surviving-spouse-corner-resources-for-caregivers/>

There are 14.3 million military and veteran caregivers, representing 5.5% of the U.S. adult population, according to a [report from Rand](#). If you find there is a need for a caregiver in your life or if you become a caregiver, know that caregivers are not alone. Many organizations offer information, guidance, and resources. Here are some to consider:

MOAA

Stay in the know about legislation and news affecting the caregiver community by reading the [latest articles from MOAA](#). You can also take action on legislation pertaining to caregivers through [MOAA's Legislative Action Center](#).

One example: The Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act would help close gaps in caregiver financial planning and preparation by providing professional development, employment assistance, and retirement guidance specifically tailored for veteran caregivers. This legislation is critical to ensuring caregivers receive the recognition, support, and financial security they have earned through their service to veterans. Urge your lawmaker to [support this bill today](#).

MOAA also partners with the Elizabeth Dole Foundation to provide [Tips for Lifelong Caregiving](#).

[RELATED: [Caregivers Sacrifice for Our Veterans – Now Congress Must Support Them](#)]

Elizabeth Dole Foundation

[The Elizabeth Dole Foundation](#) addresses “the obstacles our military and veteran caregivers face regularly, from providing access to essential resources and support networks to calling for policy changes.” Their initiatives also include the Dole Caregiver Fellowship program and the Hidden Heroes Campaign.

VA Programs

The [VA's Caregiver Support Program](#) offers clinical services to caregivers of eligible and covered veterans enrolled in the VA health care system. The program's mission is to promote the health and well-being of family caregivers who care for our nation's veterans.

Its programs and resources include the [VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#), which offers enhanced clinical support for family caregivers of eligible veterans; [Caregiver Support Program Teams](#), which have expertise in caregiving and, most importantly, are caring professionals; and [caregiver health and well-being coaching](#), a personal guide who will help you develop a personal health plan based on your values, needs, and goals.

[VA Aid and Attendance](#), or housebound benefits, provide monthly payments added to the amount of a monthly VA pension for qualified veterans and survivors.

Remarriage Rules: What Surviving Spouses Should Know

By: Lila Quintiliani April 23, 2025 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/health-care-and-earned-benefits/remarriage-rules-what-surviving-spouses-should-know/>

When a military retiree passes away or a servicemember dies on active duty, their surviving spouse remains eligible for all benefits that were previously authorized, including TRICARE, TRICARE For Life, and commissary and exchange privileges. However, surviving spouses who remarry may become ineligible for many military benefits, with a few exceptions.

Here's a breakdown of how remarriage affects a surviving spouse's ability to access a range of service-connected programs and benefits. *Note: MOAA continues its support of the Love Lives On Act, which would restore certain benefits to survivors who remarry before age 55; learn more about the bill, and write your lawmakers to seek their support, [at this link](#).*

Health Care

Spouses who remarry lose access to TRICARE unless they marry another servicemember or retiree. If there are dependents, they are eligible for military health care until they age out or otherwise lose eligibility.

Even if the remarriage ends in death or divorce, the surviving spouse cannot regain their TRICARE benefit.

If a spouse remarries and no longer qualifies for TRICARE, they might be eligible for health benefits through the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or [CHAMPVA](#).

To be eligible for CHAMPVA, one must be the surviving spouse of a veteran who died from a service-connected disability or who was rated permanently and totally disabled at the time of their death.

CHAMPVA eligibility is lost if the remarriage occurs prior to age 55, but it can be restored in the case of death or divorce. Eligibility is unaffected if the remarriage takes place after age 55.

[MORE FROM MOAA: [What Happens When I Remarry?](#)]

Survivor Benefit Plan

The [Survivor Benefit Plan](#) (SBP) allows retired military personnel to leave a portion of their pay to eligible beneficiaries. If a retiree elected to participate in SBP, eligibility for the annuity begins on the day after the veteran's death. SBP is automatic for those who die on active duty.

SBP payments are suspended if a surviving spouse remarries before age 55, but they can be reinstated if the new marriage ends in death or divorce. If the remarriage occurs after age 55, SBP benefits continue uninterrupted.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

[Dependency and Indemnity Compensation](#) (DIC) is a tax-free, monthly benefit from the VA paid to eligible survivors of a veteran who died while on active duty, died from a service-connected condition, or who had a rating of totally disabled for at least 10 years prior to their death.

Like SBP, payments are suspended if remarriage occurs before age 55, but they can be reinstated if the new marriage ends through death or divorce. If the remarriage occurs after age 55, DIC benefits can continue without interruption.

[UPDATED MONTHLY: [MOAA's Surviving Spouse Corner](#)]

Other Military Benefits

Surviving spouses retain commissary and exchange privileges, but lose them if they remarry. These benefits are reinstated if the remarriage ends in death or divorce.

VA Home Loan

Some surviving spouses may have [VA Home Loan Guaranty program eligibility](#) if they were the spouse of a veteran who died while in service or from a service-connected disability, or was totally disabled. If they remarry before the age of 57, they lose this benefit.

Non-Military Benefits

Surviving spouses are eligible to receive [Social Security survivor benefits](#) based on the work record of the deceased worker. Survivor payments continue for remarriages after age 60 (or age 50 if disabled). At age 62 or older, a beneficiary could receive benefits based on their new spouse's work (if those benefits would be higher).

Surviving Spouse Resources From MOAA

Legislative updates. Ways to connect with other surviving spouses. Information about your benefits. Bookmark this page today. <https://www.moaa.org/content/topic-and-landing-pages/i-am-a-surviving-spouse/>



Above 3 articles 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

MAY UPDATE ON ADVOCACY IN ACTION 2025

The information below was gathered from attending 2 MOAA meetings, VCOC 2nd Quarterly Meeting and State Legislative Forum, on April 15, 2025.

A very interesting discussion occurred at the State Leg Forum per the Hill Day Visits – Introductory Talking Points were reviewed. This was done at the request of Gen Kelly before talking about the legislative priorities for the 119th Congress due to concerns about some of the potential impacts of the ongoing efforts to find efficiencies across the federal budget. Excerpts follow:

- We must balance fiscal responsibility with ensuring the nation upholds its promises to those who serve and have served this country.
- Each year, MOAA takes out an ad in *The Hill* newspaper to promote our annual fly-in event. This year, we used that space to reaffirm MOAA's mission: if service-earned pay and benefits are put at risk, we stand ready to use all available resources to ensure our unified voice is heard.
- At MOAA national, our GR (Government Relations) team specializes in people programs, and we're happy to help you navigate pending governmental decisions that may impact serve-earned pay and benefits.

At the VCOC meeting, Monti Zimmerman, VCOC Legislative Rep noted that he and President Diana Kupchella led the 2 teams for the Virginia delegation and visited every Virginia legislator/their office. One team focused on DoD issues and the other on VA issues. Both addressed the Military Spouse Hiring Act.

Many similar comments were made at both the VCOC and State Leg Forum meetings. The teams received a single copy of a one-page document that showed all 5 AiA 2025 Priorities with a QR code during their prep just before meeting with legislators. In the past, members were able to share the position papers with their legislators ahead of time to help prepare them. The meetings with legislators /leg. assistants were set up by a new platform that was utilized this year for the first time that arranged all the appointments, and most members felt they lost the personal connections they had established with their legislators! It was difficult to know much about the legislators when everyone received their list of scheduled meetings after arriving in DC for the day of visits and some were changed at the last minute.

One of the more positive comments was that this system was less labor intensive in terms of making all the contacts with the legislators' offices to schedule visits. Members were encouraged to continue to talk with and/or meet with their legislators after the AiA Day as they would be returning to their state. See <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/advocacy/moaas-mission-continues-advocacy-in-action-2025-still-needs-your-support/>.

One of the Government Relations Team members from MOAA, Renee Campos, mentioned that they didn't see

as much interaction with the legislative action center as they hoped for this year. The 1st Quarter Legislative Action Center Engagement State Profile showed only 15% of chapter/council members in Virginia are registered in their system. PACMOAA showed 31 registrants that had taken 79 actions. Most chapters had less than 10 actions even when much larger than PACMOAA and with more registrants!! Even though our members utilized the action center more than any other chapter in Virginia, **all PACMOAA members and spouses** need to be registered with the Legislative Action Center at <https://moaa.quorum.us/>. The more involved members are, the better chance we have of protecting the service-earned pay and benefits.

What Budget Constraints Could Mean for Your Earned Benefits

By: Brenden McMahon April 15, 2025 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/advocacy/what-budget-constraints-could-mean-for-your-earned-benefits/>

MOAA representatives discussed ongoing concerns in key areas during a recent meeting with professional staff from both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, part of our work to protect service-earned benefits in the face of budget constraints and a compressed congressional calendar.

The talks covered four key areas: [unaccompanied housing](#), [military spouse employment](#), military health system (MHS) [access to care](#), and veterans [exposed to toxins while in uniform](#). Professional staff on both committees characterized the year ahead as primarily defensive, with limited opportunity for advancing new legislative priorities.

They expressed the greatest openness to efforts reinforcing or improving existing policies — particularly in areas related to DoD health care. Other issues, such as unaccompanied housing and military spouse employment, were met with interest and constructive discussion, though committee staff acknowledged constraints that may limit broader legislative action this year.

Here's a look at what was discussed in the March session, and how you can keep up with progress on these critical issues.

Unaccompanied Housing

MOAA and committee staff discussed the potential impacts of the [continuing resolution](#) on planned unaccompanied housing improvements. Committee staff acknowledged the issue but noted that funding limitations and competing priorities may constrain options in the near term.

While broader legislative movement on this issue may prove challenging this year, it remains a critical area in need of oversight.

[KEY LINKS: [MOAA Issue Paper](#) | [Video](#) | [Urge Your Legislators to Improve Unaccompanied Housing Transparency](#)]

Military Spouse Employment

MOAA highlighted ongoing challenges facing military spouses in the federal workforce, including barriers related to licensure portability and other employment obstacles. Committee staff expressed support and encouraged continued focus on the issue, noting potential opportunities to push forward bills like the Resilient Employment and Authorization Determination to Increase the National Employment of Serving Spouses (READINESS) Act. MOAA continues its work in support of the Military Spouse Hiring Act, which would award a tax credit to businesses hiring military spouses. However, because this bill would involve changes to the tax code, it would fall under a different committee jurisdiction.

[KEY LINKS: [Issue Paper](#) | [Video](#) | [Ask Your Lawmakers to Support Military Spouse Employment](#)]

Military Health System: Access to Care

Committee staffers encouraged MOAA to continue advocating for reliable MHS funding amid concerns that DoD is redirecting resources away from health care, impacting both readiness and the benefit itself by undercutting the direct care system.

Committee staff requested feedback on recent MHS stabilization testimony and other legislative proposals. MOAA was also asked to provide draft legislative language for a digital access assistance platform, which is one

of our Tier 1 priorities, and help clarify how much was saved through the [TRICARE pharmacy network reductions](#).

[KEY LINKS: [Access to Care Issue Paper](#) | [Video](#) | [Share Your Health Care Access Story With MOAA](#)]

Toxic Exposure

MOAA discussed recommendations from its [Ending the Wait initiative](#) and raised concerns about ongoing challenges to access service-earned care and benefits. Committee staff asked what specific problems remain unresolved and whether DoD is still failing to acknowledge certain exposure-related conditions.

MOAA and committee staff agreed it is critical to clearly identify what is still not working in these processes and what gaps may remain.

[KEY LINKS: [Issue Paper](#) | [Video](#) | [Ask Your Lawmaker to Help End the Wait for Service-Earned Benefits](#)]

A Steady Voice

As Congress faces a compressed legislative calendar and ongoing budget uncertainty, MOAA remains committed to engaging with lawmakers and staff to advance practical, achievable improvements for the uniformed services and veteran communities. Even in a constrained environment, opportunities remain — and MOAA will continue to serve as a trusted voice, providing thoughtful policy recommendations and amplifying the concerns of those who serve and have served.

To stay informed and support these efforts, visit [MOAA's Legislative Action Center](#).

More Than Medicine: Understanding the Value of VA Health Care

By: René Campos April 14, 2025 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/advocacy/more-than-medicine-understanding-the-value-of-va-health-care/>

For generations, the VA health care system has embodied the nation's promise to those who have served. Operated by the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), it provides not only medical care, but also critical support to veterans, families, caregivers, and survivors while advancing the broader health of the nation through education, innovation, and emergency response.

The far-reaching contributions of the VHA, and its importance to the nation, stem from its four core missions: delivering health care, training and educating health care professionals, conducting groundbreaking research, and responding to national emergencies. Together, these missions make the VHA a cornerstone of veteran support and a vital national asset.

Delivering Health Care

Serving more than 9 million veterans across more than 1,300 facilities, the VHA offers a full spectrum of health care services — from primary and mental health care to cutting-edge specialty treatments and services. To improve the quality of care and expand its services, the VA has in recent years:

- **Reduced Wait Times:** Improved [access to primary and mental health care](#), often outperforming private-sector benchmarks.
- **Expanded Community Care:** Used the [MISSION Act of 2018](#) to bolster its ability to refer veterans to non-VA providers when needed to access timely, specialized care closer to home.
- **Grown Telehealth Services:** Experienced a significant expansion in its remote programs, with dramatic increases in access for rural and homebound veterans.
- **Adopted a Whole Health Model:** Developed [a new approach](#) which helps veterans design personalized wellness plans including acupuncture, yoga, and nutritional counseling, allowing them to live fuller lives.
- **Supported Caregivers:** Expanded caregiver support programs including its specialized [Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#), offering home-based services, training, respite care, stipends, and more to those caring for veterans with serious injuries.

Training the Nation's Health Workforce

The VA is not just a provider of care — it is a vital educator. Through academic partnerships with over 1,400 institutions, the VA trains the next generation of health care professionals.

Each year, approximately 120,000 medical trainees — including physicians, nurses, psychologists, and social workers — gain clinical experience by working in VA facilities. An estimated 70% of practicing U.S. physicians have trained in the VHA.

This hands-on training prepares providers for complex, team-based care environments and enhances the nation's overall health system capacity. These education programs equip providers to serve veterans from all backgrounds and communities.

VHA's mission also extends to continuous learning and professional development for its workforce. VA clinicians benefit from ongoing access to advanced training, cutting-edge research, and academic partnerships — ensuring they remain at the forefront of medical innovation and best practices to better serve veterans.

Driving Innovation Through Medical Research

The VA has long been a leader in advancing medical knowledge with discoveries that benefit both veterans and the general population.

- **Pioneering Breakthroughs:** VA research has led to [major innovations](#) including the first successful liver transplant, the cardiac pacemaker, and computer tomography imaging technologies. The VA was also a trailblazer in using barcodes as part of medication administration, a widely adopted tool to reduce medication errors.
- **Precision Medicine and Genomics:** The VA delivers [cutting-edge cancer care](#) through genetic sequencing. In tandem with the [Million Veteran Program](#) — one of the world's largest health-genomics databases — VA researchers are uncovering connections between genes and chronic conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.
- **Mental Health Leadership:** VA research has led to the development of evidence-based therapies like prolonged exposure therapy and cognitive processing therapy for PTSD. These treatments, first validated within the VA, are used widely throughout the U.S. mental health system.

Protecting the Nation in Times of Crisis

The VA's "Fourth Mission" serves all Americans — mobilizing department resources to aid in emergencies, disasters, and public health crises. Examples include:

- **COVID-19 Pandemic Response:** During the pandemic, the VA provided critical support beyond its veteran patient base, treating non-veterans, deploying more than 4,000 staff, and distributing millions of vaccine doses through federal and community partnerships.
- **Disaster Response Teams:** Using a [specialized personnel system](#), the VA is able to rapidly mobilize clinical staff to respond to wildfires, hurricanes, and other large-scale emergencies.
- **National Health Infrastructure:** VA medical centers serve as [federal coordinating centers](#) as part of a larger [national disaster medical system](#) response, ensuring surge capacity for mass casualty or pandemic scenarios — a role crucial to U.S. preparedness.

MOAA's Commitment to Improving the VHA and Honoring Veterans

These four missions form the backbone of a system that not only honors veterans with world-class care, but also serves the nation through cutting-edge medical education, groundbreaking research, and vital emergency response capabilities.

Like all large health care systems, the VA faces challenges. MOAA acknowledges the need for continued reform to simplify the system and ensure veterans can more easily access the care and benefits they've earned.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to work alongside VA Secretary Doug Collins and Congress to drive meaningful, veteran-centered improvements that enhance quality, increase transparency, and ensure timely access to care.



By preserving and strengthening VA health care, we not only honor the sacrifices of our veterans — we invest in the health, resilience, and well-being of the entire nation.

Your Voice Matters: Share With MOAA

Have you experienced the benefits of VA health care? Do you have thoughts on how to improve the VHA system? We're eager to hear from you. Reach out to MOAA's legislative team at legis@moaa.org to share your experiences and recommendations.

Above 4 articles Submitted by: Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret) PACMOAA Assist leg Rep

VCOC AND JLC

Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) Met Virtually on Tuesday, April 15, 2025, from 1505-1640. 11 of 15 Chapters were represented, achieving a Quorum.

Nominations for ALL VCOC Officers were requested by the July 8th Meeting. Present Vacant positions include 1st VP, Secretary, and Chaplin. We need a Chaplin for the 4th Quarter Biennial Meeting for the Memorial/Remembrance Ceremony.

MAJ Sherry Ferki, VCOC Treasurer, presented the 1st Quarter 2025 Balance and showed fiscal restraint and income exceeds expenses. Liability Insurance was discussed and the need for it for Chapters too. It should be about \$322 per year.



CDR App reported on the VCOC Directory and should be able to send it out to chapters in May 2025.

Plans are to have the October Meeting at the Virginia War Memorial. It is the most Central Location for All Chapters.

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

VCOC Legislative Report & JLC Update

As reported in last month's Salute, all of the JLC 2025 Legislative Initiatives passed except for one – **JLC Initiative 2025-02** *Stop Unscrupulous Firms from Exploiting Veterans (Veterans Services Protection Act)* which failed on February 17, 2025. The objective of this initiative was to prohibit 'Claim Shark' companies from preying on veterans seeking to obtain or modify their VA entitlements. LtCol John Down, USAF (Ret) MOAA Representative to the JLC reported at the VCOC Board of Directors Meeting on April 15, 2025 that the JLC would be considering this initiative as one of the potential initiative items for 2026.

On State issues, the Governor returned the budget, HB 1600, to the General Assembly for their consideration on March 24, 2025 which contained 205 amendments and eight line-item vetoes.

The General Assembly reconvened a session to consider the budget on April 2, 2025. The House and Senate largely stuck to the legislation and budget that they had passed in February. There were about 300 bills for lawmakers to consider overriding or further amending. Legislators largely rejected changes the Governor recommended for the compromise budget they passed in February which included making two tax cuts affecting primarily lower income Virginians permanent. This leaves the Governor with a package of budget amendments similar to the one passed by the General Assembly to consider but adjusted for the Governor's vetoes. Governor Youngkin is now able to veto items that include his recommendations that legislators didn't agree to. By the time

the legislature adjourned, they had only accepted a few dozen budget amendments. All 100 seats in the Virginia House of Delegates are up for election this fall, which puts the votes and comments of those running for reelection under extra scrutiny. (This information is provided by reporter Jahd Khalil which covers Virginia politics for VPM News.)

From April 3, 2025, the Governor has thirty (30) days to review and take final action on the bills and budget amendments sent back to his desk. There is no current information on the Governor's decisions as of the time of this printing.

Mary L. Snyder

PACMOAA VCOC Legislative Representative

PROGRAMS

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

8 May 2025	LTC Frank Labrecque, USA (Ret) -VA Health Care System vs VA Disability
12 June 2025	Annual Scholarship Dinner & Celebrating The Army's 250 th Birthday
13 or 20 July 2025	Joint Brunch - Location To Be Determined
11 September 2025	TBD
9 October 2025	TBD & Celebrating the Navy's 250 th Birthday
13 November 2025	Annual Business Meeting & Celebrating the USMC 250 th Birthday
11 December 2025	Christmas Gala

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!

COMMUNITY

2025 JROTC AWARD CEREMONIES

Updated 4/30/25

School	JROTC Lead Instructor	Date/ Time	Presenter <i>Cadet</i>
CHESAPEAKE	<i>All AFJROTC</i>		CAPT Rick Titi
Deep Creek HS	MAJ Darrell Pearman CMSgt Pabon	14 May 2025 1830 Grassfield HS	<i>Dameon Love</i>
Grassfield HS	Lt Col Dirk Sandstrom CMst Smiley		<i>Haniya Fadli</i>
Great Bridge HS Christian Wendler	Lt Col Christian Wendler SMSgt Smith		<i>Albert Green</i>
Indian River HS Lynn Holmbeck	Lt Col Lynn Holmbeck CNSgt Patrie		<i>Nathaniel Huff</i>
Oscar Smith HS	LtCol Tom Barrett MSgt Cain		<i>Raven Scott</i>
Western Branch HS	COL Bryan <u>Spalla</u> SMSgt Terrell Rogers		<i>Kaiya Palmer</i>
PORTSMOUTH			
Churchland HS <i>MCJROTC</i>	LtCol Paul Pratt	13 May 2025 0915-1030 HS Auditorium	COL Irv Lindley, USA (Ret) <i>Cadet 1st Lt Ryan McLendon</i> <i>Unit CO</i>
I.C. Norcom HS <i>NJROTC</i>	CWO2 Joseph Redwood 754-1439 Chief Covington	21 May 2025 1800	CAPT Bruce LaLonde
Manor HS <i>AJROTC</i>	MAJ Wallace White SSG Orlanda Gordon MSG (R) Stanley Hill	1 May 0900 – Battalion formation / can present then	CAPT Bruce LaLonde <i>Cadet CPT Travis Scaggs</i>
SUFFOLK			
Lakeland HS <i>AFJROTC</i>	Capt. Sacha Fountain, USAF (Ret) SGT Yurkovich	29 May 2025 1:30-2:30 pm HS Auditorium	
Nansemond River HS <i>AFJROTC</i>	Col Leonard Sobieski MSgt Sheldon Powdar	7 May 2025 1900 HS Auditorium	<i>Cadet Capt. Mia Ong-Hay</i>
Kings Fork HS <i>NJROTC</i>	Senior Chief Shellaree Twitty		MAJ Sherry Ferki if ceremony held
Smithfield HS <i>AJROTC</i>	LTC Pete Badoian 1SGT Marvin Hunter	22 May 2025 1315 in the SHS gym	MAJ Sherry Ferki <i>C/PFC Kandice Chiong</i>

PACMOAA ACTIVITIES MAY 2025



HAPPY NURSES WEEK

National Nurses will be celebrated from 6 May to 12 May, honoring the contributions of nurses in healthcare. The picture to the left was taken in May 2019, when 7 of 8 PACMOAA nurses (members and spouses) enjoyed lunch together in celebration of National Nurse Week. The nurses pictured to the left include Donna App, Twila Nelson, Sherry Ferki, Dolly Cherrington, Alice Fticsar, and Shirley Barker. Shirley, a retired Army Nurse, was a PACMOAA member for 30 years and served on the Leadership Team continuously for over 20 years! Sadly, she died several years ago. Joyce Johnson was not included in this picture. Hopefully, the PACMOAA nurses will be able to resume celebrating National Nurses Week together this year. As far as I know, PACMOAA has 12 nurses (5 retired Navy or Army nurses, one former Navy nurse, and 6 civilian nurses - surviving spouses or spouses. Thank you all for your service as nurses both in the military and civilian communities!!

MEMORIAL DAY EVENTS

Portsmouth Hosts the 141st Annual Memorial Day Parade 26 May 2025

One of the longest running Memorial Day parades in the country, the City of Portsmouth's Memorial Day Parade began in 1884. Since that time, Portsmouth has recognized and honored the sacrifices of the brave men and women in the United States Armed Forces each year during the parade. Enjoy floats, marching bands, military units, and lots of excitement. The parade **begins at 10 a.m.** and travels on High Street from Peninsula Avenue (at I.C. Norcom High School) to Water Street.



The viewing stand is on High and Court Street. **Pictured left** at 2014 parade, L to R: Karl Wilson, Bob & Nell Wall, Shirley Barker, Ray & Peg Cicirelli, Ron Pugh, & Sherry Ferki. PACTROA/PACMOAA has participated in this annual parade for over 25 years!

Chesapeake Memorial Day Ceremony 26

May 2025 – “The City of Chesapeake will hold its Annual Memorial Day Ceremony last Monday in May at 11:00 AM in front of Chesapeake City Hall on Cedar Road to honor Veterans and to show public appreciation for those who serve and have served our country. Chesapeake Mayor's Commissioner firmly believes that recognizing and honoring our Veterans for their contributions to the American way of life is pivotal to maintaining the freedoms and lifestyle that each of us enjoys on a daily basis here in Chesapeake. Chesapeake's Annual Memorial Day Observance is presented by The Mayor's Commission on Veteran's Affairs. Ceremony will be moved inside to the Council Chambers in case of rain.” <https://www.visitchesapeake.com/event/memorial-day-ceremony/9943/>

Location: Chesapeake Veterans Memorial at Chesapeake City Hall
306 Cedar Rd
Chesapeake, VA 23322
Phone: 757-382-6151
Time: 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Albert G. Horton, Jr Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk - To commemorate Memorial Day, flags will be placed on all gravesites and the Avenue of Flags will be erected. The 2025 Memorial Day Ceremony will be held from **10:00 AM -11:00 AM** with Keynote remarks from Virginia Department of Veterans Services Commissioner Chuck Zingler and retired U.S. Army Major Larry D. Moores.

The administration office will be open from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. to assist veterans and their families with gravesite location, general information, and filling out the cemetery pre-application form.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

During the Month of May we celebrate the Memorial of those who have given their all for our Country which we learn from John 15:13 show the greatest love that man can give to another. Therefore, this month let us remember them.

GRACIOUS GOD WE REMEMBER

*We remember the many brave men and women
who have given their lives
through the history of our country
to protect us from danger and harm.
We remember all those who sustained injury
in mind and/or body in the course of their service.
We salute all those who served in the military.*



Submitted by
CAPT Bob Brewer, USN (Ret) Chaplain



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



Left: DeeAnn and CAPT Jim Hoffower with Teresa Wilfong

Right: CAPT Bob Brewer with
CDR Joe Chop, and LCDR
Paul Lamczyk



Left: CAPT LaLonde with CAPT Burrus prior to the
Dinner Meeting

That's a WRAP for MAY 2025
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 **MOAA 5th Level of Excellence Chapter** for the **15th consecutive** year and received **MOAA's Col Marvin J. Harris Communication Award at Five-Star level for Print newsletter for 5th consecutive year & Website for 4th 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: _____