



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 XXXIV Issue VI

LEARN MORE AT PACMOAA.ORG

JUN/JUL 2025

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



PACMOAA family:

With great excitement we are ending our 42nd year as an organization advocating and protecting the benefits of those who have/are serving and their families. Thank you personally for your support and dedication.

We close the fiscal year with our annual "scholarship" dinner. We have chosen two exemplary students who epitomize leadership, service and accomplished academics.

Please consider joining us at our June 12th dinner to honor them and the host of partner JROTC commanders and family who will be joining. 28 Guests in

TOTAL! We need to show them the admiration and respect we have for their efforts.

In closing -- Happy 250th to the US Army

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



Above and Left: CAPTs Bruce LaLonde (PACMOAA President) and Jim Hoffower attended Portsmouth Manor HS JROTC Awards Ceremony, May 1, 2025. Left with Cadet CPT Travis Scagg.

Right: Portsmouth IC Norcom HS NJROTC Cadet LTJG Morgan Weaver, with CAPT Bruce LaLonde presenting the MOAA JROTC Leadership Award on May 21, 2025.



VETERAN CRISIS HOTLINE Dial 988 then press 1

PACMOAA LEADERSHIP

See Leadership Pulldown



CHAPTER NEWS

JUNE

- 4-7 Battle of Midway 1942
- 06 [WWII D-Day 1944](#)
- 12 Women's Veterans Day
- 12 **PACMOAA Scholarship Dinner Meeting**
- 14 [US Army 250th Birthday](#) (1775)/ Flag Day
- 17 USN Hospital Corps Established
- 15 Father's Day
- 20 [Summer Solstice](#)
- 22 GI Bill Signed 1944
- 23 [USCG Auxiliary Birthday](#) (1939)
- 25 Start of Korean War 1950
- 27 [PTSD AWARENESS DAY](#)

JULY

- 01 Women Army Corps AC) 1943
- 04 Independence Day
- 08 VCOC Third Quarter Meeting, Virtual 1500-1700
- 13 PACMOAA JOINT BREAKFAST/BRUNCH ROGER BROWN'S 1100-1300**
- 26 Americans with Disabilities Act 1990
- 27 End of Korean War 1953
- 30 Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service (WAVES) Est 1942
- 31 Eid al-AdHa

HAPPY JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Bill Coburn Joyce Johnson Irv Lindley Kevin Terry

JULY BIRTHDAYS

**Tom Cahill Sherry Ferki Sacha Fountain
Roger Hirsh Andre Mayfield Lynn Primeaux Paul Stott**

June Scholarship Dinner Meeting

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

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

Buffett Menu

*Slow Roasted Brisket
Baked Salmon with Sherry cream sauce
Sauté' Green Beans
Wild Rice
Harvest salad
Cornbread
Apple Clobber/ **US ARMY'S 250th Birthday Cake**
Tea, Sweet Tea, Coffee, Lemonade and Water*

Cost is \$25 (includes gratuity & tax). Cash bar available. Please make your reservation no later than **Sunday, June 8th** with Sherry Ferki at 757-922-7030 or by email at navmedarmynurse@gmail.com.

A RESERVATION MADE IS A RESERVATION PAID

Please join us in welcoming the 2025 PACMOAA Scholarship winners, their parents and JROTC instructors, as well as several other JROTC instructors! 28 Guest's in Total! Please **Make Every Effort to Attend this PACMOAA Hallmark Event!**
Right: scan the QR Code to find out more about PACMOAA



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

SPEAKER**1LT JASON SUSNOSKIE USA**

1LT Susnoskie was born and raised in Quakertown, Pennsylvania. He grew up playing all kinds of sports and always competing with his twin brother, Jared. This friendly competition fueled each of them to continue to better themselves both academically and athletically. This competition also resulted in both of them competing for the Army ROTC Scholarship while in high school. Both of them earned a full 4-year scholarship and after high school graduation, both attended Penn State University. 1LT Susnoskie received a Bachelor of Science in Security and Risk Analysis with minors in Military Studies and Information Systems and Technology. He was also awarded two certificates – one in IST and the other being a National Security Agency (NSA) certification. While at Penn State, he was hired by the FBI where he put his education to work in the intelligence community for three years.

Upon graduation, he was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant where he branched Military Intelligence with a detail to Infantry. His first summer after graduation, he trained with the ROTC students at their Cadet Summer Training (CST) at Fort Knox. This opportunity provided him a chance to share his knowledge and help train future officers as they sought to achieve their branch goals. After CST, he attended the Infantry Basic Officer Leadership Course and Airborne School. Upon graduation from these courses, he was stationed at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska. He has spent the past two years as a Rifle Company Platoon Leader and then a Heavy Weapons Platoon Leader. This opportunity as a Platoon Leader is one of the most rewarding jobs the Army has to offer. It provides growth as a leader while making an impact both in a soldier's life and for the unit.

Currently, 1LT Susnoskie is a MSII instructor at Norfolk State University and will also be working on his Masters Degree in Homeland Security. He is very excited to be involved in preparing and teaching the Army's Future Officers.

MEMBERSHIP**MEMBERSHIP UPDATE AND RENEWAL REMINDER JUNE 2025**

PACMOAA currently has 72 paid members now with 5 new members. In a recent email from MOAA giving feedback on the PACMOAA 2024 LOE (Levels of Excellence) submission, they were very impressed that PACMOAA recruited 9 new members last year! Unfortunately, 3 of those new members were new Surviving Spouses.

MOAA is trying to appeal more to the 40 – 60-year-old age group. As mentioned before, legislative advocacy for our BENEFITS should be the emphasis of our recruitment strategy. **Ask the question,** *"Do you want to have benefits when you retire or to keep your benefits if you are already retired?"* This should certainly resonate with this age group. Remember, if you invite a potential member as your guest, their dinner ½ price.

Many of the younger potential PACMOAA members do not want a social club but to belong to organizations that give back to the community. Thus, focusing on 1) legislative advocacy for military benefits that include all Uniformed Services, National Guard and Reservists, family members and Surviving Spouses and 2) Community

Service should be our enticement to interest fellow officers and Surviving Spouses to join PACMOAA and MOAA. ***Every member of PACMOAA needs to be a recruiter for us to thrive!***

I will be happy to send you a copy of our recruitment brochure and will bring some to each meeting. 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: Many members include donations for our **SCHOLARSHIP FUND** with their dues and/or dinner payments and this can be done in-person, via mail, or online. The students are very appreciative of any assistance they can obtain to help with their college expenses!!

Reminder per Guidelines for Paying PACMOAA Dues, 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.

By: MAJ Sherry Ferki USA (Ret), Membership Chair

PERSONAL AFFAIRS/ SURVIVING SPOUSE

PERSONAL AFFAIRS UPDATE MARCH 2025



COL Hal Hostetler, USA (Ret), has not been able to attend meetings this year. I spoke with Hal recently and he would welcome visitors but please call first!! He is having significant mobility issues and is primarily getting around in a wheelchair and has frequent Dr appointments. For members that do not know Hal, he has continuously served PACMOAA over 17 years in variety of leadership roles.

Pictured to the left (L to R): Karl Wilson, Rep. Bobby Scott and Hal while advocating for MOAA issues in 2019.

Mrs. Tricia Alexander, wife of MAJ Bob Alexander, USA (Ret) has been having significant medical issues for some time and is now in Hospice. Her

family would appreciate our prayers. I met Tricia at a local carwash and invited her and her husband to our Christmas Gala in 2013. They enjoyed the fellowship and Bob joined at that meeting.

I know of several other members/spouses that are suffering from significant medical issues. Please keep Hal, Tricia, our other members facing illness and their families in your prayers. Some of our members may need help with transportation or simple tasks. If so, please reach out and let me know if we can help you.

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

PACMOAA 2nd VP/Membership Chair

Personal Affairs Chair and Surviving Spouse Liaison Cell 757-630-5608

Grieving Ahead of Time VA supports caregivers with help and resources

May 23, 2025 Joseph Burks Director of Communications, VA Caregiver Support Program

<https://news.va.gov/140199/grieving-ahead-of-time/>

Caring for a Veteran can be a rewarding but emotional journey. As a caregiver, you may experience grief even before a loved one passes away. This type of grief is called anticipatory grief and can bring on a wide range of emotions.

It's normal to feel sadness, frustration, or even anger. The first step to healing is recognizing these feelings and finding ways to cope.

"Being a caregiver is a selfless and challenging role, and it's important to be patient with yourself," said VA

Caregiver Support Program (CSP) Executive Director Dr. Colleen Richardson. “Grief is a personal journey, but VA is here to support you every step of the way.”

Ways to cope with grief

- Take care of yourself: Make time for activities that bring you joy, help you relax and give you rest. [Caregiver Health and Wellbeing Coaching](#) empowers caregivers by helping them focus on their own health and wellbeing.
- Lean on friends and family: Reach out to loved ones for emotional support and practical help. VA also encourages caregivers to take breaks and rest when needed through our [respite care offerings](#).
- Find support: Connect with other caregivers who understand what you’re going through. Programs like [Caregiver Peer Support Mentoring](#) and [Building Better Caregivers](#) can help.
- Talk to a CSP staff member: CSP offers self-care courses for caregivers on topics like grief, resilience and self-care. There’s also a 6-week group called Thriving Through Change and Loss that helps caregivers cope with grief and find tools to move forward.
- Express your feelings: Journaling or art journaling can help you process emotions. Ask about [CSP’s Art Journaling](#) initiative to learn more.

VA services and supports

- Help the Veteran in your care create or update their advance care plan by visiting VA’s [Advance Care Planning & Making Decisions page](#). This page includes helpful websites, forms and handouts. VA also provides [services to support](#) families of deceased Veterans or service members.

About the Caregiver Support Program (CSP)

- CSP supports caregivers of Veterans through education, resources and services to help you and the Veteran you care for thrive. [Find your local caregiver support team](#).

Surviving Spouse Support: Take These Steps to Access Your Benefits

May 28, 2025 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/health-care-and-earned-benefits/surviving-spouse-support-take-these-steps-to-access-your-benefits/>

(This article by Kimberly Lankford originally appeared in the April 2025 issue of Military Officer, a magazine available to all MOAA Premium and Life members. Learn more about the magazine [here](#); learn more about joining MOAA [here](#).)

Military spouses have access to many resources and benefits after their servicemember passes away. If their spouse dies while on active duty, survivors receive personal support to walk them through the administrative process and make sure they receive all the benefits for which they’re eligible.

Each service branch has its own resources for helping surviving spouses. For example, when a sailor dies while on active duty, Navy liaisons provide short-term and long-term assistance.

The casualty assistance calls officer (CACO) helps with initial benefits claims, said Lt. Cmdr. Stuart Phillips, public affairs officer for Navy Personnel Command.

“After CACOs complete their duties, survivor care is turned over to assigned Navy Gold Star coordinators, responsible for long-term case management,” he said. “Coordinators remain in regular contact over the months and years ahead, as long as needed.”

[FROM MOAA: [Surviving Spouse Resources and Links](#)]

Surviving spouses of military retirees are eligible for many benefits, and they need to know how to get started and where to find help navigating the system. Here are five key steps surviving spouses should take after their servicemember dies:

Contact the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS). Notify DFAS soon after the death so it can suspend retired pay, then send the death certificate as soon as it is available to receive additional benefits, said Lt. Col. Mark E. Overberg, USA (Ret), who retired in August 2024 as the director of Army Retirement Services. You can [notify DFAS online](#).

You'll need to fill out more forms to start the annuity payments if you are eligible for the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP).

[FOR MOAA PREMIUM AND LIFE MEMBERS: [Preparing for the Loss of a Military Spouse](#)]

Update the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS). Go to a DEERS ID card site with a copy of the death certificate. You'll get a new ID card that will continue to give you access to the commissary, exchange, and other resources on military bases.

Updating the DEERS system updates TRICARE for your military health benefits. You can also mail the death certificate to DEERS.

[RELATED: [DoD ID Card Office Locator and Appointments](#)]

Contact TRICARE. Overberg recommends contacting TRICARE directly to update their system and find out how bills will be paid, especially if you aren't receiving the SBP.

Contact the VA. VA is the source of many benefits for surviving spouses, such as Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, military burials, and Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI). Contact them directly or get help navigating the process from a veterans service organization. The [VA's Office of Survivors Assistance](#) can help you learn about benefits and resources.

[FOR MOAA PREMIUM AND LIFE MEMBERS: [Your Guide to Military Burials](#)]

You might be eligible for overlooked benefits. For example, VGLI beneficiaries can receive financial counseling services, said Lt. Col. Richard A. "Skip" Fleming, USMC (Ret), a MOAA Life member and a certified financial planner who has helped many surviving spouses.

Find Resources: Each branch of service offers different resources to support surviving spouses of military retirees. Visit [Military OneSource](#) to find the resources for your service.

VA Shifts Survivors Assistance Office in Effort to Speed Up Benefits

May 7, 2025 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/health-care-and-earned-benefits/va-shifts-survivors-assistance-office-in-effort-to-speed-up-benefits/>

This article by Leo Shane III originally appeared on [Military Times](#), the nation's largest independent newsroom dedicated to covering the military and veteran community.

[Veterans Affairs officials](#) unveiled a major reorganization of survivors assistance programs Monday, including the establishment of an outreach team to help families of deceased veterans [navigate the department's bureaucracy](#).

They also promised ongoing improvements to "increase automation that will expedite survivors' claims" in coming months as part of the effort.

In an open message to the veterans community, [VA Secretary Doug Collins](#) said the moves are designed to simplify the process and improve families' interactions with the department.

"The last thing survivors need in their time of grief is frustrating red tape and bureaucracy," he said in a statement. "That's why we are creating a better system to more quickly and effectively provide survivors the services, support and compassion they've earned."

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

The [Office of Survivors Assistance](#) was established in 2008 as a way to consolidate benefits for deceased veterans

under a single agency. The office provides information on funeral resources, bereavement counseling and estate planning, as well as clarification on which veterans benefits continue after an individual's death.

VA officials plan to move the office from the Veterans Benefits Administration to reporting directly to the VA secretary, with five full-time staffers advising department leadership on survivors benefits issues.

Along with the change, leadership announced plans to stand up a new "white-glove" survivor outreach team in the the Philadelphia VA Regional Benefit Office to "guide and assist eligible survivors throughout every step of the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation claims process, with the goal of getting to 'yes' on claims decisions."

Survivors can be eligible for nearly \$2,000 in monthly payouts from VA depending on their health and their veterans' service-connected disabilities before death. But the calculations for the benefit can be overly complicated, with additions and subtractions for length of marriage, length of service and final military ranks.

[REMARRIAGE RULES: [What Surviving Spouses Should Know](#)]

That new team is scheduled to start work later this month, after personnel complete specialized training on survivor benefits issues.

Department officials said that they currently process more than 1,000 DIC payments or adjustments a day through automated systems. But they said they hope to expand that number in coming months, pending a review of the department's claims systems.

Collins and other senior leaders have promised a host of cost-savings and department improvements through a series of reforms, many aimed at trimming personnel and bureaucracy within the department.

The efforts so far have generally earned praise from Republicans but concern from Democrats, who worry cutback will lead to slower response times and delays in services.

[RELATED: [VA's Top Watchdog Agency Blames Poor Accounting Practices for Budget Scare](#)]



Above articles submitted by:
Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret)
PACMOAA 2nd VP/Membership Chair
Personal Affairs Chair/Surviving Spouse Liaison

Surviving Spouse Support: Take These Steps to Access Your Benefits

May 28, 2025 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/health-care-and-earned-benefits/surviving-spouse-support-take-these-steps-to-access-your-benefits/>

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Find Resources: Each branch of service offers different resources to support surviving spouses of military retirees. Visit [Military OneSource](#) to find the resources for your service.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE MAY 2025 MUSNAVC MEETING

The MOAA Uniformed Services Nurse Advocates Virtual Chapter (MUSNAVC) held its monthly meeting on 21 May and had MG Jeffrey Clark, USA (Ret), M.D., MPH, MSS, FAAP discuss War Docs. Before he spoke, there was a brief business meeting. MUSNAVC now has 531 members covering all states and 219 Congressional Districts.

Dr Clark retired in 2019 and with a fellow physician started the War Docs podcasts in June 2021. They are trying to appeal to a larger audience, honoring the legacy and preserving the history of military medicine. Per their

website: “**The WarDocs Mission** is to honor the legacy, preserve the oral history and showcase career opportunities, unique expeditionary experiences, and achievements of Military Medicine. Foster patriotism and pride in Who we are, What we do, and, most importantly, How we serve Our Patients, the DoD, and Our Nation.” The Volunteer Board of Directors has expanded to be larger and more representative of all military medicine to include NC, PT, MSC, etc. Volunteer Ambassadors include a younger group of people like medical students and young Dr and nurses.

Over 225 podcasts have been produced with over 2000 downloads/episode. Some speakers Dr Clark mentioned included DHA Senior Enlisted person, Surgeon Generals from all services, a UK war correspondent, Army Nurses, PT, a FOX News correspondent that was blown up in Ukraine and shared the story of his recovery, and military medical team spouses. Per the website: “WARDOS documents the experiences, contributions, and innovations of all military medicine Services, ranks and Corps (affectionately called “Doc” – an earner title of respect, trust, and confidence) who are dedicated to the medial care of our fellow comrades-in-arms (both on and off the battlefield), our Wounded Warriors and our military Families.” Dr Clark stressed they are always looking for interesting presentations and encouraged all the attendees to follow up with him about any potential speakers at <https://www.wardocspodcast.com>.

After Dr Clark spoke, the MUSNAVC President (LTC Joe Gollasch USA, Ret) discussed MOAA’s 7 virtual chapters (VC) - MUSNAVC, Surviving Spouse VC, the Public Health Service VC, the Chaplains VC, Judge Advocate VC, Service Women and Families VC, and Public Affairs VC. These 7 virtual chapters have formed a Council of Virtual Chapters similar to the Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC). Joe was excited that MOAA might have 8 virtual chapters with WARDOS formed a virtual chapter.

NOTE: A comment made at the MOAA Chapter Roundtable presentation on Chapter Health on 29 May discussed the newest virtual chapter, Public Affairs, and reminded attendees that this chapter welcomes all members that work on chapter or council websites, on newsletter, etc. as well as former Public Affairs Officers.

The MUSNAVC Healthcare Issues Team “reviews and evaluates healthcare related issues which are submitted by members involving policies, practices, or encounters within DOD, Tricare, or VA facilities. The team serves as a type of early warning system for potential MOAA focus.”

The MUSNAVC Legislative/Advocacy page at <https://www.musnavc.org/legislation> includes a MOAA Advocacy Update, information about the legislative process, a MUSNAVC Advocacy Toolkit with a manual that can be downloaded, and a link to the MOAA consolidated annual State Report Card and State Tax Guide .

“*The Legislative Early Push program* is a first of a kind to identify healthcare legislation which needs a little more advocacy to become more influential and more attentive to our representatives. This program serves as an adjunct to the MOAA Legislation Action Center.” Four new items should be posted on the website at <https://www.musnavc.org/gallery> by next week. Members were reminded they can use the MOAA hotline number to call the Capital directly (866-272-6622).

Submitted by: Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret)
Retired Army Nurse and member of MUSNAVC
Assist leg Rep

MOAA & LEGISLATIVE

What’s Next for the Budget, the NDAA, and More From Congress

By: Terry Waters May 27, 2025 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/advocacy/whats-next-for-the-budget,-the-ndaa,-and-more-from-congress/>

The [historic trillion-dollar defense budget proposal](#) marked an initial step in a lengthy appropriation and authorization process, one that will serve as the backbone for funding critical programs and services that support our nation’s uniformed services and veteran communities.

As Congress makes headway on the FY 2026 budget, it's essential to know where we are in the annual process, both for the overall funding bill and for measures like the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which often serves as a vehicle for [key MOAA legislative priorities](#). Here's a look at the overall timeline:

[RELATED FROM APRIL: [What the Proposed \\$1 Trillion Defense Budget Means for Servicemembers, Families, and Retirees](#)]

The President's Budget Proposal: The process begins with the president's budget request, usually released in February or March, which outlines proposed funding levels for all government agencies. It's not uncommon for this request to be delayed during the first year of a presidential term and new Congress; this year's so-called "skinny" budget request [was announced May 2](#).

Congressional Budget Resolution: After receiving the president's request, Congress creates a budget resolution, which sets the overall spending limits for the government. This resolution acts as a framework for future spending decisions, specifying how much money should be allocated for defense and non-defense programs, including military personnel, benefits, and VA health care.

[RELATED: [Budget Bill Puts Student-Veterans at Risk](#)]

Authorization Bills: Once the budget resolution is in place, Congress begins working on authorization bills, like the NDAA. The NDAA authorizes policies, programs, and funding levels for defense-related programs, ranging from military readiness and modernization to benefits for military families and survivors. It often incorporates many pieces of defense-related legislation, making it a useful vehicle to advance MOAA-supported bills and priorities, as evidenced by [last year's "quality-of-life" NDAA](#).

Appropriations Bills: While the NDAA sets policy, appropriations bills, such as the Defense Appropriations Act and the Military Construction, Veteran Affairs, and Related Agencies (MilCon-VA) Act provide the funding to implement those policies. Appropriations bills must be passed by both chambers of Congress and signed into law by the president before agencies can access the funding.

Where Do Things Stand for FY 2026?

We can expect a more detailed budget request from the administration in the coming weeks. This will act as an essential input for Congress and lawmakers in both chambers.

Both the House and Senate are well into the process of shaping the authorization and appropriations bills for FY 2026, with amendments from advocates and constituents now under review in committees and subcommittees. Each chamber has passed its own budget resolution. While they haven't been reconciled, they are crucial to guiding ongoing budget negotiations. [More detailed legislation](#) – known as a reconciliation bill, in conjunction with the initial resolution – passed House by a 215-214 vote [early May 22](#) and will move to the Senate, where leaders reportedly hope to have a vote [before the July 4 holiday](#).

While the NDAA and other authorization bills were passed and signed into law in 2025, they're funded through a full-year continuing resolution enacted to ensure government operations continue without disruption. Despite the [challenges associated with continuing resolutions](#), the practice has become increasingly common.

With a compressed timeline for debating, amending, and reconciling the NDAA this year, there remains a significant risk of further stopgap funding measures.

How Can Advocates Help?

As Congress gets further into the process of shaping the FY 2026 budget, it's critical to stay informed of the latest updates regarding the NDAA and other relevant legislation.

You can review MOAA's legislative priorities on [our spring Advocacy in Action page](#). In addition to these issues, MOAA remains fully prepared to adapt our focus and leverage every available resource to ensure promises made to those who serve and have served, along with their families and survivors, are honored.

Grassroots advocacy is critical to determining what will make its way into final authorization and appropriation bills, and lawmakers want to hear what's important to their constituents. To support these efforts, stay up to date with [MOAA's advocacy news](#), and register and take action using the [Legislative Action Center](#).

Senate Hearing Spotlights MOAA-Backed Bill to Support Veteran Caregivers

By: Terry Waters May 27, 2025 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/advocacy/senate-hearing-spotlights-moaa-backed-bill-to-support-veteran-caregivers/>

A recent Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee hearing highlighted growing interest in a MOAA-supported proposal designed to provide critical transitional support for military caregivers.

The committee reviewed and discussed the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement (3R) Act alongside other legislation in a May 21 meeting, which featured testimony from the VA and various veterans service organizations (VSOs), including MOAA.

[TAKE ACTION NOW: [Urge Your Lawmakers to Pass the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act](#)]

"Despite their vital role, caregivers face significant financial, professional, and emotional burdens," MOAA told the committee in written testimony. "Many forgo careers, retirement savings, and personal well-being to provide care."

The 3R Act addresses key concerns raised by caregivers transitioning out of the VA's [Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#) (PCAFC), including job reentry, retirement planning, health care access, and financial stability. These caregivers often sacrifice income, career advancement, and long-term financial security to care for their loved ones ... and are met with significant gaps in support.

The bill proposes a comprehensive package of support tools, such as job training assistance, counseling, continued health care coverage, and help with professional relicensing costs, all aimed at easing the shift into post-caregiving life.

What's Next

With congressional interest building, the 3R Act represents an opportunity to ensure caregivers are recognized and supported long after their caregiving duties conclude. As this legislation progresses, MOAA continues to work closely with lawmakers to ensure the bill's provisions reflect the real needs of military families.

"By offering education, employment, and retirement opportunities, the act would empower caregivers to achieve financial security while potentially reducing the federal government's long-term economic burden by decreasing their future reliance on government assistance programs," MOAA told the committee in written testimony.

[RELATED: [MOAA Tracks Implementation of Key Veteran, Caregiver Benefit Reforms](#)]

Visit MOAA's Legislative Action Center to urge your lawmakers to [support the 3R Act](#) and ensure military caregivers receive the long-term resources and recognition they've earned.

When MOAA Speaks, Congress Listens

Learn more about MOAA's key advocacy issues, and contact your elected officials using our messaging platform.

[TAKE ACTION](#)

MORE IMPORTANT MOAA LEGISLATIVE ARTICLES

Help MOAA Protect Student-Veterans: Stop the Repeal of the '90-10 Rule'

30 May 2025 "Ending the rule not only would weaken GI bill benefits, it would cost the government \$1.6 billion. Make your voice heard today." <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/news-listing/>

MOAA Joins Renewed Push to Support More Than 50,000 Combat-Injured Veterans 21 May 2025 "The Major Richard Star Act "can be the difference between suffering and stability." Add your voice to the cause today". <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/recommended-reads/moaa-joins-renewed-push-to-support-more-than-50,000-combat-injured-veterans/>

VA Referrals to Private Medical Care Will No Longer Require Additional Doctor Review 20 May 2025 "VA Secretary Doug Collins says the change helps in "placing a premium on customer service and convenience."

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/health-care-and-earned-benefits/va-referrals-to-private-medical-care-will-no-longer-require-additional-doctor-review/>

Keeping the Promise: MOAA Tracks Implementation of Key Veteran, Caregiver Benefit Reforms

14 May 2025 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/advocacy/keeping-the-promise-moaa-tracks-implementation-of-key-veteran,-caregiver-benefit-reforms/>

VCOC AND JLC



Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC) Will meet virtually on July 8th, 2025, from 1500-1700.

Plans are to have the October Biennial Luncheon and Remembrance Meeting, In Person, at the Virginia War Memorial from 1000 to 1530 Hours. It is the most Central Location for All Chapters. Plans are to also have it available Virtually.

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

PROGRAMS

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

12 June 2025	Annual Scholarship Dinner & Celebrating The Army's 250 th Birthday
13 July 2025	Joint Brunch – Roger Brown's Banquet Room, TBD-1300
11 September 2025	Tentatively Virginia Senator Emily Jordan
9 October 2025	TBD Navy Strike Group Commander & Celebrating the Navy's 250 th Birthday
13 November 2025	Annual Business Meeting & Celebrating the USMC 250 th Birthday
11 December 2025	Christmas Gala



Left(L to R): LCDR Bob Wall, USNR (Ret), CAPT Bob Brewer, USN (Ret), and PACMOAA President, CAPT Bruce LaLonde, USN (Ret) at the 141st continuous Portsmouth Memorial Day Parade, in front of Bob Wall's car.

Right (LtoR): At our May Dinner Meeting PACMOAA Member LTC Frank Labrecque being presented with a Certificate of Appreciation for his presentation of *"Unlocking the VA: Benefits you may be Missing"* from PACMOAA President, CAPT Bruce LaLonde, with MAJ Sherry Ferki Looking on.





ABOVE: PACMOAA's CAPT Rick Titi, was the Presenter at the Combined Chesapeake Public Schools AFJROTC Awards Night on May 14, 2025. CAPT Titi presented MOAA JROTC Leadership Medals to Cadets: Dameon Love, Deep Creek HS; Haniya Fadli, Grassfield HS; Albert Green, Great Bridge HS; Nathaniel Huff, Indian River HS; Raven Scott, Oscar Smith HJS; and Kaiya Palmer, Western Branch HS.

(Ed Note: The above Students are NOT the awardees of the MOAA Leadership Medal presented by CAPT Titi)

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COMMUNITY

PACMOAA 2025 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Thank you to the Scholarship Committee members this year: Co-Chairs Scott Dickinson and Sherry Ferki and new members Bruce LaLonde and Jim Hoffower. The online application and grading forms that Scott set up in 2017 were updated this year to give students more credit for working and also for financial need (FAFSA/SAI Score). PACMOAA received 7 applications and 6 of those applicants were in JROTC, 8 were received in 2024! Applicants need to participate in ROTC in freshman year in college but do not have to in JROTC in high school although many of the scholarship winners have been active in JROTC units since I've been involved with the scholarship program beginning in 2001. This year's applicants came from Chesapeake, Portsmouth and Smithfield.



The 2025 scholarship recipients are Dane Cunningham from Deep Creek High School and Charlise Albers from Smithfield High School. Both are outstanding students that maintained superior grades while participating in sports and/or band, participating in multiple clubs, and being leaders in their respective JROTC units. Dane and Charlise also served the community in a variety of ways!

Picture to left: 2021 winner Jade Lewis with her parents

Dane plans to attend East Carolina University and major in nursing. She had an outstanding GPA and took many Honors courses. Dane was involved in the marching band since 2021 and held many leadership positions like Clarinet Section Leader, Woodwind Captain and Drum Major (her senior year) in addition to being a Marching/Concert Band soloist twice. She was also involved in multiple clubs like the Yearbook Club, Key Club and Red Cross Club in addition to Honor Societies - National Honor Society and Kitty Hawk Honor Society. Dane served in many leadership positions in the AFJROTC - Community Services Officer, Drill Team Commander and Group Commander and functioned as a student classroom instructor for 2 years. She accumulated numerous volunteer hours with the Kitty Hawk Honor Society and volunteered with several school associations and churches. In addition to all her other activities Dane worked at a local store for the past 1 ½ years. She received over 75 awards in recognition of her outstanding accomplishments, most from JROTC but several from the marching band as well as being on the Principal Honor Roll for all 4 years.

Charlise plans to attend ODU and major in nursing. She had a superlative GPA and took many honors, an AP course (Advanced Placement – college level class), and several DE (dual enrollment in high school and college) courses. Some other examples of her academic achievements included National Honor Society, Beta Club, and being on the Superintendent's Honor Roll for all 4 years. Charlise was involved in athletics throughout her high school experience – volleyball, cross country, and tennis (lettering 3 years and functioning as Team Captain her senior year). She also lettered in Varsity Debate and the Varsity Army JROTC Rifle Team. Some leadership positions included: Team Captain for the Varsity Debate Team for 2 years; lead role in a play/musical in the Varsity Theater; and Co-founder and VP of the Smithfield High School Christian Club. During her 4 years in JROTC, Charlise demonstrated her leadership skills as Platoon Sergeant, Platoon Leader, and finally as Battalion Executive Officer in 12th grade. Some of her AJROTC awards included Superior Leadership Award from the American Independence Leadership Youth Conference, 2nd place Battalion Female Physical Fitness Award twice, and American Legion Excellence Award (top10% of academic class). Her volunteer activities included many hours of service with JROTC, National Honor Society, BETA Club and her Church participating in activities like food banks, community cleanup, and other community activities. Charlise served as the Smithfield Youth Ambassador for Toys for Tots and worked 3 summers as a lifeguard (Lead Lifeguard in 2024). In preparation for her nursing career, she completed the course and is licensed in Virginia as a Certified Nursing Assistant

PACMOAA again offers our congratulations and best wishes for successful college experiences and military careers to these most accomplished students.

ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP RECOGNITION DINNER

PACMOAA will utilize the \$300.00 MOAA Community Outreach Sponsorship to help recognize the scholarship winners, their parents and the JROTC Color Guard from I.C. Norcom High School. Again, many thanks to MOAA for their continued generous support through this sponsorship. USAA previously offered this sponsorship. This was the 9th time PACMOAA was awarded this grant!
Picture to left: Manor HS AJROTC Color Guard in 2023

Please join us in welcoming the 2025 PACMOAA Scholarship winners, their parents and JROTC instructors as well as several other JROTC instructors!

Submitted by Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret)
 Scholarship Committee Co-Chair

UPDATE FROM 2024 SCHOLARSHIP WINNER, NAZA AGBASI

Email dated 5/11/2025



Good Afternoon, This is Naza Agbasi. With the successful completion of my freshman year, I have been a part of the ARMY ROTC Black and Gold society, participated in volunteer events for the ODU ROTC Program, and I am a member of the color guard team. I am also a member of the RUF which is a Reformed University Fellowship. With the opportunity to attend ODU, I am able to sign up for the Army 10 miler coming up in October 2025 and be more involved in the college community.

Naza Agbasi

NOTE: Naza graduated from Smithfield High School in 2024 and was very active in the AJROTC there.
 Submitted by Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret)



LEFT: MAJ Sherry Ferki, presenting the MOAA JROTC Leadership Medal to Cadet CPT Mia Ong-Hay from Suffolk's Nansemond River HS.

BELOW RIGHT: COL Irv Lindley, presenting Portsmouth's Churchland HS MCJROTC's, Cadet 1st Lt Ryan McLendon with the MOAA Leadership Medal



Two other MOAA JROTC Awards were given in May 2025, but the pictures haven't arrived. They were Suffolk's Lakeland HS where COL Irv Lindlay presented the MOAA JROTC Leadership Medal to AFJROTC Cadet Samari Keys on May 29th. The other was Smithfield HS AJROTC Cadet PFC Kandice Chiong by MAJ Sherry Ferki on May 22, 2025. They will be included in the AUG/SEP Salute Newsletter.

Two other schools, Suffolk's Kings Fork HS and Southampton's Franklin HS didn't have ceremonies, but are supported by PACMOAA. In all, PACMOAA serves 14 Local High Schools

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

During the Month of June let us remember the need of others. I was reminded by the Board of Oasis of the urgent need to feed the poor and hungry of Portsmouth. At our last PACMOAA meeting we were advised to provide a "Wish List" for members to bring to our next dinner meeting (12 June) to be carried to Oasis.

JUNE OASIS WISH LIST

Jam/Jelly
Canned Chicken
Canned Fruit
Collard Greens
Instant Grits/ Oatmeal
Bar Bath Soap
Shampoo

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples.

John 13:34-35



Submitted by
CAPT Bob Brewer, USN (Ret) Chaplain

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



Please join us in welcoming the 2025 PACMOAA Scholarship winners, their parents and JROTC instructors, as well as several other JROTC instructors! 28 Guest's in Total! Please Make Every Effort to Attend this PACMOAA Hallmark Event!

HAPPY 250th Birthday to the US ARMY
THAT'S A WRAP FOR JUNE!

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: _____