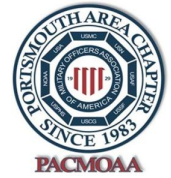




The Salute Online



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 PACMOOA actively lobby legislatures for all US uniformed services members, we are nonpartisan and do not participate in political activities.**

VOLUME XLIV Issue X

LEARN MORE AT PACMOOA.ORG

DECEMBER 2025

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



PACMOOA Family:

Without a doubt 2025 has been a successful year--- Participation in parades, state and regional MOAA conferences, stronger relationships with our JROTC components and ODU NROTC and fabulous dinner speakers. Thank you for your support, visible community leadership and achieving another MOAA Chapter Excellence Award.

With 2026 approaching , let's challenge ourselves to focus our time and talents on organizations and activities which directly support our local military and veteran population (Fisher House/ Wounded Warriors).This will require meeting them face to face and providing the leadership acumen we earned in our military career .

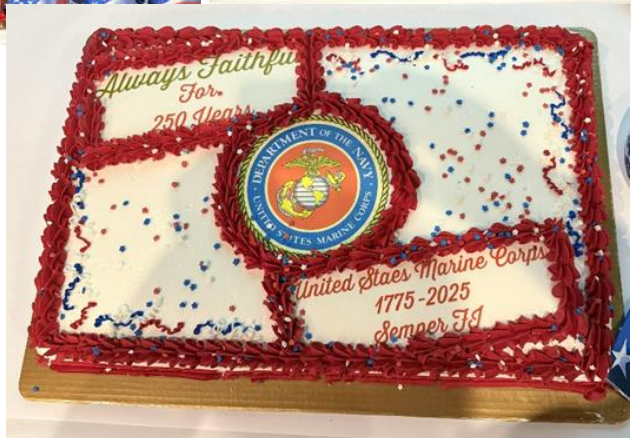
Please join us at our December dinner meeting and enjoy not only the music, but positively relish the fruits of an amazing 2025...Anchors aweigh
Bruce

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



Left: PACMOOA President, CAPT Bruce LaLonde, presenting COL Hal Hostetler the MOAA Outstanding Service Award.

Right: USMC 250th Birthday Cake. Above: The 3 Marines present (L to R) LtCol Paul Pratt, USMC Ret; MAJ Lisa Davis, USMC Ret; and Capt. Jim Jones, USMC Vet, Prepare and then Cut the USMC's 250th Birthday Cake.



**PACMOAA
LEADERSHIP**

See Leadership Pulldown



CHAPTER NEWS

DECEMBER

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- 26 KWANZAA

HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Ron Fritz Hal Hostetler
Bruce LaLonde Anna Van Laethem
Lois Yandle

December Dinner Meeting

will be held on **Thursday, December 11th** 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

- Garden Salad*
- Slow Roasted Brisket*
- Baked Salmon with Sherry Cream Sauce*
- Mashed Potatoes with Gravy*
- Roasted Veggies*
- Corn Bread with Honey Butter*
- Apple and Pecan Pies*
- Tea, Sweet Tea, Coffee, Lemonade and Water*

Cost is \$30 (includes gratuity & tax & Donation for the TCB). Cash bar available. Please make your reservation no later than **Sunday, December 7th** 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 (L-R): CDR Mike Riley, Mrs. Lois Yandle, CAPT Bruce LaLonde, CWO3 Van USN White (All Ret)



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

CHRISTMAS GALA with THE TIDEWATER CONCERT BAND

PACMOAA CHRISTMAS GALA

11 December 2025

The December Christmas Gala Dinner with The Tidewater Concert Band will be held on Thursday, December 11, 2025 at Roger Brown's Banquet Room.



We are so looking forward to seeing many of you at our Annual Christmas gathering. The Tidewater Concert Band will be back performing for us this

year and . . .we are in for a treat -- for our enjoyment our beloved Hal Hostetler will also be performing with them!!!!"

This event is a great way to end the year. It is a great opportunity to visit with friends, enjoy the holiday music, and possibly dance a bit if you like!!! If you would like to invite a friend to share an enjoyable evening with the PACMOAA members, we gladly welcome them.

There will also be several charitable donation opportunities available. We will be collecting for the "Toys for Tots" program again this year. More detailed information to follow in this newsletter. We will also be collecting items for the Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless (PVH) as we have been doing since 2011. More detailed information on those needs will follow in this newsletter. Our newest charitable opportunity is for the Fisher House. The Fisher Houses provide temporary accommodations at no cost for veterans, service members, their families, and caregivers while receiving treatment through a VA medical facility. More detailed information to follow in this newsletter. **And we will also be selling 50/50 tickets to support our scholarship program.**

The holiday season can be stressful. Come join us for some smiles, laughs, and holiday cheer. If you are not able to attend, we wish you and your families a blessed Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year!!! Please keep our military members, their families and all veterans here and around the world in your thoughts and prayers.

TOYS for TOTS



The Churchland High School MCJROTC program has disbanded. This program would collect and distribute the toys collected each year. But never fear, LTC Paul Pratt, USMC (Ret), the former lead instructor for the program, will be overseeing this event for us this year. Toys for all ages and genders are accepted. Please buy new gifts and **DO NOT WRAP THEM!!!** If you buy a toy that needs batteries, **please attach the batteries to the toy!!!** Thanking you in advance for any contributions you can make.

FISHER HOUSE, - NAVAL MEDICAL CENTER PORTSMOUTH GROUNDS

Fisher House Foundation builds comfort homes where military and veteran families can stay free of charge, while a loved one is in the hospital. Fisher Houses provide temporary accommodations at no cost for veterans, service members, their families, and caregivers while receiving treatment through a VA or Military Medical facility.

These homes are located at military and VA medical centers around the world. The one in Portsmouth is located at Naval Medical Center Portsmouth. It's about a 5-minute walk from the House to the main hospital building.

Fisher Houses have up to 20 suites, with private bedrooms and baths. Families share a common kitchen, laundry facilities, a warm dining room, and an inviting living room.

The PACMOAA Board of Directors visited the local Fisher House in October 2025 for a tour and to meet the director. Every House has a wish list of items that are needed and will be included in a future issue. The Fisher

Foundation has been ranked a Four-Star Charity for twenty-one consecutive years.

MEMBERSHIP



WELCOME ABOARD

MAJ Shalisa “Lisa” Davis, USMC (Ret) from Suffolk

PACMOAA has 73 “paid” members as of 24 November. This includes 9 new members this year, 3 Life Members, and 3 speaker memberships. We will start collecting dues in January 2026. I will contact each member via email or mail if they owe dues for 2026 over the next two months. If you’re not sure if you owe any money, please contact our treasurer, Hans Sachse, or me. A dues renewal/membership application form is attached at the end of the newsletter. Feel free to share this application with potential new members.

As has been mentioned frequently, membership is essential for a chapter to function effectively! PACMOAA, as do many of chapters in the Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC), has many older members that are having health issues. Currently, the primary way potential members in PACMOAA’s area find out about our chapter is by word of mouth. Inviting an eligible colleague, friend, or neighbor to a dinner meeting is a great way to introduce them to PACMOAA. Potential members can attend a dinner meeting for ½ the usual price. *Please consider inviting potential members to our Christmas Gala.* This is a great way to share the camaraderie of our group with others. Remind them that MOAA keeps them updated on national issues, PACMOAA provides updates on state and local issues, including pharmacy issues!

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/dinner/etc. Online

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

From the Account Overview page, click the Send button. If prompted for whether the money will be sent to a business or friend, enter “friend”. Type PACMOAATreasurer@gmail.com in the block where it says “name, @username, email, or mobile” and click “next”. Enter the amount to transmit and add “For PACMOAA Dues/dinner/etc.” 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.

NOTE: CDR Hans Sachse, USN (Ret) is the PACMOAA Treasurer.

Submitted by : Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret) PACMOAA 2nd VP/Membership Chair
navmedarmynurse@gmail.com or 757-630-5608

PERSONAL AFFAIRS/ SURVIVING SPOUSE

SOME RESOURCES TO HELP SURVIVORS DEAL WITH THE HOLIDAYS

How to Survive the Holidays When You're Grieving

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/grace-in-grief/202311/how-to-survive-the-holidays-when-youre-grieving>

Video: Living with Grief During the Holidays 12/10/2024 Presenter: [Pamela Gabbay](#)

<https://www.taps.org/video/2024/living-with-grief-holidays>

Video: Honoring the Past, Embracing the Present, and Finding Meaning During the Holiday Season After Loss 12/17/2024 Presenter: Andy McNiel

<https://www.taps.org/video/2024/honoring-past-embracing-present>

When You Really Don't Feel Like Celebrating Facing Holidays and Special Occasions in Grief 12/3/2023 Author: William Hoy <https://www.taps.org/articles/29-4/when-you-dont-feel-like-celebrating>**MOAA RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR SPOUSES/SURVIVING SPOUSES****December 2025**

Multiple forms of resources are available on the MOAA website and/or can be mailed upon request. These resources are benefits available for **Premium and Life Members**.

- “*Preparing for the Loss of a Military Spouse*”. This is an excellent resource and has combined several previous publications with updated info. It can be located at:

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/moaa-publications/help-your-survivors-detail/> .

- “*Survivor Prep Checklist*” at:

https://www.moaa.org/uploadedfiles/content/publications_and_media/moaa_publications/publication_download/survivor_prep_2024-checklist.pdf

Several recent webinars relating to preparation are listed below:**What You Need to Know About the Survivor Benefit Plan from 25 Feb 2025**

Available at <https://www.moaa.org/content/benefits-and-discounts/transition-and-careers/transition-center-webinars/survivor-benefit-plan-webinar-archive/>

Every Life Needs a Battle Plan: Preparing Yourself, and Your Family, for Survivorship Available at <https://www.moaa.org/content/benefits-and-discounts/transition-and-careers/transition-center-webinars/survivor-benefit-plan-webinar-archive2/>

MOAA Webinar: Preparing for the Loss of a Military Retiree (2025) Aug 2025

<https://www.moaa.org/content/benefits-and-discounts/transition-and-careers/transition-center-webinars/loss-of-a-retiree-2025-webinar-archive/>

Recent article based on 2023 webinar: What's the difference between Social Security spousal benefits and survivor benefits? <https://www.moaa.org/micro/asktheexperts/ate-articles/quintiliani/experts-social-security-spouse-survivor/?ategatedcontent=84459> . Webinar at

<https://www.moaa.org/content/benefits-and-discounts/transition-and-careers/transition-center-webinars/social-security-webinar-archive/>

The MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter is another great resource with monthly meetings. For more information or to join, contact mssvc02@gmail.com or find on [MOAA.org](https://www.moaa.org).

Submitted by Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret)

VCOG and PACMOAA Surviving Spouse Liaison

National Family Caregivers Month: A Time to Reflect, Support, and Act

By: René Campos November 12, 2025 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/advocacy/national-caregiver-month-a-time-to-reflect,-support,-and-act>

Celebrated every November, [National Family Caregivers Month](#) offers not only a time to honor those who care for our veterans, but to reflect on the progress made to provide the support they need ... and the work that still lies ahead.

The [Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act](#) marked a significant milestone in veteran and caregiver support. Signed into law Jan. 2, the Dole Act expands access to

home and community-based services, strengthens VA's [Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers](#) (PCAFC), and launches pilot programs to address workforce shortages in home care.

These reforms will help veterans remain in their homes and communities, and will provide caregivers with better training, mental health support, and recognition for their vital role. MOAA continues to work closely with the VA and other stakeholders to ensure these provisions are [implemented quickly and effectively](#).

[RELATED: [How MOAA Will Continue Fighting for Combat-Injured Veterans](#)]

Legislative Momentum

To build on the Dole Act's foundation, MOAA supports the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement (3R) Act (H.R. 2148/S. 879) — bipartisan legislation designed to help eligible caregivers after their formal caregiving role ends.

[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Support Veteran Caregivers](#)]

The bill covers a range of issues critical to that transition:

Health Care. Extend coverage (up to 180 days) for caregivers transitioning out of the PCAFC.

Financial Assistance. Offer up to \$1,000 for renewing professional licenses or certifications, plus access to VA training modules for continuing education credits.

Employment Opportunities. Expand access to federal job placement and career development programs, and study employment barriers and incentives for hiring former caregivers.

Retirement Options. Provide retirement planning services and study the feasibility of creating savings options tailored to caregivers who sacrificed long-term financial security.

Additional Support. Deliver bereavement counseling and emotional support following the death of the veteran they cared for.

These measures acknowledge caregiving can be a full-time responsibility – one that interrupts careers and threatens financial security. The bill provides caregivers with resources to rebuild their lives, whether following the loss of a loved one or after leaving the PCAFC program. It reflects our nation's commitment to honor their sacrifices and recognize the essential role they play in the health, well-being, and recovery of our veterans.

Funding and Collaboration

Full implementation of the Dole Act and advancement of caregiver legislation depend on stable VA funding and continued collaboration between Congress, the VA, and advocacy organizations like MOAA.

We urge lawmakers to prioritize VA appropriations and pass the 3R Act so caregivers receive the long-term resources and recognition they've earned; join that mission by [sending a message](#) through MOAA's Legislative Action Center today.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DECEMBER 2025 MUSNAVC MEETING

The MOAA Uniformed Services Nurse Advocates Virtual Chapter (MUSNAVC) held its monthly meeting on 19 November and had Dr Jennifer Strawn, DPN, RN, NEA-BC, Executive Director/Deputy Chief Nursing Officer/Veteran's Health Administration (VHA) Chief Nursing Officer. Before she spoke, there was a brief business meeting. MUSNAVC still has 539 members, covering 221 legislative districts and members in all 50 states, D.C. and Puerto Rico.

During her briefing, Dr Strawn reviewed the VA's vision statement focusing on the VA leading the future in developing the best health and well-being to our nation's veterans and the nation. She noted the VA's four missions are care, education, research, and "fourth mission" (deployment). Dr Strawn also noted that during the pandemic, over 4500 VA personnel were deployed to assist the nation with many of them being nurses!

As a nurse speaking to a large group of nurses, she emphasized the role of nurses. Women's Veterans Health

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

Care including the Women Veterans Call Center and additional resources with a dedicated website were also discussed. In addition, a detailed overview of the VHA mental health updates with numerous links to resources was reviewed. Make The Connection (MTC) at www.maketheconnection.net lets veterans know they are not alone and that many of their peers have experienced challenges and reached out for support.

Several very interesting nursing research studies were discussed that hopefully will lead to changes in practice in the medical community. HRO in Action refers to High Reliability Organization Projects like one related to PTSD and anesthesia emergence. Apparently, individuals suffering from PTSD can become violent when recovering from anesthesia. The VA has initiated practices that decrease the incidence of this occurring to less than 3% versus greater than 20% in the general population! The other study discussed structured high quality oral hygiene which decreases the overgrowth of bacteria in the mouth and decreased pneumonia related to aspiration when not on a ventilator. This is a significant issue for the geriatric population. Who knew brushing your teeth twice a day, or having someone do it for you, was good for you!

I received a copy of the PowerPoint presentation that Dr Strawn reviewed with us that has several videos imbedded and a number of links for additional resources. I am happy to share that with anyone interested.

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

REMINDER ABOUT MEDICARE AND FEDVIP OPEN SEASON

DATES: Medicare open enrollment – 15 Oct. to 7 Dec. 2025

FEDVIP open enrollment - 10 Nov. to 8 Dec 2025

FEDVIP Open Season for Military and Retiree Health Insurance Updated 11 September 2025
<https://www.military.com/benefits/fedvip-open-enrollment-dental-vision.html>

Dates Set for 2025 TRICARE, FEDVIP Open Season article 17 September 2025
<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/health-care-and-earned-benefits/dates-set-for-2025-tricare,-fedvip-open-season/>

What You Need to Know for the TRICARE, Medicare, and FEDVIP Open Season webinar presented on 23 October 2025 and will be available soon under Health Care at <https://www.moaa.org/content/benefits-and-discounts/transition-and-careers/webinar-archive/>



Above 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

Bipartisan Bill Would Make Veterans, Military Spouses More Attractive Hires

By: Stephanie Rose November 25, 2025 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/advocacy/bipartisan-bill-would-make-veterans,-military-spouses-more-attractive-hires/>

Bipartisan legislation introduced Nov. 20 would reauthorize a key tax credit supporting veteran employment and expand its reach to include currently serving military spouses as a newly recognized target group – a key addition that MOAA has been advocating for through the [Military Spouse Hiring Act](#).

The Improve and Enhance the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Act, introduced by Sens. Bill Cassidy (R-La.) and Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.) in the Senate and Reps. Steven Horsford (D-Nev.) and Lloyd Smucker (R-Pa.) in the

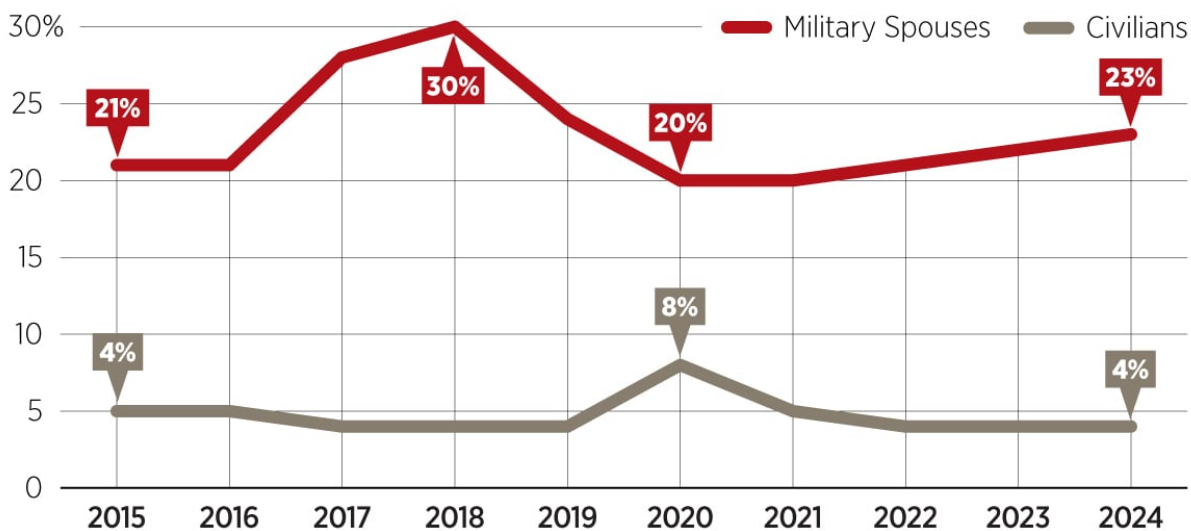
House, would modernize the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), a nonrefundable tax credit employers can take for hiring target group members during the employee's first year on the job. The program incentivizes employers to hire "[job seekers who have consistently faced barriers to employment](#)," according to the U.S. Labor Department.

[TAKE ACTION: [Support Veteran and Military Spouse Employment](#)]

Military spouses married to active duty servicemembers have consistently faced an unemployment rate of **20% or higher** over the past 10 years, a statistic detailed in both the Pentagon's [Active Duty Spouse Survey](#) and [Blue Star Families' Military Family Lifestyle Survey](#). This unemployment rate is five times the national unemployment rate of U.S. civilians.

Of the [387,095 military spouses either active or looking to be active](#) in the civilian labor force ([69% of 561,008](#)), 20% are unemployed and more than half (57%) say the [pay they receive is not enough to live on](#). That leaves only 23% of employed spouses with a sufficient income.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE: MILITARY SPOUSES vs. CIVILIANS



SOURCE: BLUE STAR FAMILIES; U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

GRAPHIC: JOHN HARMAN/STAFF

More than half (51%) of active duty spouses search for employment because "my family needs the income," according to a [2024 survey from Blue Star Families](#). Financial strain often forces families to explore alternatives, including leaving military service; nearly half (48.3%) of soldiers leaving service cited the impact of Army life on their significant other's career plans and goals as contributing to their departure, [Army Times reported](#).

When families choose to separate, it directly undermines retention and readiness, creating ripple effects across the force.

Why WOTC Matters

Frequent relocations remain a key constraint on military spouse employment, according to a [2025 study](#) by the D'Aniello Institute for Veterans and Military Families (IVMF) at Syracuse University. Many employers use these moves to defend their decision not to hire a military spouse. Adding military spouses as a WOTC target group would allow these businesses to offset such costs via tax breaks and encourage them to tap this underutilized talent pool.

A similar approach showed positive results with veterans, who were added as a WOTC target group in 2011, when their unemployment rate was in the double digits. As of 2024, veteran unemployment is at 3.0%, lower than the national civilian average.

MOAA supports extending the WOTC program (the bill would do so through 2030) to continue this success story, and expanding the program to bring similar, positive change to the military spouse community.

Support the Improve and Enhance the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Act Today

MOAA has long championed the addition of military spouses to this program, and the Improve and Enhance the Work Opportunity Tax Credit Act would make that a reality. [Contact your lawmakers today](#) and urge them to cosponsor this bipartisan legislation to support and expand employment opportunities for veterans and military spouses.

OTHER ARTICLES OF INTEREST

3 Ways to Protect Servicemembers and Veterans From the Next Shutdown. 12 November 2025. From MOAA Legislative Action Center “Legislation ending the longest federal government shutdown in U.S. history passed the House 222-209 on Nov. 12 after clearing the Senate two days earlier, with a continuing resolution set to keep the government open through Jan. 30. The president signed it into law late in the evening. It’s the first step in rebuilding a broken trust between lawmakers and the uniformed services and veteran communities. But it’s far from the last.” <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/health-care-and-earned-benefits/3-ways-to-protect-servicemembers-and-veterans-from-the-next-shutdown>

COLA and Shutdown Fallout: What You Should Know. By: Kevin Lilley 25 November 2025. “Delayed and canceled reports will make for an unclear start to the new fiscal year.” <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/finance/cola-and-shutdown-fallout-what-you-should-know/>

Texas Researcher Narrows Path to Finding Root Cause of Gulf War Illness. 25 November 2025. “A recent study moved scientists closer to the “Holy Grail of this 30-year-long quest.” CDC finally has formally recognized Gulf War Illness. <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/health-care-and-earned-benefits/texas-researcher-narrows-path-to-finding-root-cause-of-gulf-war-illness/>

From MOAA’s President: Celebrate the Giving Season by Supporting MOAA Charities. By: Brian T. Kelly 25 November 2025 “Your donations build our programs offering aid to those who serve and have served, and their families.” <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/recommended-reads/from-moaas-president-celebrate-the-giving-season-by-supporting-moaa-charities/>

Holidays Offer a Chance to ‘Reset and Refocus’ Your Finances. By: Kathleen Curthoys 21 November 2025. From TotalForce+: Build your seasonal spending plan with these four steps. “<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2025-news-articles/finance/holidays-offer-a-chance-to-reset-and-refocus-finances/>



Above Articles Submitted by:
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PACMOAA 2nd VP/Membership Chair
Asst Legislative Rep
Cell 757-630-5608

VCOC AND JLC



The Next VCOC Meeting will be Virtual on 13 January 2026 All Membership is invited to attend. If desired please let Ken App know you would like to attend so we can provide you the Zoom Link for attendance.

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

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VCOC LEGISLATIVE REPORT & JLC UPDATE

The Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations met in September 2025 and established their 2026 Initiatives. Those were discussed in the November Salute in detail. These initiatives will be presented to the Virginia legislature in January for consideration.

The Virginia legislature, or General Assembly, convenes each year on the second Wednesday in January. This will be January 14, 2026. In odd numbered years, the regular session is 30 days long, while in even-numbered years, (2026), it is 60 days long, though these can be extended. The Assembly can also be called into special sessions by the Governor or a two-thirds majority vote in each house. The Assembly also reconvenes approximately six weeks after the regular session ends to consider the Governor's actions on bills.

PACMOAA will monitor the initiatives during the legislative session and keep the members updated.



Information provided by Google AI

Submitted By:
Mary L. Snyder, Surviving Spouse
PACMOAA VCOC Legislative Representative

VIRGINIA MILITARY SURVIVORS AND DEPENDENTS EDUCATION PROGRAM (VMSDEP) UPDATE

This is an ongoing issue that PACMOAA members were very involved with last year due to changes in funding proposed by the Senate Finance Committee. Numerous articles have been in the newsletter and emails were sent to keep members updated on the proposed changes and to alert members to contact their legislators when appropriate.

A grass roots effort, the Friends of VMSDEP was started on Facebook in April 2024 with about 300 members and now has 3400. The 2026 General Assembly will be voting on a new budget and VMSDEP was linked with the budget in the 2024 General Assembly. The session will start on 12 January and last up to 60 days.

Kayla Owen, Founder of Friends of VMSDEP, was appointed to Board of Veterans Services (BVS) in July 2025 and as the Chair of a new Joint Working Group with the JLC to focus on preserving VMSDEP on 10 November. The group had its first meeting on Friday 14 November. A ZOOM meeting was held on Sunday 16 Nov with an overview of how the November elections will impact VMSDEP as well as to look ahead to January. Unfortunately, neither was well attended. It is important for the group and anyone impacted to be proactive to prevent a repeat of the last attempt to gut the program. An entry on the VMSDEP Facebook site stated "Legislators need to hear our stories. They need to know how the program helps and see the impact." Another entry noted that "VMSDEP currently supports over 10,000 students and families across Virginia. Elected officials have asked for guidance with potential changes to the program that would be the least painful. With numerous issues and bills being presented, the more factual and personal information they're provided, the better chance of gaining support for VMSDEP."

The next meeting of the VMSDEP Working Group will be held on 9 December at 0900 and can be attended in person or virtually. The Joint Legislative Council (JLC) will meet on 12/19 at 10 AM to finalize their plans for the 2026 General Assembly Session including addressing the VMSDEP issue. Links will be available for both sessions just prior to the events.

NOTE: One of the members of VMSDEP Friends and Supporter group posted a copy of an article posted 23 November 2025 discussing expanded cuts to a similar program in NC, prorated by 25%. [NC children of disabled veterans see expanded cuts to scholarships - ABC11 Raleigh-Durham.](#)

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

PACMOAA 2nd VP/Membership Chair and Assistant Legislative Rep

COMMUNITY

PACMOAA MEMBERS ATTENDED SEVERAL 2025 VETERANS DAY CEREMONIES

LAKE PRINCE WOODS



Six PACMOAA members and two spouses attended the program: Capt. Jim Jones, USMCR (Vet), MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret) and Capt. Sacha Fountain, USAF (Ret) and Lead Instructor of the Lakeland HS AFJROTC unit. Her cadets presented colors at the program this year. Capt. Jones wore the Continental USMC uniform along with his MOAA pin. MAJ Frank Labrecque, USA (Ret) and Margaret Wilshusen (surviving spouse) are pictured **below right**. Frank helped coordinate the program. Member Jane Chenault, surviving spouse, and spouses - Bruce Ferki and Jeanne Labrecque - are not pictured.

Several veterans discussed their experiences working at Albert G Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk and with the Horton Wreath Society. They

expect to place about 15,000 wreaths at the cemetery this year, one of our nation's top five state veteran cemeteries. All donations are local; they do not receive any funds or assistance from Wreaths Across America. More information can be obtained at www.hortonWreathSociety.org. Following their presentations, there was a PowerPoint program showing all the LPW veterans that had died over the past year. Roses were presented to the surviving spouses that attended.



CAPT Bruce LaLonde, USN (Ret) spoke at Christian Fellowship Church in Norfolk in support of Veterans Day. Pictured to the left.

CAPT LaLonde also spoke at Portsmouth Catholic Regional School on Veterans Day.

COL Hal Hostetler, USA (Ret) participated in the Portsmouth Veterans Day ceremony performing with the Tidewater Concert Band.

Submitted by: Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret)
PACMOAA 2nd VP/Membership Chair

UPDATE FROM PORTSMOUTH VOLUNTEERS FOR THE HOMELESS (PVH)

When 30% is an impressive impact!

During our 2024 fiscal year, we served approximately 100 Portsmouth citizens experiencing literal homelessness.

Some we served in shelter and others we served remained unsheltered on our streets, existing in our parks, abandoned buildings or anywhere they could find the cover of safety.

Through 1-on-1 sessions, we continued to meet weekly to bi-weekly with clients to review progress on addressing barriers and agreed upon re-housing plans. With the federal shut-down, paper verifications of benefits (SS/SSI/SSDI) were not being provided so we have assisted clients in creating online accounts to download this

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

documentation.

Working with local partner agencies, we had ~ 30% of our 100 clients find permanent housing options! We had 11 individuals increase their incomes – 7 via employment and 4 via accessing Social Security benefits – this will support their rehousing efforts.

When a person is housed and sheltered from outside influences and elements, sometimes 30% is an impressive impact.

Our outcomes and results reflect collaborative efforts with community partners like Legal Aid Society of Southeastern VA, Vet-serving agencies and housing-focused providers.

It also reflects the support we receive from community partners like PACMOAA.

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

Toilet Tissue	Paper Towels	Chlorox Foaming Spray Scrubbing Bubbles Spray
3-ply Facial Masks	Non-latex Disposable Gloves	Liquid Antibacterial Hand Wash
Kitchen Trash Bag	Outdoor Garbage Bags	Lysol Room Sanitizing Spray
Laundry Detergent (liquid)	Food Service Gloves	Thermal Underwear W: 1XL-2XL M: 2XL-4XL

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Thank You Lake Prince Woods for Being a PACMOAA Sponsor

PROGRAMS

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

08 January 2026 New PACMOAA Officer Installation by NEW VCOC President **CAPT Mary Lou Wessell USN (Ret)** Pictured left with CAPT Bruce LaLonde while at the MOAA Leadership Meeting in PA. Pictured below right with MOAA President, LTG BT Kelly.

12 February 2026 TBA
12 March 2026 TBA



Right: CAPT Bruce LaLonde with Virginia Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, at the Veterans Commonwealth Coffee in the Senator Hart Office Bldg. in DC.



Above: LCDR Bob Wall, COL Bill & Karen Smith, CAPT Bob Brewer, Dotty and COL Irv Lindley



Right: CAPT Martin Snyder and CDR Dwane Close



Above CW from Left: Eldeana Jones, LCDR Dolly Cherrington, CDR Hans Sachse, COL Hal and Brenda Hostetler, and LTC Billie Jones

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

In December of 1944 Commanding General George S Patton, Jr asked his Chaplin to create a prayer asking God for good weather. This prayer which was distributed on a small card was distrusted to 200,000 troops of the 3rd Army with orders to read before battle. This is believed to have been inspirational in motivating his men to rescue troops trapped at Bastone in the Battle of the Bulge just before Christmas. This prayer, known as "Patton's Prayer" gives insight to the faith of this great Army general.

"Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech Thee of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for Battle. Graciously beckon to us as solders who call upon Thee that armed with Thy grace we may advance from victory to victory and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies and establish Thy justice among men and nations. Amen."



Submitted by
CAPT Bob Brewer,
USN (Ret) Chaplain



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

NOTE: Business Meeting Minutes will be sent separately or in the next edition.

GO NAVY! BEAT ARMY!!



THAT'S A WRAP FOR DECEMBER!

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

PACMOAA MEMBERSHIP/RENEWAL FORM 2026

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 help on a committee? () Yes () No

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

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

NOTE: For members joining after July 1st, \$12.50 for Regular Members or \$10 for Surviving Spouse

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 PACMOAAreasurer@gmail.com in the block where is says "name, @username, email, or mobile" and click "next". Enter the amount to transmit and add "For PACMOAA Dues/dinner/etc." 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.

NOTE: CDR Hans Sachse, USN (Ret) is the PACMOAA Treasurer.

DATE: _____ SIGNATURE: _____