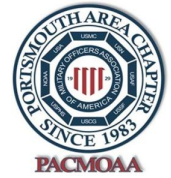




The Salute Online



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 XLV Issue IV

LEARN MORE AT PACMOOA.ORG

APRIL 2026

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



PACMOOA Family, Well our dinner meeting journeys have begun. *Bide a Wee Golf* facility catered by Baron's Pub, provided timely and plenty of food for our March meeting. Unfortunately, our guest speaker was not able to attend, but we made do with some interesting and personal fellowship.

Looking forward, hopefully, to having CAPT Kim Shaughnessy-Granger, Commanding Officer of the Naval Regional Medical Center as our April guest speaker.

We will meet on Thursday, April 9th for dinner at Eastside Pizza located on Portsmouth Blvd in Portsmouth.

We need your support and attendance to validate our attendance in finding a permanent meeting facility.....Anchors aweigh...
Bruce

CAPT Bruce LaLonde USN (Ret) CPA



Above right: COL Irv and Dotty Lindsey, with CAPT Paul Kennedy.

Left, L-R: LCDR Paul Stott, Mrs. Dena Cain, Donna and CDR Ken App, Susan and CAPT John Davidson, and DeeAnn and CAPT JIM Hoffower.



Below: The Dinner Buffet, from Barron's Pub.



Above: CAPT Bob Brewer giving the Opening prayer, with Mrs. Mary Snyder checking a late arrival.

VETERAN CRISIS HOTLINE Dial 988 then press 1

PACMOAA
LEADERSHIP

Please See Leadership Pulldown



CHAPTER NEWS

APRIL

[Month of the Military Child](#)

- 01 April Fool's Day - Passover Begins at Sunset
- 05 Easter Sunday - [Gold Star Spouses day](#)
- 06 Persian Gulf War Ends 1991
- 09 National Former POW Recognition Day = Passover Ends at Sunset
- 09 **PACMOAA 43rd Anniversary Dinner Meeting**
- 13-16 **MOAA AiA Week**
- 14 [US Air Force Reserve Birthday \(1948\)](#) – Submarine Force Day
- 15 Income Tax Due
- 18 Doolittle Raid on Tokyo (1942)
- 19 Patriots Day
- 21 **VCOC Second Quarter Meeting, Virtual 1500-1700**
- 22 **Actual PACMOAA 43rd Anniversary/ Earth Day**
- 23 [US Army Reserve Birthday \(1908\)](#) **PACMOAA BOD Meeting 1400-1600**
- 24 Arbor Day

HAPPY APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Scotty Bruce Bettye Hussey
Gladys Steorts

The April Dinner Meeting

will be held on **Thursday, April 9th** at **Eastside Pizzeria**, 5630 Portsmouth Blvd., Portsmouth, VA 23701. (The owner also owns Gianna's in Harbor View.) The meeting will be held in the separate banquet room in the back of the restaurant.

PLEASE NOTE VENUE CHANGE

Sign in and social time begins at 6 PM, with Dinner Served at 6:45 PM.

Buffett Menu

House Salad/Caesar Salad
Chicken Alfredo with Grilled Chicken
Baked Ziti
Dessert --Cannoli's
Tea, Sweet and Unsweet, Water

Cost is \$30 (includes gratuity & tax). **Cash bar available.** Please make your reservation no later than **Sunday, April 5th** with Sherry Ferki at 757-630-5608 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 or click the below links to MOAA.

[MOAA LEGISLATIVE ACTION CENTER](#)

[JOIN MOAA](#)



PACMOAA TODAY.
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level of exce...
www.pacmoaa.org

GUEST SPEAKER**CAPT Kim P. Shaughnessy-Granger**
Nurse Corps, United States Navy

A native of Hanover, Massachusetts, Captain Kim Shaughnessy-Granger earned a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Villanova University and was commissioned through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps (NROTC) in 1997.

Captain Shaughnessy-Granger began her career at Naval Medical Center San Diego as a staff nurse in the Cardiac and Intensive Care Units. In 1999, she transferred to Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune, serving as a Labor and Delivery Staff and Charge Nurse, Mother Baby/Level II Nursery Division Officer, and Business Manager for Women's Health & Maternal Infant Services. In 2003, she attended Georgetown University for Duty Under Instruction (DUINS), where she studied nurse midwifery, earning a Master of Science degree, and was inducted into Sigma Theta Tau Nursing Honor Society.

Upon graduation, Captain Shaughnessy-Granger was assigned to Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton as a staff Certified Nurse Midwife (CNM) and served as faculty for the Family Medicine Residency training program. In August 2007, she transferred to US Naval Hospital Yokosuka, Japan, where she served as Department Head of Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB/GYN), and made history as the first Nurse Corps Officer to be appointed as both Assistant Director and Director of Surgical Services. In August 2010, she transferred to US Naval Hospital Okinawa as Assistant Department Head for OB/GYN. While in Okinawa, she coordinated the local response for pregnant women and families evacuated from Yokosuka during Operation Tomodachi, following the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami. She also deployed with the Marine Corps 3rd Medical Battalion in support of the Cambodia Interoperability Program 2011, providing outreach clinical care and education to rural communities, and training in obstetric and neonatal emergencies to 50 Cambodian military physicians, midwives, and nurses.

Returning to the National Capital Region in 2012, she was assigned as Chief of Midwifery Services at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center at Bethesda and served as faculty for the OB/GYN Residency training program. In 2014 she transferred to Fort Belvoir Community Hospital, where she was competitively selected as the first Nurse Corps officer to serve as Chief of Women's Health. In 2017, she reported to the Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) Office of Women's Health, then went on to serve in multiple leadership roles including Director of Secondary and Specialty Care, Deputy Assistant Deputy Chief for Healthcare Operations, Assistant Deputy Chief for Medical Operations, senior advisor to the Navy Surgeon General supporting Military Health System (MHS) Governance and reform, and Navy Medicine Liaison to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs.

Among her accomplishments during this time, she spearheaded development of the Surgeon General's first Female Force Readiness Strategy, helped design and shape the future of the Military Health System, and laid the foundation for organizational restructuring of BUMED to better align with Fleet requirements. She served as Executive Officer of Navy Medicine Readiness and Training Command (NMRTC) Quantico, Virginia, from 2021 to 2023, and as Commanding Officer of NMRTC Annapolis and Naval Health Clinic Annapolis from July 2023 to July 2025. She currently serves as Commander, NMRTC Portsmouth and Director, Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, where she is the first Nurse Corps officer to hold these positions in the 196-year history of the First and Finest.

Her military decorations include the Legion of Merit (2), Defense Meritorious Service Medal (3), Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (4), Humanitarian Service Medal, Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, Expert Pistol and Rifle Medals, and various service and campaign awards. She earned a Doctor of Nursing Practice at Villanova University, is a 2017 Pat Tillman Foundation Scholar, and is a recipient of both the 2019 MHS Award for Nursing Leadership Excellence and the 2025 American College



of Healthcare Executives (ACHE) Navy Regent Award for Senior Career Healthcare Executive. She holds dual-board certification as a Nurse Midwife and Healthcare Executive, is a Fellow of the American College of Nurse Midwives, ACHE, and the American Academy of Nursing.

MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE AND RENEWAL REMINDER APRIL 2026

I have either called and/or emailed members per their dues renewal status and about half of those that needed to renew their membership have done so. Thank you all very much for your prompt response. I will follow up with everyone else again. Both retention and recruiting of new members are important. PACMOAA has done very well with retention of members, with losses primarily occurring if a member died or moved. As mentioned in previous newsletters, you can pay your dues in-person (at dinner meetings), by mail, or online via PayPal (Instructions on page 13). Dues should be mailed to PACMOAA, P.O. Box 5353, Portsmouth, VA 23703. If you're not sure if you owe dues, check with Hans Sachse or Sherry.

I participated in the all day MOAA Virtual Workshop for New Leaders on 4 March. General Kelly discussed the MOAA Mission – Preserve and Protect “earned” benefits of all Uniformed Services/families, etc. He noted that this is accomplished primarily through legislative advocacy and **paid membership helps pay for the 12 or so MOAA lobbyists**. Almost 20% of PACMOAA members are basic members – they only receive electronic communication from MOAA and have not paid MOAA dues. Basic membership enables MOAA to share legislative updates with more people and allows MOAA to tell Congressional Leaders that they represent over 350,000 members but does not help MOAA with revenue. To help sustain the organization and protect veterans' benefits, MOAA needs more paying members. MOAA just released a new membership brochure, and I received it electronically today. Please let me know if you are interested in obtaining a copy.

PACMOAA still needs all of you to act as **Recruiters** and invite your friends and colleagues to dinner meetings. This 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 9 April meeting at East Side Pizza in Portsmouth!!* **Personal contact** is often the most effective method of recruiting!

REMINDER: Many members include donations for our **SCHOLARSHIP FUND** with their dues payment 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!!

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

PERSONAL AFFAIRS/ SURVIVING SPOUSE

PERSONAL AFFAIRS UPDATE APRIL 2026



CDR Margaret (Peg) Cicirelli, USCGR (Ret) has been a PACMOAA member for over 20 years: serving one term on the Board of Directors, on the Scholarship Committee for three years, representing PACMOAA as JROTC Award ceremonies several times, and participating in the Annual Portsmouth Memorial Day Parade a couple of times. Peg is also a member of the Military Women of Tidewater. She has not been able to attend any meetings in some time due to health issues and is now in hospice. Peg misses her PACMOAA friends and would love to hear from them. A phone call or card would be most appreciated. Her home number is 757-809-0809.

Pictured left: Peg Cicirelli in her Navy and Coast Guard uniforms.

MAJ Traci Greene, USAF (Ret) and her husband LCDR Steve Volovsek, USN (Vet) joined PACMOAA at a Joint Recruiting Event at Patriot's Colony in 2017. Traci maintained membership, Steve

didn't. They have not been able to attend in some time due to medical issues. Steve has been having significant medical problems and is in rehab now. Please keep Traci and Steve in your prayers.

I know of several other members/spouses that are suffering from significant medical issues. Please keep Peg, Traci and Steve, and 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.

Surviving Spouse Corner: The Value of Connection

By: Pat Green MARCH 03, 2026 [MOAA - Surviving Spouse Corner: The Value of Connection](#)

How do you stay in touch with others? Maybe you prefer social media, like Facebook or LinkedIn. Perhaps email is your preference. Many connect through text messages. For some, like me, a phone call is top choice.

The need for a personal connection still exists. Nothing can brighten your day like a call from an old friend. Sharing a memory or exchanging a laugh with someone lifts the spirits. Personal communication builds strong families and good friends and creates successful institutions and cohesive organizations.

Within MOAA chapters, personal interaction among members provides opportunities to build friendships, exchange ideas, and share experiences.

[LEARN MORE: [MOAA Chapters](#)]

I recently returned from my annual MOAA council leadership training/convention. You feel the connection of shared experiences and our shared purpose at such events, but you feel more: It's the hugs exchanged, the appreciation of each member and their contributions, and the connection to the MOAA leaders and staff who attend. It was an experience that energizes and renews your commitment.

Your council and chapter create a cohesive network for the work of MOAA. They also provide a setting for friendships to flourish.

This shared affinity should be practiced in your chapter. The chaplain and the surviving spouse liaison serve as personal outreach to each member. Their role is very important.

[RELATED: [Husband's Early Death Leads MOAA Member to Serve Other Surviving Spouses](#)]

A chapter member who lives alone and has no local family needs a chapter friend or neighbor to exchange a greeting with each day. It could be as simple as texting "Good morning" and the recipient sending a thumbs-up response. The greeter and recipient should share contact information for their next of kin in the event that the greeting is not returned.

I know of one chapter that has created such a program, called Buddy Check. This might be a good idea to discuss at your next meeting.

A chapter should also have a list of emergency contacts for its members in case a member becomes ill at a meeting. I personally have experienced two situations where that information would have been helpful.

Make caring for and connecting with each other part of your mission to never stop serving.



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

MOAA & LEGISLATIVE

What Will It Cost to Help Combat-Injured Veterans? Inside the Latest CBO Figures

March 25, 2026 By MOAA Staff <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2026->

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

[news-articles/benefits/what-will-it-cost-to-help-combat-injured-veterans-inside-the-latest-cbo-figures/](#)

MOAA's long fight to end an unfair pay offset faced by combat-injured veterans has never come with a price limit – for those who've served and sacrificed, financial pressures aren't an excuse to deny earned benefits.

However, even some supporters in Congress have pointed to the cost of a legislative fix – the Major Richard Star Act – as a reason for the long delay in ending the “wounded veteran tax.” And a cost estimate for the bill released March 23 by the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) could further complicate such discussions.

[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Support Combat-Injured Veterans](#)]

The Basics

Medically retired veterans eligible for Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC) are not eligible to receive both earned retirement pay and VA disability pay – one offsets the other, meaning some do not receive any retirement pay. These are two different payments for two different purposes, one recognizing years of service and the other providing disability compensation.

The Major Richard Star Act, as envisioned by advocacy groups like MOAA and other supporters, would end this offset and ensure these *medically retired veterans with combat-related disabilities* receive full retirement pay and VA disability compensation. Doing so would cost \$13 billion over 10 years, [according to the CBO estimate](#). That figure could end up lower, as some retirees may choose to keep their existing tax-free CRSC benefit rather than receive Concurrent Retired and Disability Pay (CRDP).

However, the full CBO score of the Major Richard Star Act sits at \$78 billion over 10 years – \$65 billion above the initial figure.

[MOAA SITREP: [The Major Richard Star Act](#)]

The Breakdown

The Major Richard Star Act has been introduced in multiple congressional sessions with adjustments made to legislative language over time. In its current draft, the bill would not only address the offset for combat-injured medical retirees, but also would extend CRDP eligibility to a significantly broader population of Chapter 61 retirees.

Specifically, the current draft would also eliminate the offset for:

- [Chapter 61 military retirees](#) with fewer than 20 years of service
- Chapter 61 retirees with at least 20 years of service and a 40% or lower disability rating

This broader application extends beyond combat-related disabilities and would cover approximately 255,000 more retirees, accounting for the additional \$65 billion in projected cost.

While this expanded scope is reflected in the CBO estimate, it does not align with the original, longstanding objective of the Major Richard Star Act: *to correct the inequity faced by medically retired veterans whose disabilities are directly tied to combat*.

Earlier versions of the legislation – and recent amendment language proposed to both the FY 2026 National Defense Authorization Act and appropriations legislation – have reflected this more targeted approach by limiting eligibility to combat-injured medical retirees. Those versions have consistently received significantly lower cost estimates, generally \$10 billion to \$13 billion over 10 years.

The Way Forward

The legislative process provides an opportunity to ensure the policy is aligned with its intended purpose. Clarifying the scope of eligibility will be key to ensuring the bill delivers relief to combat-injured veterans without introducing unintended expansions that drive up cost and complicated passage.

MOAA will continue to advocate for a solution that fully removes the offset for medically retired veterans with combat-related disabilities and fully restores the benefits they earned through their service and sacrifice. Given their profound sacrifices, those with combat-related injuries must be the first priority. While individuals with non-combat disabilities are deserving of support, they should be addressed through a separate framework distinct from

the remedies reserved for those wounded in service to their country.

As a founding member of [The Star Act Alliance](#), MOAA stands ready to work with lawmakers to refine the legislation so it achieves this goal.

MOAA members can help by adding their voice to the cause: The Major Richard Star Act is one of four key priorities we'll bring to Capitol Hill on April 15 as part of [Advocacy in Action](#), our signature advocacy event. The more messages we're able to [send to lawmakers](#), the greater the effect of our visits to hundreds of congressional offices.

Keep up with the latest on this bill and other MOAA priorities [at our advocacy news page](#).

Advocacy in Action 2026: MOAA's Key Issues, and How You Can Add Your Voice

By: Terry Waters March 04, 2026 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2026-news-articles/advocacy/moaa-announces-4-focus-areas-for-advocacy-in-action-2026/>

Combat-injured veterans shouldn't lose earned retirement pay because of their wounds.

Servicemembers shouldn't have to wonder whether a government shutdown will interrupt their paycheck.

Veterans shouldn't pay thousands of dollars to an unaccredited consultant for "help" accessing their earned disability compensation.

And no military family should struggle to access services at their military hospital or clinic without a clear path to care.

On April 15, leaders from among MOAA's 350,000 members – representing a community of more than 22 million current, former, and retired uniformed services personnel – will bring these important issues to Capitol Hill as a part of MOAA's signature annual advocacy campaign, Advocacy in Action. This year, our efforts will center on four initiatives designed to uphold our nation's commitments to our servicemembers, veterans, their families, and survivors – and we need your support.

[LEARN MORE: [Advocacy in Action 2026](#)]

Major Richard Star Act

Combat-injured servicemembers who are medically retired before reaching 20 years of service lose some or all of their earned retirement pay because it is offset by VA disability compensation. The [Major Richard Star Act](#) (H.R. 2101 | S. 1032) would correct this long-standing injustice for these wounded warriors.

Nearly 54,000 combat-injured veterans are affected by this policy. The legislation has broad bipartisan support in both chambers, but passage has been blocked by procedural issues in recent years. Correcting this injustice reinforces a simple principle: Retirement earned through service and compensation earned through sacrifice are not the same, and both should be honored.

[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Support Combat-Injured Veterans](#)]

Shutdown Fairness Act

Recent funding lapses have left approximately 41,000 Coast Guard servicemembers performing their duties without certainty of timely pay. This is the third shutdown within the last year, and during these funding gaps, active duty servicemembers, retirees, and their families are forced to grapple with the stress and hardships of missed paychecks.

The Shutdown Fairness Act (S. 3168) would provide a permanent fix, ensuring members of the armed forces continue to receive pay and benefits during funding lapses while Congress resolves broader appropriations matters. Those who serve should not be asked to operate under the threat of financial uncertainty, especially when readiness and retention are already under pressure. This act will also enable reservists to continue performing drill functions, maintaining readiness, during future government shutdowns.

[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Protect Servicemember Pay During Any Future Shutdown](#)]

GUARD VA Benefits Act

Unaccredited companies are charging veterans thousands of dollars to assist with VA disability claims, a service which is legally available for free through accredited representatives. Weak enforcement mechanisms have allowed bad actors to exploit veterans navigating the VA claims process.

The GUARD VA Benefits Act (H.R. 1732) would restore penalties for unauthorized fees and strengthen oversight. Veterans should never have to surrender a portion of their earned benefits to unregulated, for-profit intermediaries.

[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Stop Predatory Claims Agents](#)]

Military CARE Act

Military families frequently encounter appointment shortages, referral delays, and other barriers to access at military treatment facilities (MTFs) – often with no clear, standardized way to elevate or track access-to-care concerns.

The Military CARE Act (H.R. 6796) would establish a centralized digital platform allowing TRICARE beneficiaries to report access-to-care problems, route concerns to the appropriate patient advocate, and provide the Defense Health Agency and Congress with aggregated data to address widespread challenges.

[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Help Fight MTF Access Problems](#)]

We Need Your Support

As MOAA advocates prepare to bring these priorities to Capitol Hill in April, lawmakers are listening closely to the voices they hear back home. They want to know these issues don't just matter in Washington – they matter in their districts and states, to the constituents they represent.

That's why this year's Advocacy in Action effort includes a focused digital campaign designed to generate a strong, coordinated wave of messages in the coming weeks. When our in-person advocates walk into congressional offices, they should be reinforcing what lawmakers have already heard from you, their constituents. Your support can make the difference between a bill gaining traction or being lost among competing congressional priorities.

You can help today by:

- **Signing up for [MOAA's Legislative Action Center](#)** to send prepared messages to your elected officials and receive priority alerts when it is time to act.
- **Call your lawmakers directly** via MOAA's Capitol Hotline at (866) 272-MOAA (6622) to express your support for MOAA's legislative priorities.
- **Engaging with [your local MOAA chapter](#)** to strengthen grassroots efforts and coordinate legislative outreach within your district.

When our members walk into congressional offices, they carry the collective voice of our nationwide community. Your work will help ensure Congress keeps faith with those who serve to protect our nation.

Update on Advocacy in Action 2026 (AiA) as of 26 March

The Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter meeting on 17 March, the Military Nurse Advocates Virtual Chapter (MUSNAVC) meeting on 18 March and the MOAA Virtual Chapter Roundtable on 26 March all gave excellent overviews on AiA 2026. Several interesting facts not addressed in the 4 March article were mentioned.

Major Richard Star Act – This issue has been presented at the last 3 sessions of Congress and generally had very good support but concerns per funding. Currently, HR 2102 has 317 co-sponsors (Jen Kiggans is the only local co-sponsor) and SB 1032 has 78 so-sponsors (Mark Warner was an original co-sponsor). The recently released CBO report, discussed in the article "What Will It Cost To Help Combat-Injured Veterans? Inside the latest CBO Figures", includes a larger group of Chapter 61 retirees than the original intent of the Ricard Star Act and is much more expensive.

Shutdown Fairness Act – This issue is especially relevant now with 2 shutdowns this year impacting the USCG and PHS which has 750 members assigned to Homeland Security and thus is paid by Homeland. SB 3168 has 7 co-sponsors (neither Sen Kaine or Sen Warner is a co-sponsor) and HR 7137 has 22 co-sponsors (no local co-sponsors). Reservists have also been impacted this year as their training is suspended during shutdowns and this can impact their years of service for retirement.

GUARD VA Benefits Act – HR 1732 has 121 co-sponsors, (none local). This bill seeks to reinstate criminal penalties against loan sharks that were repealed in 2006 in an attempt to give lawyers more access to assist veterans with appeals. This is the 3rd session this issue has been introduced. Even though some states are addressing this, MOAA feels it should be addressed nationally to ensure the accountability and integrity of the VA claims system.

NOTE: The Virginia General Assembly just passed legislation (SB 315 & HB 398) that would enable loan sharks to charge veterans for assistance which is the opposite of the intent of the MOAA bill! It would legalize certain fraudulent practices and the veteran could not appeal per VCOC Legislative Representative. A letter from VCOC was emailed a few days ago to PACMOAA members asking them to contact the Governor (804-786-2211 or <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/contact/>) and ask her to veto the legislation.



Above Articles Submitted by:
Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret)
PACMOAA 2nd VP/Membership Chair
Asst Legislative Rep / Retired Army Nurse and member of MUSNAVC
Cell 757-630-5608

VCOC AND JLC

The Second Quarter VCOC Meeting will be Virtual on April 21st at 1500. All members are invited to attend. If interested, please contact me at thesalute1@gmail.com.

Submitted By: Ken App CDR USN (Ret) PACMOAA VCOC Representative 757-630-0886

VCOC LEGISLATIVE REPORT & JLC UPDATE VIRGINIA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Virginia operates under a two-year (biennial) budget cycle – adopting the two-year budget in even-numbered years and amending the budget in odd-numbered years. The proposed 2026-2028 biennial budget, navigating a split between House and Senate plans, focuses on tax rebates, education funding, and data center tax policy. The Governor proposes the budget, which is then analyzed, amended and passed by the House Appropriations and Senate Finance & Appropriations committees. The 2026 Virginia General Assembly session adjourned on March 14, 2026 without a budget agreement due to disputes over data center tax incentives. **This failure to pass a budget necessitates a special session called to convene on April 23, 2026.**

Some of the key legislative actions in 2026 are as follows:

- **Gun Control:** The House and Senate advanced a ban on assault firearms, large-capacity magazines, and strengthened “red flag” laws.
- **Minimum Wage:** Senate Bill 1 passed, aiming for a \$15 per hour minimum wage by January 1, 2028, with increases beginning in 2026.
- **Education:** Legislation was passed addressing school instruction regarding the January 6, 2021 Capitol incident.
- **Data Centers:** Lawmakers passed measures to curb tax exemptions for the data center industry and shifted some energy infrastructure costs to them.
- **Budget Crisis:** A fight over ending tax exemptions for data center equipment derailed the budget forcing

a special session.

While many bills failed during the “crossover” period, over 1,000 which ended their chances for the session, many bills received approval from both chambers, including significant changes to school board terms and union-backed labor legislation. Legislators also passed significant legislation including a phased \$15 minimum wage, over 25 gun control reforms, and new regulations on data center energy costs. Some bills, such as certain environmental or in-state tuition proposals, were pushed to the 2027 session.

The key budget issues are as follows:

- **Budget Size:** The previously proposed two-year budget was roughly \$212 billion, with the current impasse focusing on tax policy changes that could impact revenue by over a billion dollars.
- **Key Proposals:** Senate proposals included \$100-\$200 tax rebates, 3% teacher raises, and \$50 million for affordable housing.
- **Stalemate Issue:** The central conflict is the Senate’s proposal to end a sales tax exemption on data center equipment, which the House seeks to retain to protect industry investment.
- **Next Steps:** As mentioned earlier in this article, a special session is scheduled for April 23, 2026 to resolve the stalemate between the House and Senate versions.

Information obtained by the Virginia Mercury from the reporting of the 2026 legislative session midway point and after adjournment.

Submitted by Mary L. Snyder
Surviving Spouse
PACMOAA VCOC Legislative Representative

VMSDEP UPDATE as of 27 March 2026

As noted in the VCOC Legislative Report above, the General Assembly did not pass a budget in their regular session and will meet in special session on 23 April to complete the 2026-2028 biennial budget. The VMSDEP funding was included in the budget in the 2024-2026 budget and so has not been finalized yet. Per the VCOC Executive Board meeting on 24 March, both Gen Tim Williams (Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs and previous Adjutant General) and John Maxwell (Commissioner of Virginia Department of Veterans Services) are very supportive of VMSDEP and working on maintaining this very important benefit for Virginia Veterans. I will keep PACMOAA members updated on the status of VMSDEP and alert you if we need to contact our legislators about this issue.

Submitted by Sherry Ferki
MAJ, USA (Ret)
Assistant Legislative Representative

Picture at Right (CW from Left): CDR Hans Sachse, CDR David Von Rump, Karen & COL Bill Smith, CWO4 Chuck Waggoner, Mrs. Lois Yandle.



Left CW from Left: Cindy and CAPT Bob Brewer, Mr. Paul and Margie Stevenson, Nikolas Algood, and Teresa Wilfong.

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PROGRAMS

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

- 09 April 2026 East Side Pizza, 5630 Portsmouth Blvd, Portsmouth, VA CAPT Kim Shaughnessy-Granger USN CO NMCP
- Monday, 11 May 2026** Barron's Pub, 500 High Street, Portsmouth **Speaker TBA**
- 18 June 2026** Bide-A -Wee, **Note 3rd Thursday**, Scholarship Dinner, Speaker Tentatively, CAPT Matthew T. Frauenzimmer, USN ODU ROTC DIRECTOR
- 19 July 2026 Joint Brunch, Hosted by HRCMOAA at Atlantic Shores Retirement Community \$40PP

COMMUNITY

UPDATE ON SCHOLARSHIPS AND JROTC AWARD CEREMONIES

March through the end of May are very busy months for the PACMOAA Scholarship Committee and JROTC Awards Committee and presenters! *2025 Scholarship winners Charli Albers and Danr Cunningham, and Scholarship Committee members picture to the left.*



Scholarship applications were emailed to about 35 schools in the PACMOAA area, both public and private schools around mid-March with a due date during the last week week in May. The Scholarship Committee has a short turnaround time to review all applications and select 2 awardees. Applicants do not have to belong to a local JROTC unit but do need to attend a ROTC like program in college.

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



PACMOAA supports 14 local JROTC groups for awards. Many of the schools contact PACMOAA directly with the date of the award ceremony and some require multiple contacts to find out the date. *COL Irv Lindley with Churchland HS AJROTC awardee to the left.* The JROTC Award Ceremonies are very impressive, highlighting the many achievements of the cadets! Over the past 10 years, there have always been 1 – 3 schools that did not give awards although most of them did have awards during the pandemic. PACMOAA member CDR Lynn Primeaux, USN (Ret) organized an NJROTC program at Kings Fork High School in school year 2024-2025 and they will conduct their first award ceremony this year. The previous program there was AFJROTC and didn't have

a leader for several years. Generally current and past PACMOAA Leadership Team members attend and present the MOAA medal and certificate to the cadet selected by the school but interested members are welcome can attend these ceremonies. Several times over the past 20 years, interested members attended with a seasoned presenter and then attended a ceremony on their own the following year. It would be great to have more of our members involved in these award ceremonies!!

Last year PACMOAA invited all the JROTC Instructors to the Annual Scholarship Award Dinner in June to strengthen our relations with them and their cadets and hopefully gain some of them as members also. Even though I had communicated with several of the instructors that attended last year for some time, it was great to finally meet them! Invitations will be sent for 2026 June meeting.

Submitted by: Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret)
Scholarship Committees Co-Chair & Awards Committee Chair

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

For April a poem by Sr. Miriam Barker, C.D.S from *The Salesian collection*

KEEP SMILING

Keep smiling when the sun would hide,
And shadows fall like night-
When storms would toss and turn and turn you 'round,
And nothing would be right.

Keep smiling, for the sun's around
The corner, never fear-
For then the clouds will vanish, and
The skies will soon be clear

Keep smiling', tho your heart would break,
And tempest take its toll-
When tears, like rain from angry skies
Would flood your troubled soul.

Keep smiling, yes, for clouds will part,
And sun will soon begin-
To warm your heart as God restores
Your peace and joy within.

Submitted by: **CAPT Bob Brewer, USN (Ret) Chaplain**

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



That's a wrap for April!

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.

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 is says "name, @username, email, or mobile" and click "next". Enter the amount to transmit and add "For PACMOAA Dues (or whatever category is appropriate)" 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: _____