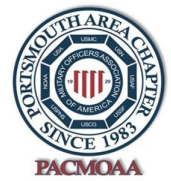




The Salute Online



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 III

LEARN MORE AT PACMOOA.ORG

MARCH 2026

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

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



PACMOOA Family: *Sadly, we had our last dinner meeting at Roger Browns restaurant---* thankfully, we had over 4 solid years of personable customer service, affordable meals, and a venue which accommodated our speaker/entertainment needs. Thanks to those who attended (see picture below) and helped say goodbye to the dedicated staff.

Beginning next month, we need your patience and support in trying to find a new meeting place. We are planning to explore the **Bide A Wee golf course Event Center**...expect a slight increase in our meal cost (\$ 30.00)...for the next four meetings we will try out 4 different places ---to help give some us bargaining flexibility--we desperately need your attendance to negotiate a good future meal

cost.



Our Guest Speaker is tentatively scheduled to be CAPT Brian Stamm, CHC, USN (Ret) of the NAVY/COAST GUARD Wounded Warrior Program.

Please mark your calendar for **March 12th** for our next dinner meeting...not only do I promise a meaningful program, but I will provide and sing a few Navy Hymns.

Anchors aweigh!

Pic at right: CAPT Bruce LaLonde presenting our Guest Speaker, Joyce Elliot with a Certificate of Appreciation

Bruce

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

Right: Mrs. Dena Cain presenting PACMOOA President, CAPT Bruce LaLonde, with a pair of LOVE Sunglasses!



VETERAN CRISIS HOTLINE Dial 988 then press 1

PACMOAA
LEADERSHIP

SEE LEADERSHIP PULLDOWN



CHAPTER NEWS

MARCH

Women's History Month

- 03 U.S. Naval Reserve Established 1915
- 04 National Hug a GI Day U.S. Navy Band Established 1925
- 05 U.S. Navy Seabees Birthday 1942
- 08 [Daylight Saving Time Begins](#) (Spring Forward)
- 13 [K 9 Veterans Day](#)
- 12 **PACMOAA Dinner Meeting –NOTE THE NEW VENUE (Wear Green)**
- 15 [American Legion Birthday \(1919\)](#)
- 17 [St. Patrick's Day](#)
- 18 National Supreme Sacrifice Day
- 20 [Vernal equinox](#) First Day of Spring
- 25 National [Medal of Honor Day](#)
- 29 [National Vietnam War Veterans Day](#) Palm Sunday

HAPPY MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Mike Riley
Gordan Van Hook

March Dinner Meeting

will be held on **Thursday, March 12th** at Bide-A-Wee Golf Course Pavillion Center, 1 Bide A Wee Drive, Portsmouth **PLEASE NOTE VENUE CHANGE**

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

Buffett Menu

- Pot Roast*
- Salmon*
- Mashed Potatoes & Gravy*
- Green Beans*
- Bread And Honey butter*
- Brownie*
- Tea, Sweet/Unsweet Tea, Coffee, and Water*

Cost is \$30 (includes gratuity & tax). **NO bar available.** Please make your reservation no later than **Sunday, March 8th** 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

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GUEST SPEAKER

CAPT Brian Stamm, CHC USN (Ret), of the NAVY-USCG Wounded Warrior Program. CAPT Stamm is the Director of the program. His Full bio will be sent separately.

MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE AND RENEWAL REMINDER MARCH 2026

I am still working on sending reminders to members if you owe dues for this year. You can pay your dues in-person (at dinner meetings), by mail, or online. 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 mentioned last month that MOAA would be sending out a one-time bulk mailing of member data of potential members to chapters. I received the PACMOAA list and there are 1900 names on it!! The lists are based on zip codes and PACMOAA and the Hampton Roads Chapter overlap a lot in Chesapeake. Sorting through this list will take some time and hopefully will help PACMOAA increase our membership. The Leadership Team will continue to reach out to all the JROTC Lead Instructors to strengthen our relations with them and their cadets and hopefully gain some of them as members also. 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 March meeting at Bide-A-Wee Golf Club!!* **Personal contact** is often the most effective method of recruiting!

Talking Points to encourage potential members to join PACMOAA and MOAA could include:

- Legislative advocacy for veterans benefits on a state (PACMOAA) and national (MOAA) level.
- Working with high school students.
 - Recognizing their achievements in their JROTC groups by presenting the MOAA certificate of recognition along with a MOAA medal at their annual award ceremonies.
 - Awarding several scholarships each year to high school seniors going into a ROTC program in college!
- Keeping members updated on changes in local benefits, e.g., related to pharmacy issues

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!!

Reminder per Guidelines for Paying PACMOAA Dues/dinner/scholarship donation, 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 PACMOAAreasurer@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 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. Hans Sachse is the PACMOAA Treasurer.

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

PERSONAL AFFAIRS/ SURVIVING SPOUSE

PERSONAL AFFAIRS SCAMS/FRAUDS

I attended a program at Lake Prince Woods this week on Senior Scam Prevention that was presented by the Towne Bank Loss Prevention Manager Jodie Jones. When checking my email that evening, I found an email from USAA titled "STOP: Scammers Use Emotions – Don't let Them Rush You". Both reviewed a lot of the same helpful information.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) releases data on scams/fraud every year. The most recent release for 2024

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showed that even though the number of fraud reports didn't increase, consumers lost 25% more in 2024 than in 2023! The top frauds in 2024 were 1. Imposters, 2. Online shopping and negative reviews, 3. Business and job opportunities, 4. Investments, and 5. Internet. Examples of imposters can include a family member in trouble, government officials like DFAS, business you know like bank or credit card company, etc. One very interesting stat showed that younger people (20-29 years old) reported losing money to fraud more often than older people (70-79 years old) but older people lost more money. Per the FTC Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book 2024 at [Consumer Sentinel Network Data Book 2024](#), Virginia rates #16 in fraud reports and #11 in number of victims per Speaker Jodie Jones.

The presentation, USAA articles and webinars mentioned **Red Flags** such as unsolicited contact about a problem (for example with VA Benefits) or prize; pressure to act immediately (for example missed jury duty and need to pay immediately); or instructed to pay in a certain way like gift card, wire funds via Walmart, or money order.

Both the presenter and USAA suggested using the **STOP** method to protect yourself with slightly different suggestions on how to **STOP**. Several of the steps include:

- *Stay Cautious* – Be alert when someone asks for your personal information or money.
- *Take your time* – scammers want to rush you. Slow down and **THINK BEFORE YOU ACT!** An example of this is a phone call saying you didn't pay your electric bill and electricity will be cut off immediately if you don't pay now.
- *Only trust verified sources* - Double check information through trusted channels. For example, I have received quite a few emails that looked exactly like the USAA emails but did not include the last 4 numbers of my USAA number in the Security Box they have. Sometimes you will notice the email it was sent from is not spelled correctly or is different than normal from that entity.
- *Protect your info*- Never share personal or financial details, including one-time codes, unless you're sure who you're dealing with.

Some suggestions for “**If You Fall For a Scam**” included:

- Do not be embarrassed! People of all ages and walks of life are victims of scams.
- Do not continue to engage with the fraudster.
- Check with your bank and credit card company.
- Freeze your credit (if identity theft or you gave out personal identification information through your credit card company.). You can find more information at <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/credit-freezes-and-fraud-alerts>.
- File a police report.
- Report it to the FTC at reportfraud.ftc.gov or call the **National Elder Fraud Hotline at 1-833-FRAUD-11 or 1-833-372-8311** Monday-Friday 10 AM-6 PM.

MOAA had several excellent webinars last year addressing this fraud and identify theft. They are now available on YouTube. You need to be a Premium or Life member to access them and need to sign in to the MOAA website first and then into YouTube via Google.

”Protect Yourself From Identity Theft and Fraud” <https://www.moaa.org/content/benefits-and-discounts/transition-and-careers/transition-center-webinars/identity-theft-and-fraud-webinar-archive/>. This was presented on 4/8/25 by an FTC Consumer Protection Representative. Several strategies to “Protect Your Finances and Identity” included monitoring your bank and credit accounts regularly, monitoring your credit reports from all 3 bureaus monthly, and freezing credit files and lifting freezes for legitimate inquires.

“How to Stop Scams Targeting Veterans and Military Families” on YouTube that was presented on 10/16/25 at <https://www.moaa.org/content/benefits-and-discounts/transition-and-careers/transition-center-webinars/webinar-archive-stop-scams-2025/>.

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

Personal Affairs Chair and Surviving Spouse Liaison

Surviving Spouse Corner: Getting to Know TAPS

By: Cheryl Toland February 03, 2026 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2026-news-articles/spotlight/surviving-spouse-corner-getting-to-know-taps/>

The [Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors \(TAPS\)](#) directly supports all grieving the death of an active duty servicemember or veteran, regardless of the survivor's phase in their grief journey.

TAPS' team of experts, staff, compassionate volunteers, and peer-support network stand ready 24/7 to embrace bereaved families, friends, and battle buddies and connect them with immediate and lifelong tangible resources and emotional care. This includes casework and education assistance, community-based connections, in-person events, a thriving online community, and the [National Military Survivor Helpline](#), (800) 959-TAPS (8277), which is answered by a knowledgeable, caring survivor care team member anytime, day or night.

[MORE MOAA RESOURCES: [Surviving Spouses](#)]

TAPS was founded in the wake of a military tragedy following a 1992 C-12 crash in Alaska that took the lives of eight soldiers. Among the grieving family members was Bonnie Carroll, the widow of Brig. Gen. Tom Carroll, USA. After realizing that no support network was in place for the families of the fallen, Bonnie spent two years researching best practices while navigating her own grief alongside fellow survivors.

In 1994, TAPS officially opened its doors to military and veteran survivors. Today, Bonnie and the TAPS team have supported over 100,000 military and veteran survivors as they grieve, heal, and honor the life of their loved one.

Each day, an average of 26 new survivors connect with TAPS in search of support, resources, and community, such as:

- **Programs.** TAPS offers a wide variety of programming, seminars, online groups, and workshops. Learn more at [TAPS.org/programs](https://www.taps.org/programs).
- **Advocacy.** Efforts are dedicated to empowering survivors to use their voices to spark change while working closely with government leaders and lawmakers to advance policy and legislation that impacts life after unspeakable tragedy. Visit [TAPS.org/advocacy](https://www.taps.org/advocacy).



- **TAPS Magazine:** This quarterly publication, mailed to members/survivors, is a comprehensive resource for grieving families. Visit [TAPS.org/magazine](https://www.taps.org/magazine).

- **Facebook group.** In this group, a survivor can share and receive support from other survivors, staff, and professionals. Learn more at [Facebook.com/tapsorg](https://www.facebook.com/tapsorg).

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

MOAA & LEGISLATIVE

MOAA on the Hill: CEO Outlines Key Priorities at Joint Veterans Hearing

February 24, 2026 By MOAA Staff <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2026-news-articles/reads/moaa-on-the-hill-ceo-outlines-key-priorities-at-joint-veterans-hearing/>

Lawmakers have the opportunity to provide sorely needed support for veteran caregivers, protect service-earned benefits from for-profit “[claim sharks](#),” and shore up critical transition-assistance programs for those leaving service by passing three bipartisan bills already moving through Congress, MOAA's president and CEO told a joint committee hearing Feb. 24 on Capitol Hill.

Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret), testified alongside fellow veterans advocates before House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee members in Washington, D.C., using his remarks to stress the importance of three

bills on MOAA's priority list:

- The [Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act](#), which offers financial guidance along with career and retirement support that “helps family members avoid choosing between caring for a veteran and securing their own future,” Kelly told lawmakers.
- The [Governing Unaccredited Representatives Defrauding \(GUARD\) VA Benefits Act](#), which provides tools to stop unregulated companies from charging veterans for help with disability claims and “restores accountability without restricting access to lawful, accredited assistance,” Kelly said.
- The [TAP Promotion Act](#), which allows groups like MOAA to play a more important role in the transition process and “ensures servicemembers and their family members receive timely, accurate information before separation, not after problems arise,” Kelly said. Understanding trusted sources of this information allows veterans to find “the right places to follow up to make sure they can get access to all their benefits,” the CEO added in response to a question from Rep. Nancy Mace (R-S.C.), who chaired the hearing.

[MORE DETAILS: [MOAA's Written Testimony to Congress](#)]

Kelly linked the need for streamlined provision of service-earned veterans benefits with the strength of the all-volunteer force, noting MOAA's work on behalf of those in and out of uniform, including the development of the people-focused [TotalForce+ event](#).

VA Rule Reversal

Kelly joined representatives from six other veteran advocacy groups – Blue Star Families, Vietnam Veterans of America, National Congress of American Indians, Service Women's Action Network, Gold Star Wives of America, and Black Veterans Project – on the day's second panel. Representatives from Disabled American Veterans (DAV) spoke to lawmakers during the first, which covered legislative issues as well as the VA's [recent rule change](#) – and [subsequent reversal](#) – regarding the effect of medication on the disability ratings process.

[RELATED: [VA Must Rescind, Not Just 'Halt,' New Rule on Disability Ratings](#)]

After opposition lodged by veterans and advocates, VA Secretary Doug Collins announced the department would not enforce the Feb. 17 regulation – a rule he said only served to “clarify existing policy” in the wake of recent court rulings. Advocates have said the rule could have unintended consequences, such as encouraging veterans to skip medication prior to evaluations, reducing benefits for those able to control certain conditions via medication, and neglecting second- and third-order effects caused by a medication's side effects.

“From first salute to final honors, how we care for those who serve and those who stand beside them directly impacts who is willing to serve next,” Kelly said.

MOAA and other groups also raised concerns that the rule was implemented without the customary notice-and-comment process and without VA officials discussing the regulation with veterans associations.

“Transparency in terms of consulting us, giving us information, we think would've provided the secretary and the VA with information that may have adjusted the outcome” of the rule issue, Kelly said on behalf of the panelists in response to a question by Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-Ill.). “This group of people has information to provide and should be consulted.”

VA Fully Rescinds Disability Ratings Rule ... Here's What Should Happen Next

By: Kevin Lilley February 27, 2026 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2026-news-articles/benefits/va-fully-rescinds-disability-ratings-rule--heres-what-should-happen-next/>

After feedback from veterans, advocacy groups, lawmakers, and other stakeholders – 20,000 of whom provided comments [via the Federal Register](#) – the VA [fully rescinded an interim final rule](#) that may have punished veterans for receiving medical treatment.

VA Secretary Doug Collins announced Feb. 19, two days after the new rule was published, that it would not be

enforced. The official rescission echoes Collins' Feb. 19 statement, which said the rule served to clarify existing policy, but notes the department "recognizes that many commenters construed the interim final rule as something that could result in adverse consequences."

[RELATED: [MOAA CEO Outlines Key Priorities to Joint Veterans Panel](#)]

MOAA was among those commenters, noting that the rule "fails to account for treatment burdens, creates harmful incentives, destabilizes access to benefits, and was promulgated without adequate public input." While the VA's Feb. 27 move to rescind the rule represents a first step toward rebuilding trust with the veteran community, three other key recommendations from MOAA's public comment should come next:

End the Legal Fight

The VA's short-lived rule change came after the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims ruled against the department in *Ingram v. Collins*, stating that the VA should issue disability ratings based on the severity of a veteran's condition, following precedent "requiring the discounting of beneficial effects of medication."

In the rule, the VA said the court "erred" in its determination and noted the case and other recent judicial rulings as grounds for rapid passage of the clarifying regulation. MOAA and other stakeholders disagree with this interpretation, and so long as the VA proceeds with appealing *Ingram* and similar cases, veterans' benefits would remain under threat.

"Continued pursuit of an appeal is in direct opposition to the halted enforcement of the [interim final rule]," MOAA wrote in its public comment.

[RELATED: [New Law Will Preserve Value of VA-Issued Life Insurance](#)]

Clarify the Ratings Process

The rescinded rule had been meant to "reaffirm the proper understanding of VA policy," according to the rule text. And while the rule is going away, such reaffirmation is still sorely needed.

The department should state clearly that a disability rating will not be reduced based on the effects of treatment, and that a veteran's ability to address chronic injury or disease with medication should not be confused with "medical improvement."

Many veterans suffer a reduced quality of life from effective treatments – anything from moderate to severe side effects to medication and treatment needs that disrupt life's regular rhythms. They should not worry about losing earned benefits while they deal with these second-order effects.

Keep Veterans Healthy

By weighing medication as part of a VA disability rating (and subsequent benefits), the department inadvertently created an incentive for veterans to skip treatments prior to an evaluation, or otherwise mask any treatment-related improvements.

The VA can address this concern moving forward by releasing guidance that would "explicitly prohibit adverse rating consequences tied to treatment compliance, ensuring veterans are not discouraged from following prescribed care," MOAA wrote in its public comment.

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

The Next Step

MOAA and fellow veterans service organizations will continue to engage with the VA on this issue; the lack of engagement with such groups has been cited by many as contributing to the confusion caused by the recent rule, which was passed without a traditional feedback period.

No veteran should feel that undergoing treatment for an illness or injury could lead to unexpected downgrades in their service-earned benefits. Keep up with this issue and other MOAA priorities [via our news page](#).

LEGISLATIVE AND OTHER ARTICLES OF INTEREST

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Know Your TRICARE Virtual Health Options February 27, 2026

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2026-news-articles/benefits/know-your-tricare-virtual-health-options/> “Available benefits vary based on your coverage type” **NOTE:** There are some options covered for TRICARE Prime or TRICARE Select and for TRICARE for Life.

MOAA Life Member Awarded Medal of Honor During State of the Union Address

February 25, 2026 <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2026-news-articles/spotlight/moaa-life-member-awarded-medal-of-honor-during-state-of-the-union-address/> “100-year-old Capt. Royce Williams, USN (Ret), was the second awardee to receive the honor during the speech.”

Partial Shutdown Could Mean No Pay for Some in Uniform February 17, 2026

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2026-news-articles/finance/partial-shutdown-2026-coast-guard-pay/> “A MOAA-backed bill would prevent such financial uncertainty during future funding lapses.”

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

Health Care Access a Top Complaint Among Servicemembers February 13, 2026

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2026-news-articles/benefits/health-care-access-a-top-complaint-among-servicemembers/> “Top enlisted leaders told a Senate panel about a "gradual erosion" in the service-earned benefit.”

[TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmakers to Address Military Treatment Facility Access Problems](#)]

Veteran Suicide Rate Slightly Increased, Latest Report Finds February 11, 2026

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2026-news-articles/reads/veteran-suicide-rate-slightly-increased,-latest-report-finds/> “The report noted several unique veteran populations that the VA should consider targeting for prevention.”

TRICARE Users: This Scam Could Put Your Personal Health Information at Risk February 09, 2026

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2026-news-articles/benefits/tricare-users-this-scam-could-put-your-personal-health-information-at-risk/> “Get expert advice on avoiding a type of fraud that could target service-connected beneficiaries”. **NOTE:** An example is a fake website looking like MSH GENESIS Patient Portal.

Military Spouse Employment Partnership Reaches Major Milestone February 06, 2026

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2026-news-articles/family/military-spouse-employment-partnership-reaches-major-milestone/> “More than 1,000 employers, including MOAA, have pledged their support.”

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



NOTE: Comments after website link enclosed in quotation marks are from MOAA website.

Notes are from MAJ Ferki.

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 thesalutel@gmail.com.

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

VCOC LEGISLATIVE REPORT & JLC UPDATE
VIRGINIA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

As stated in the previous Salute edition, the 164th Virginia General Assembly convened on January 14, 2026 and is set to adjourn on March 16, 2026.

The General Assembly reached its midpoint on February 17 as lawmakers hit crossover. In total, the House passed 849 of the 1528 introduced House bills, and the Senate passed 520 of the 849 introduced Senate bills. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees will soon announce their respective revisions to the introduced budget, and report on those actions.

With crossover complete, the surviving bills now move to the opposite chamber, where lawmakers will amend, pare back, or press forward their proposals before they can reach the Governor's desk. The second half of the session will also be defined by negotiations over the state's biennial budget. Those discussions have already begun.

JLC UPDATE

Below is the latest update on the six Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations initiatives for 2026 –

JLC Initiative 2026-01 Secure the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP)

This became HB 56 and SB 92. The General Assembly is concerned with the program's cost. HB 56 was reported from the House Education Committee with a substitute and referred to Rules with a vote of 21 Y, 0 N.

SB 92 was continued to 2027 in the Senate Finance & Appropriations Committee with a vote of 15 Y, 0 N.

The DVS Secretary and Commissioner remain strong advocates. JLC is currently utilizing "soft advocacy" alongside partners like the Wounded Warrior Project and AUSA.

JLC Initiative 2026-02 Stop Unscrupulous Firms from Exploiting Veterans

This became HB 1268 and did not pass. It was continued to next session (2027) in the House Rules Studies Subcommittee with a vote of 5 Y, 0 N. A Plus One bill to regulate claim providers who are not accredited remains alive in the Virginia General Assembly, and interestingly, a recent court ruling in Louisiana found unconstitutional a Plus-One bill.

<https://cases.justia.com/federal/district-courts/louisiana/lamdce/3:2024cv00446/64834/102/0.pdf>

JLC Initiative 2026-03 Veteran Suicide Death Information Access

This became HB 529. Bill was read a third time and passed House block vote by a vote of 98 Y, 0 N, 0 A. This bill is currently in Senate committee.

JLC Initiative 2026-04 Veteran Textbook Support Grant

No information available.

JLC Initiative 2026-05 Exempt Veterans Service Organization (VSOs) from Limits on Use of Proceeds from Charitable Gaming

This became HB 1407 and SB 195. HB 1407 (gaming proceeds to VSO and not outside charity) failed. But SB 195 (Gaming Commission) continues to move forward. The JLC has received information that a regulatory effort is underway to cap gaming companies fees at 35%.

JLC Initiative 2026-06 Inclusion of USPHS and NOAA in Income Tax Subtraction

This became HB 47 and SB 148. These state tax exclusions are stalled for now. HB 47 was tabled in House Finance Subcommittee by a vote of 8Y, 2N. SB 148 was continued to next session (2027) in Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee by a vote of 12Y, 1N.

The information used to author this article came from the JLC chair, Bill Aramony, and the Virginia Nurses Association.

Submitted by: Mary L. Snyder
PACMOAA VCOG Legislative Representative

VMSDEP UPDATE as of 26 February 2026
Per posting on VMSDEP Friends Facebook Page

“BUDGET UPDATE — What We Know So Far:

- Both the House and Senate budgets keep program funding level for the next two years — approximately **\$85M per year of the biennium.**
- There are **no changes to eligibility requirements.**

The House budget also adds something important: **data transparency and reporting.** The language closely mirrors the data transparency and reporting requests from the December BVS/JLC working group letter — a strong sign those concerns were heard and translated into formal budget language.

If enacted, this would move data collection from “requested” to **required.**”

“Important context:

- These data transparency and reporting requirements are currently in the **House budget only** — they are not yet in the Senate version. Both budgets must match and the Governor must sign off before anything becomes law.
- The proposed use of Virginia 529 funds requested by Governor Youngkin to fund the program in perpetuity has been **removed.**
- If the data transparency and reporting requirement is removed at any point during the budget process in the coming weeks, that would be a **very concerning development.**

We continue to watch the process closely.”

Comment from member of group (I’m not including the specific wording from the Youngkin budget): “The Youngkin budget included the use of non-appropriated 529 funds, \$75M/year in addition to the \$85M/year of appropriated funds, for a total of \$160M. The removal of the 529 funds represents a cut of proposed funding.”

Information sent out via email on 23 February from postings from 20 February:

Kayla Owens, the Co-Founder of the Friends of VMSDEP (your “official” grassroots advocacy organization Facebook page) was appointed to the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) in July 2025. The VMSDEP Working Group was established at the 10 Nov meeting of BVS and they held meetings three times before the 17 Dec BVS meeting. Kayla was appointed to work as the Chair of the working group. As a result of their work and the reports they presented to the BVS and JLC, VMSDEP rose to the top of the JLC 2026 Initiatives. The VMSDEP Working Group continued to meet after the 17 Dec meeting.

“On February 3, Kayla’s confirmation to the Virginia Board of Veterans Services was suddenly withdrawn. This occurred while she was meeting with the Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs and DVS leadership, where VMSDEP was described as a top priority.

At the same time, SCHEV (State Council of Higher Education for Virginia) was briefing Senate Finance about the program’s “unsustainable growth.” Those present in the veterans meeting were unaware that both the withdrawal and the briefing were happening simultaneously”.

“Families should be deeply concerned that Kayla was targeted and that the Board’s only representative voice for veteran spouses and surviving families has been removed.

Survivor and veteran voices have asked for transparency and data for years, yet key information continues to be withheld while the program is repeatedly labeled “unsustainable.”

Our goal remains unchanged: ensuring decisions about this program are made carefully, transparently, and with the long-term stability of veteran and surviving families at the center.”

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

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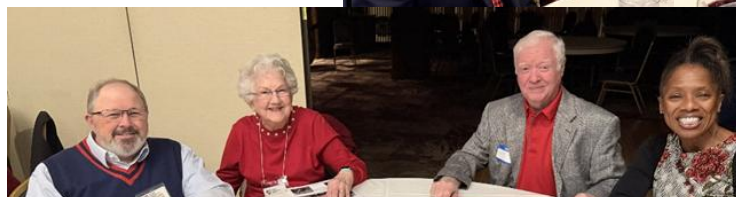
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Thank You Lake Prince Woods for Being a PACMOAA Sponsor

Picture at right L-R: CAPT Jim & DeeAnn Hoffower, Teresa Wilfong, CAPT Bruce LaLonde, Joyce and Curtis Elliot.



Left L-R: CDR Scott Dickinson, Mrs. Lois Yandle, CWO4 Chuck Waggoner, MAJ Lisa Davis
Below L-R: CAPT Bob & Cindy Brewer, CWO3 Karl & Angela Wilson, LT Joyce Johnson



Left L-R: Mrs. Mary Snyder & Mrs. Gladys Steorts at the Check-in Table

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

Below: L-R: CDR David Von Rump, CAPT Martin Snyder, LCDR Bob Walls, COL Hal and Brenda Hostetler.



Below L-R: LtCol Jeremy Seigel and CDR Hans Sachse



Left L-R: Mrs. Donna App, Mrs. Dena Cain, LCDR Paul Stott

PROGRAMS

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

- 09 April 2026 EastSide Pizza, 5630 Portsmouth Blvd, Portsmouth, VA CAPT Kim Shaughnessy-Granger USN CO NMCP
- 14 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. Fraunzimmer, USN ODU ROTC DIRECTOR
- 19 July 2026 Joint Brunch, Tentatively at Atlantic Shores Retirement Community \$40PP

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

As seasons change and spring approaches, we notice the beautiful work of creation. I am so grateful for the world of nature which our creator has given us. How wonderful it is to see the plants and animals come forth. How awesome is your power in the shape of the Earth! Thank you, Lord for making the landscape and creating so much beauty in the natural world.



Submitted by
CAPT Bob Brewer,
USN (Ret) Chaplain

*"I will speak of the glorious honor of thy majesty,
And of thy wondrous works. PSALM 145:5*

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



WEAR SOME GREEN AT OUR MARCH MEETING!!!

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 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/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: _____