



The Salute online



Monthly newsletter of the Portsmouth Area Chapter, an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America, serving Portsmouth, Chesapeake, Suffolk, Smithfield and Franklin, Virginia, since 1983. Dinner meetings are held the Second Thursday of each month except July and August. Although MOAA and PACMOAA actively lobby legislatures for all US uniformed services members, we are nonpartisan and do not participate in political activities.

VOLUME XXXVII ISSUE X

Learn more at pacmoaa.org

December 2018



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

I hope you all had a good Thanksgiving with your family and /or friends. Thank all of you that came to our annual business meeting and participated in our elections. Unfortunately, we had a much smaller turnout than in the midterm elections - only 21 out of 70 members voted. I want to say a special thanks to Paul Pratt for "volunteering" again to count the ballots. He did such a good job that we didn't need a recount! The results are: President: MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret), Secretary: COL Harold Hostetler, USA (Ret), and for Board of Directors: Col Ben Barnard, USAF (Ret) and CWO2 Doug Weller, USCG (Ret). Congratulations! Special thanks for a job well done to outgoing Board members Lt Col Bob Steorts, USAF (Ret) and Lt Col Jim Stephan, USAF (Ret) during their terms.

MOAA presented Special recognition to all of our leadership team and membership in the form of our eighth consecutive 5 star Level of Excellence Award. This an accomplishment the entire membership can take great pride in.

We tried to make the business meeting more interesting again this year by having the Calvary Baptist Church Bell ringers. Hal and Brenda Hostetler as well as Carol Rowe, wife of member and Portsmouth Mayor John Rowe, were among the bell ringers and they helped start the meeting with the National Anthem as well as performing for about 15 or 20 minutes after dinner with patriotic music.

Hopefully by now, you should have signed up for the FEDVIP program if you want dental and/or vision coverage during 2019. You can only sign up for FEDVIP during the November-December open season, unless you have a **life change** like marriage, divorce, death, etc. The end of the open season this year is **10 December** so be sure to sign up before that date, if you want coverage for 2019.

I hope to see many of you at our Annual Christmas Gala. 'Tis a season of revelry and giving. Hal's Band known as the Tidewater Concert Band will be performing and the Churchland HS Marine Corps JROTC cadets will be collecting toys for the "Toys for Tots" program. Santa Claus will arrive and with the help of his elves will distribute gifts to members participating in this year's Pollyanna. Some members like to bring a small Pollyanna item (\$15.00 or so) to exchange. All in great fun. We will also be collecting items for the Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless see article on page 4.

This gala event is always a wonderful way to end the year. It is a wonderful time to visit with friends, enjoy the holiday music and dance, if you dare. This is a great time to invite a friend so they can share an enjoyable evening with PACMOAA members. If you are not able to attend, I

(Continued on page 2) PRESIDENT'S DESK

Chapter Happenings September

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 Civil Air Patrol (USAF Auxilia
ry) Birthday (1938) | 13 PACMOAA CHRISTMAS GALA |
| 7 Pearl Harbor Remembrance
Day | 17 Wright Brothers Day |
| 13 US National Guard Birthday
(1636) | 21 Winter Solstice |
| | 25 Christmas Day |
| | 31 New Year's Eve |

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DIRECTORY](#)

NOVEMBER DINNER

Our December Christmas Gala dinner will be held on Thursday the 13th at Hilton Garden Inn Harbour View (MAP.) Social hour begins at 1800 with dinner at 1900. The cost of the meal is \$40.00 including tax and gratuity.

DINNER MENU

INDICATE YOUR CHOICE of ENTRÉE WITH YOUR RESERVATIONS!

Seasonal Salad with a variety of dressings

Entrée 1- Beef Tenderloin - Medium Temp

or

Entrée 2 - Fresh Flounder Stuffed with Chesapeake Bay Crabmeat and Old Bay Sauce

Mashed potatoes, Green Bean Almandine, Dinner Rolls and Butter

Chef's choice for Desserts

Ice Tea, Coffee, Water

Please make your reservation **no later than Sunday 9 December** with Sherry by phone at 686-4650 by email at navmed1@cox.net . **NO LATE RESERVATIONS CAN BE ACCEPTED!** **PLEASE REMEMBER THAT A RESERVATION MADE IS A RESERVATION PAID!**

(Continued from page 1) president's desk

hope you and your families have a blessed Christmas and happy New Year and hope to see you next year. The holiday season can be stressful, especially for service members deployed away from home and family. Please keep our military members, their families and all veterans in your thoughts and prayers.

WELCOME ABOARD

The Salute extends a hardy welcome to:

CAPT Jeffery Westling USCG (Ret.) and his wife Patricia who live in Chesapeake.

Auxiliary Member Mary Snyder of Suffolk.

Major Sherry Miller USA (Ret.) of Suffolk.

CPT Paige D. Cherry USA (Ret) and his wife Yvette of Portsmouth.

Welcome back to Col Benjamin Barnard USAF (Ret) of Suffolk and his wife Gayle.



IN IN MEMORIAM

It is with sadness that we announce the untimely passing of PACMOAA member CAPT James Fticsar, USN (Ret) on thirteenth of last month

We also lost a TROA Surviving Spouse member Eleanor Joyce Lane Janke on Veterans Day.

REMEMBERING CAPT JIM FTIC SAR, USN (RET)

Dr. Jim Fticsar retired from a 31-year Navy career including seven sea deployments. He served as a surgeon in a variety of positions including Head of the General Surgery Department at NRM C Portsmouth



Jim joined PACMOAA in August 2010 and was immediately elected to his first term on the Board of Directors in November

2010, serving from Jan 2011 to Dec 2012. Jim was re-elected to a second term and served from Jan 2014 to Dec 2015. Jim also served as the Hospitality Co-chair from Jan 2012 until Jan 2017, when he physically could no longer continue in that position! For the first 6 years of his membership, Jim was a very active member continuously serving in a leadership position!

Jim and his wife Alice were not able to attend many meetings over the last few years as his health deteriorated, attending their last dinner meeting in February of this year. Alice and son James live locally and his daughters Christine and Jennifer live respectively in Indiana and Naples, Italy.

We will certainly miss Jim but have many good memories of times together as well as

pictures. Please remember Alice and her family in your thoughts and prayers. We hope to see Alice return soon.

REMEMBERING SURVIVING SPOUSE JOYCE JENKE

I did not personally meet Joyce, a loss on my part I am sure. As the newsletter editor, I develop an unusual knowledge of membership similar to that of a pen pal. This is especially true of hardcopy recipients like Joyce. Eleanor Joyce Lane Janke, a surviving spouse member, passed away on Veterans Day last month just three months short of her 90th birthday.

This North Carolina girl earned her Bachelors Degree in Elementary Education at Wake Forest and her Masters Degree in Education at the University of Virginia. Her teaching and administrative posts include Rocky Mount, NC, the cities of Portsmouth and Chesapeake, VA plus the University of Virginia Extension Program. As a natural champion of education, Joyce gave generously to the PACMOAA Scholarship Fund, even though she was unable to be an otherwise active member.

Most telling of who Joyce was is her active participation in Church, the Western Branch Lions Club, The Retired Officers Association (now represented by her life membership in MOAA), USCG Officers Association, USCG Auxiliary and the Red Hat Society. I find the Red Hat Society particularly revealing. I will certainly remember Joyce each month as I mail the newsletter.

PACMOAA MEMBERSHIP IMPROVING!

Membership continues to be a crucial issue for PACMOAA's survival!! As was noted in the 35th Anniversary presentation in April, PACMOAA's missions include: 1. Membership, 2. Legislative Advocacy, and 3. Community Involvement. Without increased membership and engagement of the current membership, we will not be able to continue being effective in legislative advocacy and involvement with

community activities!!

PACMOAA currently has **73 paid members**. Last year, PACMOAA recruited 11 new members and ended the year with 83 members! This was the first time in about 7 years that our membership numbers had increased from the previous year. As of 2 December 2018, we have 6 new members for the year (Bob Brewer, Tony Oliphant, Jeff Westling, Mary Snyder, Sherry Miller, and Paige Cherry). Bob Steorts and I attended the Joint Recruiting Event at Patriots Colony on 25 October but, unfortunately, did not recruit any new members there. As I mentioned in an earlier newsletter, the PACMOAA Board of Directors voted for PACMOAA to pay for 1/2 of the dinner cost for an eligible member through the end of 2018. Please reach out in your community and look for potential new members.

Some time ago, MOAA stated that chapters with less than 75 members are dying! Most of our current losses are due to health issues, members relocating, and three deaths this year (Samuel Simpson, Joyce Janke, and Jim Fticsar). Some members feel that, if they cannot participate, they should not be members. Please remember and remind potential new members that chapter membership numbers do have an impact when dealing with state legislators! Please let Dolly Cherrington or any Leadership Team member know, if you have any suggestions on how to increase membership.

Thank you all for your continued membership and support. It is greatly appreciated.

Submitted by Sherry Ferki

PVH NEEDS DONATIONS

Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless, Inc. (PVH) is a 501 C-3 non-profit organizations providing a winter shelter program, in partnership with local faith communities, social and civic organizations from mid-November to April. The PVH Service Center is a year-round facility to shower, do laundry, receive

mail and get referrals and complimentary bus tickets for eligible appointments. Referrals, actively participate on our local Portsmouth Homeless Action Consortium (PHAC), engaged with receiving and making service referrals among agencies and organizations to help address the comprehensive issues of homelessness.

In 2018 PVH served 270 distinct individuals in winter shelter and service center services to of 203 distinct individuals for total of 160 night's stay. The PVH Service Center provided 12,045 units of service (sheltering, showers, laundry, HRT bus passes, mail distribution, telephone usage, and housing documentation), coordinated, staffed and managed inclement weather contingency sheltering (around-the-clock) for snow storms, and coordinated with homeless service providers to get 40 individuals housed.

PACMOAA, in addition to regular monthly donations, responds to requests for specific items to balance operational inventories. The following items have been requested:

- XL Ziploc bags (10 gallon size)
- Deodorant (travel size)
- Lysol Disinfectant Spray
- Clorox Disinfectant Wipes
- Hand warmers
- Bleach (chlorine)
- Towels and Facecloths (white)
- Kitchen Trash bags
- Adult Pull-Ups (brief-style)
- Foot Powder (travel size)
- Paper Towels
- Men's Boxers (M, L, XL)
- Lady's Underwear (M, L, XL)

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

A Voice in the Dark

Airborne, Christmas 1969: Actress Connie Stevens was one of dozens who performed for the GIs overseas.

When Bob Hope said to me, 'You've just got to come,' I knew I would go to Vietnam to entertain the troops, even though I had two little ones, both under the age of two, at home. It was a difficult assignment for an entertainer. I had to perform in the jungle in the incredible heat. I certainly couldn't use my hair spray and look my best. I was who I was.

Between shows, when we were flying all over, we'd speak at night to the battleships from the plane. I remember flying over the ocean and falling dead asleep. Someone would wake me and I'd go to the cockpit. Bob would say, "I'm talking to a ship that hasn't been home for months, they're out the middle of the ocean and the speakers are on. Connie, why don't you talk to them?"

I'd hardly even be awake, but suddenly I'd be talking to twenty-seven hundred young men in the dead of night, over a black ocean. I'd just say, "Hi, glad to talk to you. Is it okay if I sing?" and I'd hear, "Yeah!" come back to me over the intercom. So I would sing some little a cappella song. I'd make up words about the way America should be feeling for them, what I thought their folks would say to them.

Whenever I stopped to think about the fact that I was talking to thousands of young men of all sizes, shapes, colors, trying to represent their mothers, their sisters, their homes, their country, it was just overwhelming. Especially since I couldn't see their faces, I was just talking on a loudspeaker - but the emotions reached all the way up to the plane. I'm sure mine reached to them, because I could barely speak sometimes. I was so moved by the enormity of what I was experiencing. Even now I still run into someone every week that saw me in some jungle or heard my voice late one night, and they thank me.

They're still thanking me, when In fact we should be thanking them.

Connie Stevens

Giving comfort and care to our military was a very special gift from Bob Hope and his volunteers to our troops. We also can offer our help

in volunteering in many ways.

As Connie says, we should be thanking them for keeping our country safe. God knows when we help others.

Bob Steorts, Chaplain

MINUTES 8 NOVEMBER 2018 PACMOAA BUSINESS MEETING

REPORTS:

President: MAJ Sherry Ferki

Thanks to all Leadership Team members for all their work over the past 2 years especially Lt Col Bob Steorts, USAF (Ret) and Lt Col Jim Stephan , USAF (Ret) Board of Directors

5 Star Level of Excellence Award for the 8th consecutive year!!

1st Vice President/Programs: CDR Ken App

Dec: Christmas party with Hal's band, Toys for Tots, and collecting for Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless

Jan: Installation of officers: COL Dan Warren, USA (Ret), VCOC President will speak and perform installation of officers

Feb: Chelsea Lunch, USO

Suggestions for speakers discussed. LCDR Jack Keane about anti Submarine Warfare during WWII or Cold War from Ken

2nd Vice President/membership: LCDR Dolly Cherrington

On 1 January 2011, 114 members; 1 Jan 2018, 77 members.

Current membership numbers: 70

New members this year: 2 (none from 26 Oct Joint Recruiting Event at Patriot's Colony).

Dolly recently mailed out 211 letters, weeded out of several thousand on potential list MOAA sent.

Deaths as of meeting date: 1

Lt Col Samuel Newton Simpson III,
USAF (Ret)

Suggestions: Bring an eligible member
to a dinner meeting as your guest

Secretary: COL Hal Hostetler : No report

Treasurer: CDR Hans Sachse

Overall status : Stable

Dinner meetings: Usually deficit of
about \$100 per month.

Hans working on getting state tax ex-
emption for Veteran Organizations.

Scholarship fund - \$4000 (need to keep
\$1000 in it at all times

Operating account: \$5600

\$7000 - \$8000 in certificates and sav-
ings

Received USAA grant again to help de-
fray costs of June Scholarship din-
ner

Audit for 2016 : Ken App working on
and will be ready for Board Meeting

VCOC Rep.: LCDR Dolly Cherrington absent.
Next VCOC meeting will be on 15 Jan with
"Storming the Hill" on 16 Jan.

Leg. Rep.: CWO3 Karl Wilson: VCOC has 18
chapters. VCOC is one of 25 service organiza-
tions assembling in December to decide JLC
priorities for next year.

Personal Affairs Report: MAJ Ferki (see page
7)

**Newsletter and website : Thanks to Gor-
don for all his hard work on both of
these!**

BUSINESS ITEMS ADDRESSED:

Election – Election committee (Lt Col Paul
Pratt, USMC, Ret) counted the ballots and
reported on outcome. COL Hal Hostetler,

USA (Ret) Immediate Past Pres, Sec., Chair
of Nominations Committee was busy per-
forming with the Calvary Baptist Church
Bell Choir. Congratulations to the new Lead-
ership Team members:

President: MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret)

Secretary: COL Harold Hostetler, USA (Ret)

Board of Directors:

Col Ben Barnard, USAF (Ret)

CWO2 Doug Weller, USCG (Ret)

2. Community Outreach Grant program with
MOAA for chapter involvement in direct ser-
vices to local military and veterans families.
No interest at this time.

3 . Decreasing attendance at PACMOAA din-
ner meetings.

Discussed potential changes. Group
voted to try starting meetings dinner/
meeting at 5:30 with 30 minute social
hour and dinner served at 6PM, if hotel
agrees. Sherry will verify with hotel.

4. Efforts to increase membership

Joint Recruiting Event at Patriots Colo-
ny - Sherry will check with Patriots Col-
ony per summer event next year vs fall

LCDR DeGroft sent Dolly a list of poten-
tial members from his various military
affiliations and she will follow up with
them

5. Scholarship awards

Two Scholarships awarded this year.

**Continued support of scholarship
program with donations allows
PACMOAA to award 2 scholarships/
year.**

6. Events PACMOAA participated in for 2018
(see PAGE 7)

7. Other business to address?

Lt Col Paul Pratt, USMC (Ret), Senior
Military Instructor at Churchland HS
MCJROTC, thanked PACMOAA and

PACMOAA members for donations that helped support for Hampton Roads 1st Senior Leadership Camp this past summer and requested continued support.

Portsmouth Veterans Day 2018 ceremony will be at the Flag Pole at 1400 and the Tidewater Concert Band will be playing. Bob Steorts reminded members that PACTROA members were very involved in the Portsmouth Flag Association that obtained the flagpole.

Hal mentioned Thanksgiving and Christmas services/concerts at Calvary Baptist Church.

Date of next board meeting: 29 November

All members are welcome to attend the board meetings.

PERSONAL AFFAIRS REPORT

November was a very sad month for PACMOAA. Two PACMOAA members passed away in November and will be genuinely missed. (See page 3)

For many of us, PACMOAA is like a family and families help each other out. PACMOAA members would like to assist other members and their families when they are having problems but can only do so if we are aware of the need, large or small.. Please reach out when you, your spouse or another member is ill or needing some assistance. I have mentioned many times how wonderful PACMOAA members were taking turns driving me to see my Mom after she broke her hip two days after I had foot surgery. Just getting out of the house and eating lunch with friends was a real treat for me as Bruce had to go back to work !

Many of our members and some spouses have had a rather difficult year as illness or being a caregiver can be very stressful. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

Chuck Kuehn, our wonderful birdhouse painter, recently broke his hip. Chuck is living in the Skilled Care Unit at Lake Prince

Woods. He would love for anyone that can to visit him.

Bob Parker is still having medical issues. Bob is still very interested in PACMOAA and asked to me to tell everyone hello for him. He looks forward to hearing from members. Eleanor Parker (Bob's wife) is having some medical issues and recently moved into Brightwood Woodburn.

Steve Turner and his wife Paula continue having some medical issues right now

Ray Cicirelli is still having medical issues so they will not be able to attend meetings as often as in the past.

Please let me know if you, a member of your family, or another PACMOAA member is ill and would like visitors or for us to remember them in the newsletter. We cannot support members when they need us unless someone notifies us.

Thank you.

Sherry Ferki, Personal Affairs Officer
home number: --- cell: ---

PACMOAA ACTIVITIES 2018

1. PACMOAA held only nine dinner meetings due to hurricane Florence.
2. PACMOAA celebrated our 35th Anniversary at 12 April celebration with 42 members, spouses and guests!
3. Members participated in quarterly PACMOAA and VCOC Board meetings
4. Immediate Past President Hal Hostetler attended the Portsmouth Mayor's Military Affairs Committee meetings throughout the year helping to bring another perspective in planning for the city and military community.
5. In January, Legislative Representative, Karl Wilson, met with HRCMOAA and VIPMOAA representatives before informal "Storming the Hill."
6. March - April PACMOAA scholarship in-

formation sent out to over 30 local high schools and JROTC groups.

7. Sherry and Bruce Ferki, Hal and Brenda Hostetler, with Bob Steorts attended the 50th Anniversary of Vietnam War Commemoration with HRCMOAA in March.
8. On 9 May, Hal Hostetler, Karl Wilson and Jim Stephan, attended the VCOC/MOAA 34th Annual Congressional Luncheon honoring entire VA Congressional delegation for their loyal support for the military community.
9. Karl Wilson and Hal Hostetler attended the 25 May Health and Aging Conference with Representative Scott Taylor.
10. Hal Hostetler attended the WWI Symposium at the MacArthur Memorial, Saturday on 19 May.
11. During April and May PACMOAA Leadership Team Members attended JROTC Award ceremonies at seven local high schools representing 12 local JROTC units.
12. On 28 May, PACMOAA members participated in the 134th Annual Portsmouth Memorial Day parade.
13. PACMOAA Scholarship Committee presented two scholarships for \$1500 each at our June Scholarship Banquet.
14. "Southeastern Regional Legislative Committee" representing Hampton Roads military community at large was officially recognized at a VCOC meeting in July.
15. Twenty PACMOAA members attended the Annual Joint Brunch on 22 July.
16. MAJ Ferki represented PACMOAA at the Hampton Roads Senior Leadership Camp Award Ceremony on 17 August and presented an award to the Honor Graduate.
17. Hal Hostetler represented PACMOAA at the US Coast Guard WWI Remembrance Ceremony.
18. Sherry and Bob Steorts worked the Joint Recruiting Event at Patriot's Colony on 25 October.
19. Annual November PACMOAA business meeting with Calvary Baptist Church Bell Choir
20. On 21 Nov, (MOAA) SOUTHEASTERN

REGIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE met including Karl Wilson, PACMOAA Legislative Rep.

21. Annual Christmas Gala with The Tidewater concert Band, Santa Clause and Pollyanna gift exchange. Collections made for Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless and MCJROTC "Toys for Tots" program.

REGIONAL NEWS

MINUTES

(MOAA) SOUTHEASTERN REGIONAL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2018

1. Representatives of the (MOAA) Southeastern Regional Legislative Committee met at the Woodlands Golf Course, Hampton, VA on Wednesday, November 21st, 2018 to review and plan a schedule of activities for the balance of 2018 and do preliminary planning for 2019. Attendees included:

Col Jim Pauls, USAF (Ret), VIPMOAA Chapter, Chairman

CDR Link Smith, USN (Ret), Hampton Roads Chapter

CWO3 Karl Wilson, USA (Ret), Portsmouth Chapter

Col Jack Hilgers, USMC (Ret), Adviser

2. The meeting began with a discussion of what to do about supporting MOAA National's "legislative priorities" for the balance of the year. The committee agreed that there was not that much time left to really influence any potential movement by the state's Federally-elected officials and to try to do so would likely be futile. There was overall agreement that we should definitely become actively engaged in early 2019 in supporting MOAA's "legislative priorities."

The members agreed that meetings with the State federally-elected officials District offices should be scheduled for early Spring in 2019.

It was also agreed that, in as much as the "SBP-DIC Offset" issue would more than

likely be one of MOAA's top "legislative priorities" for 2019, the meetings should include Surviving Spouses affected by the issue from each of the three chapters.

CDR Smith offered to begin some preliminary planning with Senator Warner and Kaine Districts office staffs.

3. Members then reviewed and discussed the Minutes of the VCOC 4th Quarter meeting held on October 14th in Richmond, VA. Specific items of interest included:

The scheduling of the VCOC's 2019 1st Quarter meeting scheduled for January 15th at 10:00AM at the American Legion Building in Richmond followed by a Reception hosted by the VCOC. The 10:00AM start time was implemented in order to allow those attending who were not going to participate in the "Storming" event on Monday, January 16th to depart earlier than in past years when the meetings convened at 12:00 NOON.

A "JLC Storming the Capitol" event on January 16, 2019 which will be coordinated by the Virginia Department of Veteran Services which will override a VCOC-sponsored storming event this year. The Virginia National Guard Association will host a reception following the "Storming" activities.

There was no information provided regarding the decision to transform what has been a VCOC-sponsored activity over the last decade or so to a "JLC-sponsored" event but Col Hilgers noted that some time ago the JLC actually did sponsor the event.

After some discussion about the overall benefits of participating in this event this year, the Committee agreed that it would probably not be that profitable because:

The expansion of the activity to include ALL JLC organizations would greatly increase the numbers of individu-

als participating which would lead to even more "overcrowding" of the available space in the Pocahontas Building.

2019 is a "non-Budget" year for the Virginia Legislature meaning that "new" budget items are not likely to be introduced!

The Committee did agree that even though there would be no "Committee" participation, per se, Chapter representatives can participate if they choose.

4. The Committee then reviewed and discussed the seven "2019 Joint Legislative Committee Policy Initiatives" which had been developed and approved by the JLC. The Committee noted, first of all, that it seemed "odd" that, this year, the MOAA state chapters were not given an opportunity to review and comment on the Initiatives in advance! Subsequent discussions focused on the following JLC Initiatives:

JLC 2019-03, "Electronic Ballot Return":

While the Committee strongly endorsed the Initiative, it did question the process for selecting the company to perform the pilot program.

JLC 2019-06, "Removing the Combat Requirement for the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEPP)":

The Committee unanimously opposed this Initiative to "remove the requirement that the 90% disability rating be combat related and within an armed conflict."

JLC 2019-07, "Phased-In System for Partial State Tax Exemption for Military Retirement Income":

The Committee wholeheartedly endorsed the initiative but concluded there was little likelihood that the proposal would receive serious consideration this year. However, Committee members agreed that educating State elected officials about the benefits of such a proposal was absolutely necessary and should be strongly pursued next year – well be-

fore the 2020 January Legislative Session begins!

Col Pauls indicated he would correspond with the VCOC Legislative Representative indicating the Committee's position on the "2019 JLC Policy Initiatives" and also raise the question about why there was no coordination with the VCOC MOAA Chapters in advance of their being "officially" adopted.

Col Jim Pauls, USAF (Ret)
Committee Chairman

NEWS FROM MOAA

VA CHANGES

True to his word, Secretary Robert Wilkie has been busy calming the waters at Veterans Affairs, implementing reforms to improve the veteran experience, and streamlining the delivery of services he committed to improving when taking office on July 30, 2018.

Customer service is one of Wilkie's top priorities. This month he rolled out a number of initiatives to honor his commitment to making VA a friendlier and easier place for veterans to be served: VA.gov Redesign, Benefits Delivery at Discharge Program, Veterans Impacted by Super Typhoon Yutu and Hurricanes Florence and Michael, Free Federal Agency Legal Assistance, and VA Health System Realignment. Through an executive order signed last year by President Donald Trump, requiring reorganization of the entire federal government. The plan is to break up dozens of program offices, consolidating them into four offices to provide "greater accountability and clearer governance over these critical functional areas" - an integration and consolidation effort Wilkie says will reduce bureaucracy and help the agency focus on the veteran.

FOUR STEPS FOR BUILDING A POST-MILITARY PROFESSIONAL NETWORK

Having a network of supporters and advisors is important throughout your professional life.

Unfortunately, most military members don't focus on building a network during their time on active duty, but it is never too late - or early - to start.

Whenever you start, maintaining and nurturing a strong professional network doesn't stop when you land your first civilian job; that same and growing network will help you excel in your new position and future transitions as well. Additionally, don't forget to pay it forward. Networking is a two-way street. Always be asking yourself what you can do to help people in your network and bring in others who might benefit.

Networking is not hard. Beginning well in advance of your transition date, follow the **10-1-2-3** formula: Every day, spend **10** minutes on LinkedIn and make **one** new contact. Every week, conduct **two** informational interviews and reconnect with **three** people you haven't talked to in a while. This is a simple and proven system to quickly build and maintain a professional network. **6 Tips to Use Business Cards Successfully**

TRICARE RATES FOR 2019 ANNOUNCED

TRICARE recently established premiums and cost shares for 2019. As MOAA predicted, grandfathered Group A TRICARE beneficiaries will see minimal cost-share changes. Fees largely stayed the same and were adjusted based on the change in this year's COLA.

You can find all TRICARE fee and plan changes. You can compare TRICARE plan costs. A full breakdown of 2019 costs is available in this PDF.

Do you know what would have happened if it had been Three Wise Women instead of Three Wise Men?

They would have asked directions, arrived on time, helped deliver the baby, cleaned the stable, made a casserole, brought practical gifts and there would be Peace On Earth

THAT'S A WRAP FOR DECEMBER