

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.

VOLUME XXXVI ISSUE VII

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pacmoaa.org

September 2017



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

PACMOAA EARNs 7TH CONSECUTIVE 5-STAR LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE AWARD!!!

Our Leadership Team and active members have earned my personal gratitude and BZ for all their hard work over the past year and a job well done. MOAA recognizes 2 Levels of Excellence: 4-star and 5-star. PACMOAA's first entry was in 2010 and we have been recognized as a 5-star chapter ever since.

I hope everyone relaxed and enjoyed summer vacation activities, especially the special events and programs celebrating the Fourth of July. Several members represented PACMOAA participated in a range of official and fun events: July Patriotic musical, August recruiting at Patriots Colony, Annual Area Chapters brunch, Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia Planning, Mayors Military Affairs Committee, not to mention having time for a PACMOAA board meeting.

It was wonderful to see so many JROTC cadets, our scholarship winners and their families at our special June dinner. Special recognition and thanks are required for the success of the dinner. LTC Dickens, USA (Ret), Senior JROTC Instructor and Chief Covington, USN (Ret), ROTC Instructor graciously agreed to replace the scheduled speaker program with only a week's advance notice. Their combined presentation gave us a greater awareness of how their programs function and what challenges their cadets routinely face. LTC Dickens' Woodrow Wilson High School (WWHS) AJROTC Color Guard faced special coordination difficulties as two members were to be sworn in to the Army at Ft Lee on the day of our meeting. She arranged an extra cadet in case they could not return in a timely manner. Finally, we again thank USAA for providing funds to ensure this scholarship presentation banquet was memorable.



Many Leadership Team members attend area JROTC award ceremonies to present MOAA JROTC Medals and we see how impressive the cadets are in their uniforms. It was great for our members to have that same opportunity. Every table hosted at least one JROTC student or scholarship winner.

(Continued on page 3 –Presidents Desk)

HAPPY BIRTHDAY July August September

Thomas R Cahill
Robert L. Collette
Sherry D Ferki
Robert L Lane
Irvin Lindley
Andre H Mayfield
Peggy E Moran

Robert G Ponton
Matthew J Streeter
Henry F Berck Jr.
Henry C Boschen Jr.
Dolores A Cherrington
Herbert W De Groft
Harry P Miller
Gordon M Nelson
Robert A Steorts
Kenneth Turner

Kenneth App
Raymond V Cicirelli
James Fticsar
Betty Lambdin
Hans Sachse
Samuel N Simpson
Joan Wedgewood
Margaret N Wilshusen
Richard Yesensky

Chapter Happenings

Sept 2 VJ-Day WWII

Sept 4 Labor Day

Sept 14 PACMOAA DINNER

Sept 15 POW/MIA DAY

Sept 18 USAF Birthday

Sept 24 Goldstar Mother's Day

SEPTEMBER DINNER

Our next dinner will be held on **Thursday, 14 September** at the Hilton Garden Inn Ballroom at 5921 Harbour View Boulevard in Northern Suffolk. [LINK TO HGI](#) for a map and venue contacts. Social hour will begin at 1800 with dinner at 1900.

MENU

Iceberg Tossed Salad with Ranch or Italian Dressing

Pork Tenderloin with Apples and Jasmine Rice

Green Beans Almandine and hot Rolls

Chef's Choice Dessert

Coffee and Hot Water for Tea Station

Water and Ice Tea

Cost is **\$30.00** (includes tax and gratuity) Please make your reservation no later than **Sunday, 10 September** with Sherry Ferki at _____

— Come join us for good company, good food and a good time.

REMEMBER A RESERVATION MADE IS A RESERVATION PAID.

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM



Steven J. Combs serves as Deputy Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services. Son of an Air Force veteran, Deputy Commissioner Combs received his commission and Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Virginia. He served 10 years in the U.S Air Force in operations and logistics, including a tour as a squadron commander at Rhein-Main Air Base, Germany. Other assignments took him to California, Korea, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, and Nevada. Following his military service, Deputy Commissioner Combs earned Masters of Business Administration and Masters of Public Policy degrees from the College of William & Mary. In the summer between his 2nd and 3rd years at William & Mary, he was a Governor's Fellow under then-Governor Mark Warner. In April 2004, he joined the Virginia Department of Veterans Services as the Director of Policy & Planning, where he led the Department's budget and legislative development initiatives and support for four citizen boards. He became the Deputy Commissioner in April 2015. In this role, he supports the work of DVS Commissioner John L. Newby II, the directors of the Department's six service lines, and the 700+ employees of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services. He and his wife Brigitte live in Ashland, Virginia. They have six



(Continued from page 2) **September program**

children, including daughters who are Navy and Air Force veterans. He is a member of the Military Officers Association, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Air Force Association. In his spare time, he enjoys travel, reading, and the study of historic coast defense forts.

(Continued from page 1) **Presidents Desk**

The WWHS AJROTC program has the motto "Without Teamwork We Will Fail and Failure is Not an Option". There are usually 150 - 200 members in the JROTC program and they are very active in community activities: lots of parades (we always see them in the Portsmouth Memorial Day parade), frequent color guard presentations, supporting a veterans program at Maryview, etc. They do have some overnight trips, but these are at the students expense and there is a summer program at Fort AP Hill. LTC Dickens noted that sometimes she sees the cadets more than their families do and that a few of her goals is to get the students out of their Mom's house and prepared for the workforce or college.

The I.C. Norcom Navy JROTC program is known for dedication, hard work and fighting spirit. The cadets are taught to "Pay attention to detail". Chief Covington noted they are also very active in the community, usually participate in the Portsmouth Memorial Day parade, and recently presented colors at the Memorial Day service at Calvary Baptist Church in Portsmouth. Markeil Blow , one of the scholarship winners, was very active in their NJROTC.

All the JROTC cadets and scholarship winners were very impressive in their appearance and manners. When we frequently hear such negative information in the news about adolescents

in the United States, it is even more impressive to see the motivation and dedication of all of the students/cadets that attended our meeting. It was a great reminder of how important good role models and guidance are to the youth of our nation. LTC Dickens and Chief Covington certainly provide both as do we all! I frequently remind my nursing students that we role model good behavior and habits for staff and families. That ties in very well with MOAA's motto of "Never Stop Serving".

I attended college on an Army Nursing Scholarship and have been active on the scholarship committee since I joined our chapter. College was less expensive when I attended, but I knew I needed scholarships to be able to attend college. I have frequently heard that same sentiment from our scholarship winners over the years! Getting to meet the scholarship winners and their families was truly a pleasure. You will see more information about them in the article later in the newsletter. These students are the reason we keep asking for contributions for our scholarship fund. You will periodically see updates in our newsletter from previous winners.

In previous editions of the newsletter, we advertised that ADM John C. Harvey, Jr. USN (Ret) ,Virginia's Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, was going to be the September speaker but he recently announced he will be stepping down from that position on 1 September 2017 to move to a new position. Steven Combs, Deputy Commissioner of Virginia Department of Veterans Services graciously volunteered to speak to our group with very short notice, which we really appreciate!

After our two month respite, we should charge towards the year end with an 8th 5 Star LOE in mind. Please keep our troops in your thoughts and prayers.

Sherry Ferki, President

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

by Bob Steorts, Chaplain

THE GIFT OF HOPE

I will be forever beholden to Ray Kusela of Bremerton, Washington, a man I knew only for a few weeks over fifty years ago. He did me the greatest favor of any man I've ever known...

"So long!" we shouted to our friend Ray as he swung his makeshift backpack over his shoulder.

With a big grin, he answered, "So long, you guys! I just wish I could take all of you with me."

It was a cold, gray day in December 1944 when Ray trudged across the compound of Stalag Luft 4 in northern Poland and out the gate, never to be seen by any of us again.

When Ray's bomber was shot down over Germany the year before, his left arm had been badly wounded. The Germans knew he'd never be able to use his left hand again, and because of that disability, he was being repatriated on a prisoner exchange.

My B-12 had been shot down on November 2, 1944. but back in the States, all my distraught parents knew was that I'd been classified as "missing in action". It wasn't until February 1945 that they were officially notified I was being held prisoner somewhere in Germany. That same month, my mother read in the Los Angeles times that the War Department was sponsoring meetings across the country for relatives of prisoners of war. Ex-POWs talked to these audiences about life and treatment in the prison camps.

There was to be such a meeting in the Los Angeles Shrine auditorium. Mom and Dad could hardly wait.

The following week when the big day arrived, they anxiously took their seats in the big auditorium. Half a dozen soldiers and sailors, all

ex-POWs, took seats on the brightly lit stage. One by one, they spoke to the silent audience. Among the speakers was Ray Kusela.

When they finished, the officer in charge announced, "The men will now go down into the audience to look at any photos you brought along. Some of them may be recognized.

When the men came down from the stage, the audience crowded forward, extending photos of their missing sons, husbands and sweethearts.

Dad later told me what happened next:

"Your mother and I had been feeling really bad since we got the telegram that you were missing in action. But those boys up there on that stage gave us hope that everything would turn out all right.

"I watched this one fellow pushing his way through the crowd, looking at pictures - hundreds of them- held out to him. He just shook his head and kept saying, 'No. No. No.'

By the time he made his way to where your mother and I stood, I began to feel dejected again. but I held out your picture and , suddenly that kid's face lit up and with a big grin, he said, "Hey, that's Bill!"

Dad said he had to hold back a sob when he asked, "Is he okay?"

"Yes, he's fine," Ray assured them, relieving them of a burden of worry they had carried since the previous November. Then he pressed his way deeper into the crowd , looking for other familiar faces on the photos clutched tightly in hopeful hands.

Mom and Dad cried on the way home that night, hearing over and over again those wonderful words that filled them with hope," Yes, he's fine."

From: *Chicken Soup for the Veteran's Soul*

My War College Class of 1977 had 20 members who had been "guests" in the Hanoi Hilton for 2 - 8 years. Their stories brought our class of 264 to tears.

Bob Steorts, Chaplain

PERSONAL AFFAIRS CORNER

September 2017

In January 2017, I included information about the role of the Personal Affairs Officers/Committee. I want to emphasize a section of the responsibilities again "To provide PACMOAA with a method of keeping the membership advised of those members and next of kin who are indisposed or experience illness or death in the immediate family; to educate/inform members of the importance of notifying PACMOAA of such events... " per the Bylaws.

I need information from the membership in order for PACMOAA to provide assistance to our members/family members when someone is ill or worse. When my Mom was in the hospital with a broken hip and I had just had foot surgery, PACMOAA members took turns giving me a ride to the hospital to see my Mom. Legislative efforts are a big focus of MOAA but supporting each other is another important aspect of PACMOAA membership. Many of us volunteer with other groups in the community but we should also help each other. It's difficult to do that if we don't know when someone could use our assistance. To help each other more effectively, I am asking the membership for their assistance. As Personal Affairs Officer, please let me , the chaplain

or the surviving spouse liaison know if a member or their family might benefit from our assistance.

This section will become a regular section in the newsletter. For many of us, PACMOAA is like a family and families help each other out.

CAPT Bob Parker, USNR (Ret), a member of PACMOAA for 34 years and Past President, was admitted to the Maryview Medical Center ICU on August 17, 2017 for severe pneumonia. He has been slowly improving. As of 31 August, Bob has been off the ventilator for two days and was moved out of ICU !!! He is still fighting pneumonia and receiving both occupational and physical therapy. He is very weak and confused at times, which is normal. The family requests that no one visit him at the hospital right now but cards, phone calls or visits to Eleanor (Bob's wife) are fine. If you want to visit Eleanor, please call first to make sure she is at home. There is usually another family member at the house right now. I will let everyone know when he can receive visitors. Bob's home address and phone number are:

Thank you. Sherry Ferki, Personal Affairs Officer
home number:

Chapter Happenings

WELCOME ABOARD

The Salute express extends a hardy welcome to the following new members:

US Navy Veteran LT Donna O. O'Brien, who lives in Windsor, VA.

US Navy Veteran LCDR Steven Volovsek and his wife Traci from Suffolk.

MAJ Traci Green, USAF (Ret.) and her husband Steven from Suffolk.

CDR William F. Duncan, USNR (Ret.) and his wife Leah from Elberon, VA.

LTC Matt C. Kaufman, USA (Ret.) from Suffolk.

CAPT Gary Davidson, USN (Ret.) and his wife Toni from Suffolk.

CAPT Daniel N Hartwell, USN (Ret.) and his wife Lynn from Suffolk.

Col Benjamin Barnard, USAF (Ret.) and his wife Gayle from Smithfield.

Please remember to bring personal items for the Portsmouth Volunteers for the Homeless which operates a twelve month Drop In Service Center where clients can shower, do laundry, receive their mail and use telephone. Help support the winter sheltering program. Remember 20% of our area homeless are veterans. Thanks

DRIVERS AND RIDERS WANTED

PACMOAA always attempts to coordinate volunteer drivers and members needing transportation to meetings and dinners functions. Please, if you are able to pick up members or need a ride, contact Sherry Ferki or *The Salute* to meet these requirements. This also applies to out of town functions such as VCOC functions. Thanks in advance.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

A PATRIOTIC MUSICAL - "GOD BLESS THE USA"



IN MEMORIAM

It is with a measure of profound sadness that we announce the passing of PACMOAA member CAPT Thomas Louis Wedgewood, Sr., USCG (Ret.) He was a

PACMOAA member for 34 years. Tom passed away at 84 years of age in his Portsmouth home on August 10, 2017. Captain Tom, a Search and Rescue Aviator, served 35 years in the Coast Guard, working his way through the enlisted ranks to retire as Captain. Tom is survived by Joan his loving wife of 62 years.

It was wonderful to see so many Portsmouth residents attend a patriotic musical on 2 July 2017 at Calvary Baptist Church. Most of the attendees were senior citizens but there were some children and adolescents there also. Several hundred people attended including PACMOAA members (left to right) Bob Parker, Shirley Barker, Bob Wall, Sherry Ferki, and Hal Hostetler. The program started with the hand bell choir playing several songs including "America the Beautiful". George Washington,

played ably by our own Hal Hostetler, said a prayer and then the narrator, Benjamin Franklin, played by the Portsmouth Major and PACMOAA member John Rowe, introduced the Continental Congress. Soon Patrick Henry, PACMOAA's Bob Wall, gave his speech and then the choir sang "Let Freedom Sing". Both Benda Hostetler and Carol Rowe participated in the hand bell choir and choir. Many patriotic songs followed with the audience participating frequently. Uncle Sam was there in his full regalia and all the historical re-enactors had great period costumes on. Veterans were recognized during the performance. It was impressive to see so many people wearing patriotic outfits and the feeling of camaraderie was terrific.

23 JULY 2017 ANNUAL BRUNCH

The Portsmouth Chapter (PAC), the Hampton Roads Chapter (HRC), and the Virginia Peninsula Chapter (VIP) of MOAA hosted a brunch mixer at the Virginia Beach Resort Hotel and Conference Center on Sunday, the 23rd of July 2017. Between 50 and 60 members, spouses and guests from all chapters attended. PACMOAA had 24 attendees including one of our new members, Ben Barnard and his wife Gayle. The PACMOAA newsletter editor and photographer was busy snapping pictures and doing his usual great job. Thank you again for many years of great newsletters and pictures, Gordon!!

This was our 5th year at this location and we had a beautiful view looking out over the bay, the food was delicious and the pianist was ex-

cellent. As usual, it was a great time for fellowship and camaraderie. PACMOAA and the Virginia Peninsula Chapter had met for the annual brunch at Fort Monroe for many years until its closure and then we met at the Chamberlain for several years.

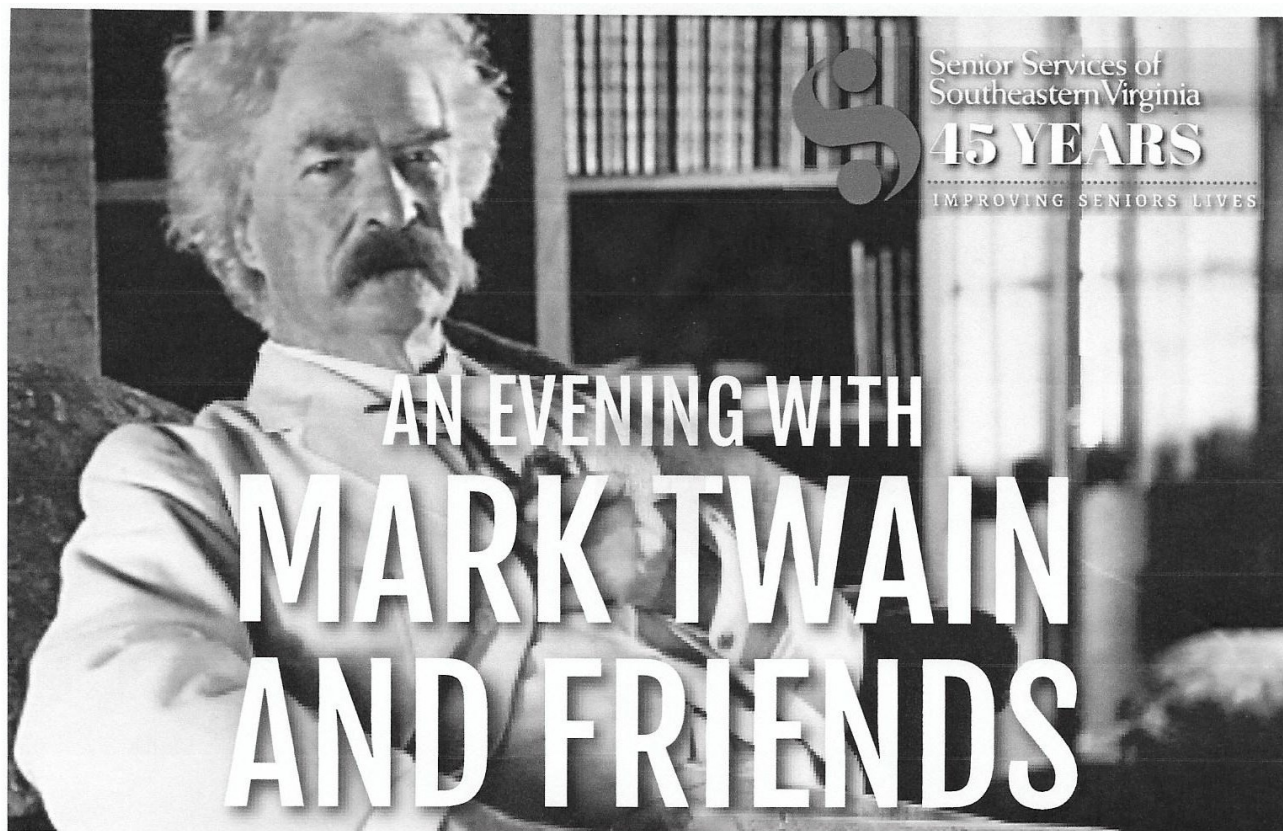
The peninsula chapter checked with the Chamberlain but they would not take a reservation for more than 20 people. I checked with the Renaissance Hotel but they do not have brunch on Sunday. We were trying to rotate the location but could not find another good alternative to the VA Beach Resort and Conference Center in VA Beach. If anyone knows of an alternative site that could accommodate up to 70 people, please let us know to help plan for next year.

SENIOR SERVICES OF SOUTHEASTERN VIRGINIA PLANNING SESSIONS

As mentioned in an earlier newsletter, MAJ Ferki participated in the first meeting in May and was unable to attend in June but is still actively involved in planning a "Meet & Greet for Organizations Serving Veterans". Again, Senior Services of SE VA is trying to facilitate veterans over 60 in accessing all the resources available to them in a seamless manner.

Included in this newsletter, you will see an invitation to "An Evening with Mark Twain and Friends" at the Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts in September. The tickets price benefit Senior Services of SE VA and may help their efforts to assist veterans over 60.





Date: Thursday, September 28, 2017

Time: 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.

Place: Suffolk Center for Cultural Arts
110 W. Finney Avenue, Suffolk, VA 23434

Tickets: \$45 donation to benefit Senior Services of Southeastern Virginia

.....

Come spend an evening with America's best-loved humorist and storyteller. Enjoy good food and drink, laughs, music of the era, and good company with an American literary legend.

*Be our guest at a private viewing of the season-opening exhibit
in the BB&T and Norfolk Foundation Galleries,*

From Concept to Creation...Nature in Bronze, Turner Sculpture.

After, visit Mosaic Café for a Mississippi-themed meal. 10% of your meal cost will be donated to Senior Services.

Tickets are on sale through Monday, Sept. 18, 2017

at www.ssseva.org or call 757-461-9481, ext. 204.

PRESENTED BY

VIRGINIAeye
consultants

PORTSMOUTH'S MAYOR'S MILITARY AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Hal Hostetler participated at the committee meeting for August. Hal's input over the past few years has facilitated city involvement in additional community activities recognizing more military and veterans events besides those honoring the US Coast Guard.

Submitted by Sherry Ferki

EIGHT NEW MEMBERS RECRUITED !!

Eleven new members in 2017 and 8 recruited this summer!!! Dolly Cherrington sent out 47 letters the beginning of July and 3 members joined due to those letters. She sent 42 more letters out a week later but hasn't had any response to them so far. We had 5 members join at the Joint Recruitment event at Patriots Colony on 1 August. This is a definite improvement but we need to continue to work on getting new members and retaining current members.

As is mentioned frequently in newsletters, chapters need more members to have a greater impact on the community as well as in the legislative process. Please consider inviting a friend to a dinner meeting to help us continue to increase our membership and impact!

A most sincere welcome to all of the new members. We want you to feel comfortable and a part of our family. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to facilitate that process.

PATRIOTS COLONY RECRUITING EVENT

On 1 August, Patriots Colony in Williamsburg hosted the event with a tour of their property; a great presentation by COL Dan Merry, USAF (Ret), Former Commander of the Air Force Mortuary Affairs Operations at Dover AFB and currently Vice President, Government or Chief Lobbyist as he described himself; and delicious heavy appetizers and cocktails. COL Merry's presentation was "The current MOAA perspective on military benefits and entitlements".

Ken App and I represented PACMOAA. PACMOAA tied the Peninsula Chapter (VIPMOAA)

by recruiting five new members and the HRCMOAA recruited three new members. All the advertising for this event, food, MOAA speaker and one year's membership for the new members recruited at this event were paid for by Patriots Colony!! This is the fifth or sixth year they have hosted this event but the first time PACMOAA and HRCVNA were invited. We are all looking forward to participating in the great activity again next year.

I also spoke with ADM Walter Doran, USN (Ret), MOAA Chairman, Finance and Audit Committee and Chairman, MOAA Military Family Initiative Board. I expressed our concerns with all the changes MOAA has been making in relation to chapters without any notice or discussion. Some examples include no longer paying for ROTC and JROTC medals and certificates as well as only having Levels of Excellence (LOE) award dinners every other year, while continually saying chapters are very important. Both ADM Doran and COL Merry agreed ADM Doran would probably be the next MOAA President. He has been visiting as many chapters as possible and will visit us some time in the future.

Submitted by Sherry Ferki

UPCOMING PACMOAA EVENTS SUMMER AND FALL 2017

14 SEPTEMBER Dinner- Steven J. Combs, Deputy Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services

07 OCTOBER VETERANS IN THE VINEYARD. A Great Time. See video. [VIDEO](#)

11 OCTOBER VCOC Biennial Luncheon

12 OCTOBER dinner- Delegate Chris Jones (R-Suffolk)

9 NOVEMBER- Annual Business Meeting and speaker from the Senior Services of Southeastern VA.

14 DECEMBER - Annual Christmas Gala.

3rd ANNUAL*Gauthier Vineyard*

VETERANS IN THE VINEYARD

Save
the
Date
07 Oct 2017

A Salute to Our Military Veterans & Their Families



LIVE MUSIC FROM THE FAMOUS
CODEBLUE GRASS BAND



**YELLOW
RIBBON FUND, INC.**
Welcoming Our Injured Service Members Home



MOAA
Military Officers Association of America

MISSION BBQ
The American Way.



New Kent
WINERY



Join us for a salute event of food, beverages, entertainment, and more. All active duty Military, Guard, Reserves, Veterans, and their Families will be our honored guests.

For information/RSVP please contact:

fgwickersham@vsecorp.com

Date: Saturday, 07 October 2017

Time: 12:00 to 5:00 PM

Location: Gauthier Vineyard

5000 Farmers Drive

Barhamsville, Virginia 23011

www.gauthiervineyard.com

2017 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

The Scholarship Committee members Sherry Ferki, Scott Dickinson, Lynn Terry and Bob Steorts reviewed the applications for the PAC-MOAA scholarship utilizing the excellent scoring tool Scott formulated. There were 5 applicants this year whose grade point averages (GPA) ranged from a low of 3.69 to a high of 4.325. Students have greater than a 4.0 since many of them took Honors classes, Advanced Placement classes and Dual Enrollment classes (receiving both high school and college credit for the course). They receive more points for these higher level classes.

The Scholarship Committee selected 3 award-ees from this group of students. Three of the five applicants belonged to JROTC in their high school and all of them excelled in academics and belonged to or led many school organizations (like the National Honor Society, language clubs, etc.). Most of them were very involved in sports, church activities and volunteer activities. The caliber of these students and their involvement in the school and community was truly a pleasure to see. These students are why we donate to the Scholarship Fund and why we need continued donations.

All 3 students selected have shown dedication and commitment to excelling in many areas like sports, school, volunteerism, and great leadership abilities while maintaining > 4.17 GPA! Markeil, Robby (Robert), and John exemplify the characteristics that make great military officers. PACMOAA wishes to extend congratulations to all of these students and best wishes for successful careers as Military Officers!

Markeil Mercedes Blow graduated from I.C. Norcom High School in Portsmouth and plans on attending George Washington University. She plans on majoring in computer science and becoming a Naval Intelligence Officer. Markeil was the Captain of the Varsity Volleyball Team and Varsity softball Team. She took a break from playing varsity volleyball and softball in 2011 but was a varsity volunteer assis-



tant for both that year as well as participating in the PAHS bowling Club. Markeil received 6 sports awards like the Varsity volleyball Most Valuable Player in 12th grade. She was also involved in numerous clubs as well as being in leadership positions as Class President in Freshman and Senior years, National Honor Society Vice President and English Honor Society Membership Officer. Markeil also held a variety of leadership positions in NJROTC in 9th, 10th and 12th grades including Platoon Commander and Academic and Communications Officer. She was awarded several NJROTC medals and also worked as an ECPI University student worker 9th - 11th grades as well as a city of Portsmouth Intern in 12th grade. In addition, Markeil was very involved in church activities from 9th - 12th grade while maintaining >4.17 GPA.

Robby (Robert) Edward Peterson graduated from Grassfield Wilson High School in Chesapeake and plans on attending Virginia Military Institute and majoring in electrical and computer engineering. He plans on becoming an officer in the U.S. Air Force. Robby played baseball from the age of 3 years old including varsity 10th - 12th grade was VHSL Scholar Athlete from 9th - 12th grade. In addition to playing baseball, Robby was a youth baseball mentor for RBI (Revitalizing Baseball in the Inner city) in 9th grade, a Chesapeake Middle School basketball tournament volunteer in 11th grade, and a volunteer youth basketball coach in 10th - 12th grade. He was also very involved in clubs/societies and held several



leadership positions like Interact Club (Secretary 10th - 12th grade), Ruri-Teen Club (Vice president 11th grade, President 12th grade), and belonged to 4 National Honor Societies (National, Latin National, Science, and History). Robby was very involved in working with the annual St. Mary's Home for Disabled Children's Prom from 10th - 12th grade as well as being a Freshman Fusion volunteer in 11th & 12th grade. He received a congressional Nomination by the Honorable Randy Forbes to the United States Air Force Academy as well as AFJROTC and NROTC scholarship awards. In addition to playing baseball and being involved in numerous clubs and volunteer activities, Robby worked at Fellini's restaurant as a bus boy from 9th - 12th grade and maintained a >4.17 GPA!

John Phillip Walker graduated from Western Branch High School and is going to attend Texas A&M. He plans on majoring in aerospace engineering and becoming an Air Force Officer preferably flying. John was in the AFJROTC all 4 years of high school and school orchestra his 1st 2 years. He was a member of the National Honor Society for 3 years and served in a variety of leadership positions in school groups like a 10th grade class officer and a Student Council Association officer in 12th grade. John served in many leadership positions in AFJROTC from Flight Commander and Competition Drill Commander in 11th grade to Flight Commander, Competition Drill Team Commander for three teams and Squadron Commander in 12th grade. He was also on

the Varsity Cross country Team in 11th & 12th grade. In addition, John worked 2 jobs and was involved in 2 church groups while he was in the 11th grade. While in several of these groups/organizations, John accumulated many volunteers hours - National Honor society, JROTC and Student council Association. He was also volunteered with the Roc Solid organization in 11th and 12th grade. John received many AFJROTC awards including Outstanding Cadet in 10th and 11th grade, two national AFJROTC awards, and the Western Branch



High School Medallion for Aerospace Science. While participating in cross country running, AFJROTC activities, school and community volunteer activities and working, John maintained > 4.17 GPA.

Once again, congratulations to these exceptional students and great examples of the youth of America! Best wishes for much success in their college and their military careers.



Woodrow Wilson High school 2017 JROTC Color Guard.

EVENTS COMMEMORATING THE 100TH & 75TH ANNIVERSARIES OF WWI AND WWII

I was fortunate to be able to see the Profiles of Honor Tour presented by the Virginia World War I and World War II Commemoration Commission when it was at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Museum. The tour bus is rather small but has a lot of interesting memorabilia from Virginians that served in WWI & WWII. It is certainly worth seeing. You can find more information on the Commission at

www.virginiawwiandwwii.org

The tour bus will be in our area again on the following dates:

8 September Salute to Veterans, Petersburg

15-17 September Centennial Commemoration of the 80th Division at Camp Lee, Ft Lee

14 October WWI & WWII: Conversations and Commemoration, Smithfield

Other related venues

Portsmouth Art & Cultural Center

from July –thru 9 October "...To Face The Unknown: Portsmouth and the Great War

The Military Aviation Museum, home to one of the largest private collections of [World War I](#) and [World War II](#) era military aircraft in the world, in Virginia Beach.

NEWS FROM MOAA

As always, before you sign anything, read the small print. This saying applies all too well to DoD budget submissions of the past few years - and now to the Senate Armed Services Committee's (SASC) 2018 defense authorization bill.

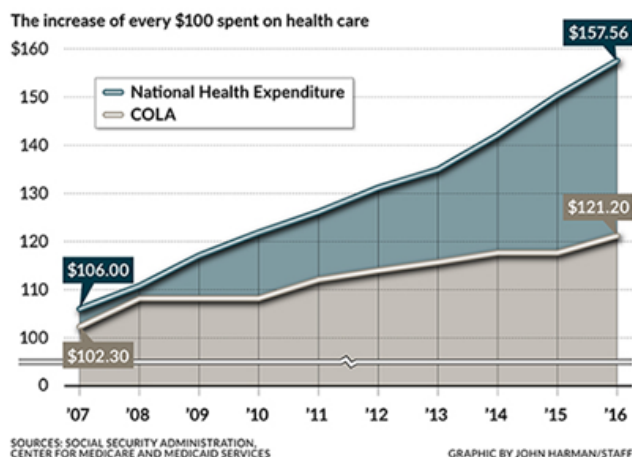
TRICARE fee increases in the SASC bill are the same, if not worse, than those proposed in DoD's 2018 budget submission. If they are included in the final FY18 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), they will directly affect what you and your family will pay for health care.

In June, we wrote *TRICARE Fees to get a Big*

COLA vs NHE

In an ongoing effort to get beneficiaries to pay more, a frequent tactic of budgeteers is to tie a different index, other than the current COLA, to the TRICARE fee and cost share structure. The index used to achieve this is the National Health Expenditure index (NHE). Contained in the NHE is every component of U.S. healthcare. NHE projections are presented by type of good or service delivered (hospital care, physician and clinical services, retail prescription drugs, etc.) and by source of funding for those services (private health insurance, Medicare, Medicaid, out-of-pocket spending).

The chart below demonstrates the compounded effect over the past decade of the NHE versus the COLA, using an example of every \$100 spent on health care.



Raise, outlining the DoD budget proposal. In July, *Senate Proposal Cuts Your TRICARE Benefit to Pay for Readiness* covered the SASC proposals. However, we would be remiss not to address the impact buried in the small print. What's in the small print, you ask? Some not-so-small changes. According to DoD's own language, "Increases in premiums, co-pays, deductibles and catastrophic caps would increase annually based on the increases in health care costs as measured by the growth in the National Health Expenditures (NHE) per capita." Currently, TRICARE fees and applicable cost shares are tied to the annual rise in the COLA. Swapping this index out for an arbitrarily selected index, the NHE, will result in beneficiaries paying substantially more for health care over time - as shown in this chart. The compounding effects from this index, if applied, will gradually erode every category of TRICARE beneficiaries' earned health care benefits. MOAA strongly believes beneficiaries' TRICARE fees and cost shares should not rise faster than the annual COLA. The rate of inflation resulting from the NHE index is unacceptable. []

SURVIVING SPOUSE CORNER

By Kathy Prout, former Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee chair

When a death occurs after a sudden or long illness during a short or long marriage, the surviving spouse has suffered a huge loss. It is never easy. Out of sympathy and good intentions, family and friends sometimes say the darnedest things. Here are examples of what not say; all comments I heard as a surviving spouse — and some suggestions for what to do and say instead:

♦ “I understand exactly how you feel because my [substitute any noun other than spouse, including cat, dog, etcetera] died.” Nobody knows how another person is feeling. Every relationship is different. Instead, say one of the following: “I can’t imagine how you must be feeling,” “You must be so sad,” or even, “I don’t know what to say.”

♦ “If you need anything, let me know.” A recent widow(er) doesn’t know what he or she needs and won’t call. Do say, “May I take you out for coffee?” “May I run errands for you?” “May I bring you a meal or babysit?” or “May I stop by and visit?”

♦ “He or she is at peace now” or “At least you were prepared,” in the case of a terminal illness. It is never easy. When death is sudden and unexpected, do not say “At least he/she ‘He or she is at peace now’ or ‘At least you were prepared,’ in the case of a terminal illness. It is never easy. When death is sudden and unexpected, do not say “At least he/she didn’t suffer.” The surviving spouse thinks, *Maybe he/she didn’t suffer, but I am suffering.*

♦ To a younger survivor, people say, “You are young, and you will move on and find somebody else.” Naturally, the surviving spouse cannot imagine life with anybody other than the deceased spouse.

♦ Asking any survivor about dating is just as tactless. Do not ask, “When are you going to start dating?” or “Will you remarry?”

♦ To an older widow, people say, “You were so fortunate to have had such a long marriage or to have known each other so long.” It is never

long enough.

♦ “Did he or she leave you a hefty life insurance policy?” Unless you are a very close family member, the family financial advisor, or an attorney, *do not* ask.

♦ “It has been a while now. Aren’t you over it yet?”

♦ Don’t be afraid to talk about the deceased, as memories are with survivors constantly. It is comforting to survivors to know others have not forgotten them. Tell them, “I remember.” Everybody grieves differently and on a different time line. It can take six months to several years. Accept where a survivor is in the process. Do not assume a survivor is no longer interested in couple’s activities. Your invitation might be declined, but it will be appreciated.

♦ No matter what, remember to be there for a surviving spouse and stay connected.

I offer the following using current hot topics of National Flag protocol, start of school year, and truth telling:

It was little Johnny's first day at school and he'd been told by his mum to listen to the teacher and do exactly as he was told.

The teacher told the class that at the beginning of each day they would start with the pledge of allegiance. She instructed her new charges to put their right hand over their hearts and repeat after her, "I pledge allegiance to the flag..."

Looking around she noticed little Johnny with his hand over the right cheek of his bottom. She got rather cross with him and told him she would not continue until he put his hand over his HEART!

Little Johnny started crying and wailed. "But it is over my heart. I know it is because when Grandma comes to visit us, she pats me here," indicating his bottom, "and she always says 'Bless your little heart, Johnny; my grandma goes to church every Sunday and she sure wouldn't lie!'"

THAT’S A WRAP FOR SEPTEMBER