



# The Patriot

Richmond Area Chapter - Military Officers Association of America - April 2026



## The President's Corner by LCDR Wayne Sine



As you know, we had to postpone the 1 February meeting to 1 March due to very bad weather. Many thanks to all who helped to coordinate this transition to an alternate date. See page 4 for a review of this meeting.

RAC-MOAA has supported twenty-five Richmond area high schools with JROTC programs for many years. At this time, preparations are being made for RAC-MOAA members to present MOAA Award of Merit Medals at JROTC awards ceremonies throughout the Richmond area. In addition, RAC-MOAA solicited applications for the COL Mel Drisko Leader-Scholar \$1,000 Awards. These awards are issued on a competitive basis to senior year JROTC Cadets who are attending a service academy or a four-year collegiate institution taking the Senior ROTC program with the intent to pursue a career in the military. Our 7 May meeting will celebrate recipients of this year's Leader-Scholar Awards.

Plan to join us on Friday, 26 June, at the American Legion Post 354 located on the James River in Midlothian for some leisurely summer fun. See page 2 for more information. This is the first of what we hope will be an annual event.

In keeping with MOAA's familiar motto of "Still Serving," two of our Chapter members have recently volunteered their time and talent to serve on important Chapter committees. COL Anthony Atlas has agreed to join the Drisko Leader-Scholar Committee and CDR John Beall has agreed to join the Military Community Assistance Program (MCAP) Committee. The "Still Serving" call is wide open for all Chapter members. If you'd like to get more involved or simply learn more about your Chapter's operations, please reach out to any Chapter officer.

### 2026 MOAA Advocacy in Action (AiA)

On April 15<sup>th</sup>, over 150 MOAA Leaders from Councils and Chapters across the country will mobilize in Washington, D.C. for the 2026 Advocacy in Action (AiA) campaign. Collectively, they will canvass House and Senate office buildings, meeting with lawmakers and their staffs to promote MOAA's legislative priorities for the current Congress.

The four AiA initiatives include:

- Protect Service Member Pay During a Shutdown (Shutdown Fairness Act - S. 3168)
- Address MTF Problems (Military Care Act - H.R. 6796)
- Stop Predatory VA Claims Agents (Guard VA Benefit Act - H.R. 1732)
- Stand up with our Wounded Warriors - Major Richard Star Act (S. 1032 / H.R. 2102)

Next Member Meeting is on Thursday, May 7th!  
**Social starts at 5:15pm at the Meadowbrook Country Club. Buffet starts at 6pm. More details on page 2.**

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### OUR MAILING ADDRESS

**Richmond Area Chapter—  
MOAA  
P. O. Box 985  
Chesterfield, VA 23832-9998**

Click the TAKE ACTION graphic above to see Active Legislative Campaigns

Read this newsletter on our webpage at: <https://www.racmoaa.org/Newsletter>

# May 7th JROTC Awards Banquet

The Chapter will host its annual COL Mel Drisko Leader-Scholar awards dinner and presentations on Thursday, 7 May 2026, at the Meadowbrook Country Club. The social will begin at 5:15pm and the buffet will start at 6pm. Our plan is to present three \$1,000 checks to outstanding high school seniors who will attend a collegiate ROTC program, or a service academy this fall to pursue a military officer career. The buffet dinner will include sliced steamship beef, cheese manicotti, roasted vegetables, garlic mashed potatoes, garden salad, rolls & butter, iced tea, coffee, and assorted desserts. The price is \$50 per person. The reservation deadline is May 1<sup>st</sup>. Guests are welcome. Join us as it's always uplifting to see these deserving students and hear of their many achievements.

Dress is business casual and all guests are welcome. [Payment can be made on the RAC-MOAA website](#) using a credit or debit card or by check mailed to PO Box 985, Chesterfield VA 23832-9998. If paying by check, please also send a confirmation email to [Treasurer@racmoaa.org](mailto:Treasurer@racmoaa.org) or phone 804-796-1113.

## First Annual Picnic

Plan to join us for some leisurely summer fun on Friday, June 26, 2026, at American Legion Post 354, 4800 Welby Turn, Midlothian VA 23113. Located on the James River, the views are spectacular and there is waterfront access. We will serve picnic fare and beverages starting at 6pm and corn hole and golfing competitions starting at 4:30pm. There is plenty of parking on the property and it will be held rain or shine as there are covered pavilions and indoor restrooms. The price is \$45 per person by the reservation deadline of June 23, 2026. Dress is casual and all guests are welcome. [Payment can be made on the RAC-MOAA website](#) using a credit or debit card or by check mailed to PO Box 985, Chesterfield VA 23832-9998. If paying by check, please also send a confirmation email to [Treasurer@racmoaa.org](mailto:Treasurer@racmoaa.org) or phone 804-796-1113. This is the first of what we hope will be an annual event for some relaxing good times together.

### Treasurer's Report

Beginning Balance 01 January 2026:	\$21,220
Receipts	3,838
Expenses	<u>(3,957)</u>
<b>Ending Balance 31 March 2026:</b>	<b>\$21,101</b>
<b>Encumbered Funds</b>	<b><u>(8,803)</u></b>
<b>UNENCUMBERED BALANCE</b>	<b>\$12,298</b>

### Membership Report

As of 12/31/25	Regular	Surviving Spouse	Honorary	Total
Receiving Services	160	22	4	186
Currently Paid	145	22	4	171
Lapsed/Unpaid	15	0		15

Please note: If 2025 dues remain unpaid after 15 April, lapsed individuals will no longer receive communications. For membership questions/info or if you are willing to learn and work with our Membership Chair, please contact MAJ John Nahm at: [membership@racmoaa.org](mailto:membership@racmoaa.org)

### **The Patriot**

The Richmond Area Chapter (RAC-MOAA) is an independent nonpartisan affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), a member of the Virginia Council of Chapters (VCOC-MOAA), and a non-profit, non-stock corporation registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Patriot is normally published five times each year in January, March, May, August, and October.

Send articles or comments to:

Richmond Area Chapter - MOAA  
ATTN: Newsletter Editor  
P.O. Box 985, Chesterfield, VA 23832-9998

Email: [editor@racmoaa.org](mailto:editor@racmoaa.org)

*Editor: COL Alan Cunningham, USAR (Ret.)*

# Chapter April Legislative Update

## 2026 Virginia General Assembly & JLC Initiatives

At the time of this writing, the 2026 General Assembly (GA) session concluded without a budget. A special session will follow in April to agree to a budget that the Governor would be expected to sign. Tied up in that budget exercise will be Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP). Tim Williams, the new Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, and John Maxwell, the new Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services (DVS), have stated their full support for this program and anticipate coverage in the budget, with a JLC and the Board of Veterans Services (BVS) working group studying the administration and fiscal costs with plans for future stabilization.

### 2026 JLC Initiatives Review:

2026-01 VMSDEP: covered above

2026-02 Claim Sharks. The bill that has gone to the Governor's office was not supported by the JLC and does not adequately protect from claim sharks not VA-accredited who charge for claims assistance (see MOAA National priority #3 on page 1).

2026-03 Veterans Suicide. A bill requiring better reporting and use of data to determine specific causes of veteran suicides is headed to the Governor for signature.

2026-04 Student Veterans Textbook Support: withdrawn to focus on VMSDEP

2026-05 Charitable Gaming. Bill giving some relief to brick-and-mortar VSOs failed.

2026-06 USPHS and NOAA State Tax Exemption. House bill failed, but Senate bill was continued to 2027.

**YOUR HELP IS URGENTLY REQUESTED!** If you have not done so already, please sign up for the MOAA Legislative Action Center (LAC) [here](#). Sign in and get started! Our Chapter 's future Level of Excellence Award application will include incentives for increased member active participation on the LAC. If you are not registered, please do so. If you are, please go to the LAC and send pre-scripted (editable) correspondence to your legislators. All our future benefits are dependent upon your participation.

## Coming Events at the Virginia War Memorial

### War in Pieces Theatrical Production, the 5th annual festival of one act plays

The Virginia War Memorial Foundation is pleased to announce the return of *War in Pieces*, a festival of four one-act plays written by veterans and the spouse of a veteran. The production will be held April 10 – 19, 2026, and will be professionally produced and performed at the Memorial in partnership with [Firehouse Theatre](#).

**Tickets are \$35.00 per person (General Admission) and \$15.00 for Military Veterans and Students. Tickets are on sale at [FirehouseTheatre.org](#) or by calling the Box Office at (804) 355-2001.**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Performance Schedule (curtain call subject to change):</b>                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday, April 15 (7:30PM)        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friday, April 10 (7:30 PM) – OPENING (Almost Sold Out!) | <input type="checkbox"/> Thursday, April 16 (7:30PM)         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday, April 11 (2:00 PM and 7:30PM)                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Friday, April 17 (7:30PM)           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday, April 12 (2:00PM)                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday, April 18 (2:00PM)         |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Saturday, April 18 (7:30PM)         |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday, April 19 (2:00PM) – CLOSING |

Location: Virginia War Memorial, 621 S. Belvidere Street, Richmond, Virginia 23220

**For information about these and other events, go to: <https://vawarmemorial.org/events/>**

# 1 March Meeting at Va. War Memorial

On Sunday, 1 March 2026, RAC-MOAA hosted a member meeting, luncheon (catered by Panera), and memorial service at the Virginia War Memorial, 621 S Belvidere St, Richmond, VA 23220-6504. This meeting was delayed due to weather from the original scheduled date of 1 February 2026.

Our featured guest speaker was Mark Casper, CEO of Tech for Troops (T4T) and a Marine Corps Veteran. T4T's Mission is dedicated to empowering Veterans with computers, skills, and Information Technology (IT) work force training. While located in Richmond, Tech For Troops has national reach. Mark knows that working computers can provide a new life to struggling Veterans rather than being discarded. The T4T Game Corps "Aiming For Zero" program has saved many lives in the last 2.5 years. In almost 11 years, T4T has responsibly reused or recycled 2 million tons of e-waste and this number is growing.

Mark provided an update on new and expanded activities at T4T since he last spoke with our Chapter a number of years ago. Mark was eager to share news about new outreaches to Veterans, thanks, in part, to our Chapter's recent \$500 donation to T4T from our Military Community Assistance Program (MCAP).

Following Mark's presentation, our annual Memorial Service was held in honor of Chapter members who passed away during the 2025 calendar year. Chaplain Ken Ruppard led us in the Memorial Service.



Mark Casper Giving Presentation



Chaplain Ken Ruppard Leading Memorial Service



Mark Casper Receiving Certificate

## VA helps Veterans maximize their G.I. Bill education benefits

The Department of Veterans Affairs is making it easier for eligible Veterans to maximize use of their G.I. Bill education benefits in the wake of two recent court rulings.

The rulings (*Rudisill v. McDonough* and *Perkins v. Collins*) potentially enable millions of Veterans to receive additional education benefits under both the Montgomery G.I. Bill and the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill. Veterans may be eligible under either court decision for an additional 12 months of benefits, up to a total of 48 months.

VA is taking three steps to help Veterans in the wake of these rulings. First, VA is no longer requiring Veterans to formally request a VA assessment of their eligibility under Rudisill. Second, VA is reviewing eligibility under both Rudisill and Perkins for any Veteran who has less than three months of benefits left and who is either enrolled in school or was enrolled in the last six months. Third, VA is updating its automated adjudication systems to apply the Perkins decision.

[This article](#), and many more of importance to veterans can be found at:

<https://news.va.gov/>

# Chapter News

## Chapter Contacts - 2026

### Elected Officers & Directors

President	LCDR Wayne Sine	804-363-5406
Vice-President	MAJ John Nahm	804-839-5635
Secretary	LTC Terry Moore	804-739-8112
Treasurer	LTC Owen Waltman	804-796-1113
Director-at-Large	COL Tony Atlas	804-931-7894
Director-at-Large	LtCol Curt Powell	703-999-5816
Past President	COL Vincent Cammarata	804-338-8975

### Appointed Directors

Member Services	CAPT Mary Lou Wassel	804-551-1878
	MAJ John Nahm	804-839-5635

### Appointed Directors

VCOC Rep.	COL Mark Rich	804-706-6650
Legislative Affairs	Vacant	
Youth Programs	COL Anthony Atlas	804-305-8397
Personal Affairs	Vacant	
Transition Services	Vacant	
Publicity	MAJ John Nahm	804-839-5635
Surviving Spouse	Vacant	
Hospitality	LTC Terry Moore	804-739-8112
Special Programs	LTC Owen Waltman	804-796-1113
Chaplain	LTC Ken Ruppard	804-639-0179
Webmaster	MAJ John Nahm	804-839-5635
Editor	COL Alan Cunningham	804-307-7815

### Chapter Database or E-mail Address Corrections (Login to the Website to make Updates is Preferred)

Please make the following changes to the RAC-MOAA Membership Database and/or my e-mail address:

Request you add Zip Code Plus 4. The Plus 4 is needed by the Postal Service and gives you faster mail delivery. It saves the editor time having to look it up for mailings. Thanks, keeping us informed of address changes saves money.

### Reservations for the 7 May Dinner Buffet Meeting at the Meadowbrook Country Club

Please make reservations for \_\_\_\_\_ persons for the buffet Dinner on **Thursday, 7 May 26, at 1715.**

My check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (**\$50.00 per person**) payable to "**RAC-MOAA**" is enclosed. **Please respond by 1 May!**

Rank and name: \_\_\_\_\_

Guest(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Are you attending a RAC-MOAA Event for the first time? \_\_\_\_\_

If you are mailing a check, please call 804-796-1113, or email the Treasurer (treasurer@racmoaa.org) to let him know to expect your check. Registration on web page is preferred.

### Reservations for the 26 June First Annual Picnic at American Legion Post 354

Please make reservations for \_\_\_\_\_ persons for the cookout on **Friday, 26 June 26, starting at 1630.**

My check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (**\$45.00 per person**) payable to "**RAC-MOAA**" is enclosed. **Please respond by 23 June!**

Rank and name: \_\_\_\_\_

Guest(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Are you attending a RAC-MOAA Event for the first time? \_\_\_\_\_

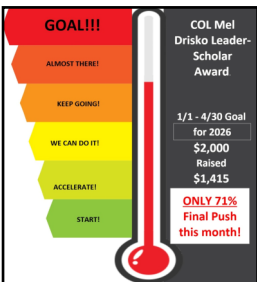
If you are mailing a check, please call 804-796-1113, or email the Treasurer (treasurer@racmoaa.org) to let him know to expect your check. Registration on web page is preferred.

### COL Mel Drisko Leader-Scholar Awards Contribution

I wish to contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support the *Drisko Memorial Leader-Scholar Awards Fund*. This fund provides monetary awards for senior-year JROTC cadets who have demonstrated the leadership and scholastic ability to pursue collegiate degrees and careers as military officers.

Enclose check payable to RAC-MOAA & put Leader-Scholar in comments. *All contributions are tax deductible.*

Print Name and Rank: \_\_\_\_\_



### Military Community Assistance Program (MCAP) Contribution

I wish to contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to support the Military Community Assistance Program (MCAP). This fund provides money to support worthwhile military and veterans' organizations of Virginia like: The VA National Guard Foundation; The Richmond Fisher House; Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center; and the USO.

Enclose check payable to RAC-MOAA & put MCAP in comments. *All contributions are tax deductible.*

Print Name and Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

