



The Bugle

Central Virginia Chapter



Volume 54, Issue 8

October 2026

MOAA, including the Central Virginia Chapter, is a nonprofit nonpartisan veterans' association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and to preserving the earned entitlements of members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors. Membership is open to those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any component of the U.S. Army, USMC, USN, USAF, USCG, USPHS, USSF or NOAA and their surviving spouse.

George Hamilton explains the advantages of Small Modular Nuclear Reactors and Micro-Reactors

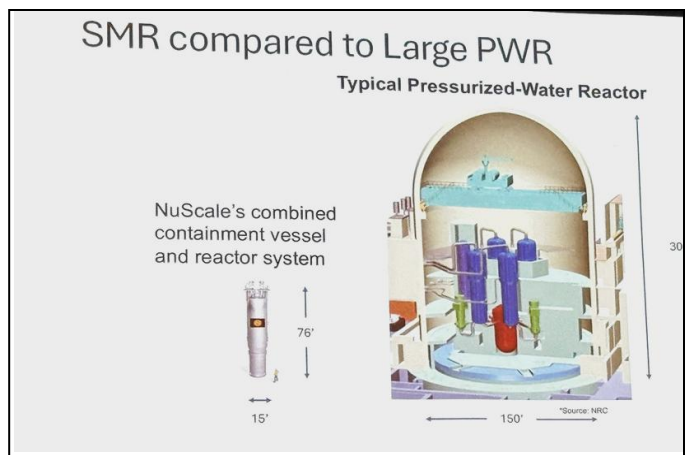
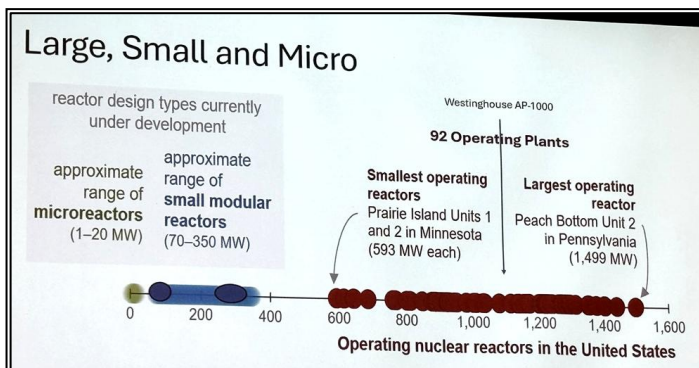
Mr. George Hamilton grew up in a suburb of Pittsburgh, PA, and won an appointment to the US Military Academy at West Point. He served for 5 years on active duty including a tour in Vietnam with the independent 1st Brigade of the 101st Airborne Division. Mr. Hamilton then attended MIT where he earned a Masters Degree in Nuclear Engineering in 1969. He spent the next 30 years in the commercial nuclear power industry in a number of firms supporting commercial nuclear power ranging from nuclear core design to decommissioning nuclear plants.

Following the sale of his last company, he worked as Chief Operating Officer and then Chief Financial Officer of a river terminal operator. Since retiring, Mr. Hamilton has continued to follow the evolution of commercial nuclear power to include the failed effort a decade ago to restart the construction of large nuclear plants and more recently the unique new designs of Small Modular Reactors and Micro-Reactors.

His presentation was perfect for us non-engineers in the room as he described the differences between large reactors, SMRs and Micro-Reactors. He provided best-use scenarios of each and compared costs, maintenance, safety and longevity. He also reviewed the trends in national and state political and popular sentiment in nuclear energy production as well as the skyrocketing demand due to the rise of data center construction.



Guest Speaker George Hamilton at September Luncheon





2026

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The Bugle

2025 Col Marvin J. Harris 5-Star
Communications Award Winner

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**Our October Luncheon Speaker will be
Dr. Bruce Chase, University of Delaware,
Research Professor Emeritus.**



Bruce Chase has a Ph.D. in chemical physics from Princeton University. He spent 34 years in the Central Research Department of DuPont and served as Chair of the DuPont Fellows for his last four years. He spent the last ten years in the Department of Materials Science and Engineering at the University of Delaware, and is now a Research Professor Emeritus. His research has involved the use of lasers to probe the structure of high strength fibers. He will be speaking on the investigation of the mysterious sinking of the Great Lakes freighter, SS *Edmund Fitzgerald* on Lake Superior in 1975 with no survivors.

Community Calendar

Wednesday, 7 October at 1300 at the Club at Glenmore:
CVC MOAA Board of Directors Meeting
(Optional lunch starts at 12:00 noon)

Thursday, 22 October: CVC MOAA Luncheon at The Club at Glenmore, Social Hour starts at 11:00 and seating at 12:00 noon. Lunch will be followed by a presentation by Dr. Bruce Chase on the sinking of the SS *Edmund Fitzgerald* (Reservation form on page 7).

Join MOAA's Central Virginia Chapter

To learn more about the nationally recognized
Central Virginia Chapter



contact

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Bill Would Expand PACT Act Benefits to Those at the Pentagon in the Days After Sept. 11

By MOAA Staff

(Hyperlinks are active in digital version)



MOAA recently endorsed bipartisan legislation that would expand benefits to veterans who served at the Pentagon in the days after the Sept. 11 attacks and suffer from a range of toxic exposure-related illnesses.

The Susan E. Lukas 9/11 Servicemember Fairness Act (H.R. 5339) extends the presumption of service connection to several conditions for those who served at the [Pentagon Reservation](#) from Sept. 11, 2001, to Nov. 19 of that year.

Conditions include asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), tracheomalacia, and any other type of cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, skin disease, or cancer. The bill also allows Pentagon leaders to identify other diseases for service connection if they are linked to specific hazardous materials found at the Pentagon after the attack.

[RELATED: [Sept. 11 Through the Eyes of National Guard Officers Who Were There](#)]

Four Virginia lawmakers serve as original cosponsors of the legislation: Democratic Reps. Suhas Subramanyam, Don Beyer, and Bobby Scott, and Republican Rep. Rob Wittman.

“These servicemembers spent countless hours at their posts, putting the mission before themselves in the early hours of our post-9/11 reality,” said Jen Goodale, MOAA’s director of Government Relations for Veteran and Retired Affairs. “Our nation has an obligation to honor that service by ensuring they receive the benefits and care their sacrifices have earned.”

The bill bears the name of Lt. Col. Susan Lukas, USAF (Ret), who was serving at the Pentagon during the attack and returned to work the next day. She was diagnosed with several toxic exposure-connected conditions in later years, [she told USA Today](#), including tracheomalacia, which can lead to a collapsed airway.

More than 3,000 individuals may have been exposed to toxic substances at the Pentagon in the aftermath of the attacks, according to the Reserve Organization of America (ROA), a longtime supporter of the legislation. The bill would provide protections to these individuals in line with those offered by the [Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics \(PACT\) Act of 2022](#) to those who served near burn pits or other areas linked to toxins.

“These heroic men and women deserve the same benefits under the PACT Act that Congress has provided to other servicemembers, and I am proud to introduce this bill to close the gap in coverage,” Subramanyam said [in a press release](#) announcing the bill’s 2025 introduction.

Legislative Review...



*The Chapter's Legislative Committee
is chaired by
Dan Moy*

For up-to-date information about legislative issues that
affect you, go to the MOAA website
<http://www.moaa.org/takeaction>

The following is a Joint Leadership Council (JLC) report from John Down, long time CVC MOAA member and the new Vice Chair, JLC and MOAA Representative.

1. Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs, Tim Williams, gave brief comments. He mentioned that at the DVS Resources Fair held on 10 September, 200 folks attended. The next fair will be held in Chesapeake on 23 October. He cautioned that budget and legislative actions will be smaller this year. Deputy Secretary Leslie Kipling mentioned that the upcoming General Assembly (GA) session will be the short (45-day) session, which ties in with comments made by the Secretary. The Deputy Commissioner also mentioned that there are certain criteria that must be met before a non-profit, non-military organization can be approved for JLC membership, which ties in with a proposed initiative to be discussed elsewhere in this report.
 2. The Commissioner of the Department of Veterans Services (DVS), John Maxwell, provided in-depth remarks echoing many of the comments contained in his letter to Chair Martinez, Vice Chair Down, and for fellow Council members.
 - a. On Veterans Suicide and Opioid Addiction: State grants for supporting programs are available for up to \$200K, due by 30 September 2026.
 - b. Veterans suicide occurs most frequently for military members who have separated up to a year, referred to as the "deadly gap." From 2023 data:
 - i. The General population experiences 14.2 suicides per 100K
 - ii. The *Veteran population* experiences 35.2 suicides per 100K
 - iii. For *Veterans in first year of separation* experiences 41.2 suicides per 100K
 - iv. For *Veterans separating with Substance Abuse issues*, 152.6 suicides per 100K are experienced.
 - v. We need to have community involvement to welcome all veterans into the community.
 - c. Are we resourced properly to provide effective and efficient services? There are access and awareness issues connecting veterans to services. Combining up to three such services at the same resource center can be both effective and efficient.
 - d. The Veterans Administration (VA) Inspector General's Office has placed a high priority on fighting fraud committed against veterans. Recent efforts have yielded \$607M recovered so far. A total of \$2B has been identified as additional fraud. Policy oversight and governance issues, along with staff shortages, are obstacles to be overcome. There are problems within the VA also in hiring of physicians. [My Note: 97% of VA medical facilities report severe physician staffing shortages, just FYI]
 - e. The Department of Defense seeks to provide military spouses with paid internships.
 - f. The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) needs to provide an earlier
 - g. From his letter noted above, the Commissioner highlighted that the state veterans cemeteries are implementing a new Virginia Honor Guard Program, established this year per HB 108 (Delegate Jason Ballard) to provide financial support to eligible VSO's that perform honor guard burial details for Virginia veterans. \$25K appropriated for FY2027 and starts distribution in February. Applications must be submitted by October 31 of this year to the DVS. The Board of Veterans Services and the Virginia Veterans Services Foundation also provided reports at the meeting.
- Former JLC Chair Bill Aramony, representing the American Legion, led the review of the proposed initiatives. (Legislative Chair Glenn

Yarborough was unable to attend the meeting). A ranking of all initiatives will take place by electronic means before the December 17th Quarterly meeting.

3. The Marine Corps League requests that the state legislature mandate specialized Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) training for all law enforcement officers, dispatchers, and first responders, expanding upon existing first responder education laws. For example, in some cases, restraint of a veteran with PTSD can lead to that veteran's cardiac arrest. This initiative was deferred at the last meeting, and it has been amended to be included among this year's JLC initiatives.
4. The Student Veterans of America wish the Governor and the General Assembly support amendment of the definition of a qualifying VSO to enable membership of a non-profit organization incorporated specifically to advocate for military and surviving spouses of veterans of the US Armed Forces. Examples include Gold Star Moms and Blue Star Families. Key here is what determines a qualifying organization. Is it federally recognized? Meet the Governor's team qualifications? (See brief remarks from the Deputy Secretary, above)
5. The Northern Virginia Veterans Association requests a formal study to assess the health impact of perimenopause and menopause on women veterans, and to develop evidence-based recommendations to improve early identification, treatment, and long-term health outcomes.
6. The Northern Virginia Veterans Association wants to ensure that the Commonwealth support for transportation and care coordination services to improve healthcare access for elderly, disabled, low-income, and underserved veterans via a \$500K state pilot grant program. Aim is to fill in gaps where they exist. Discussion mentioned that rural veterans are at risk, and that we need to fill in gaps in existing programs.
7. The American Legion, on behalf of all brick-and-mortar VSO's, asks that the Virginia code be amended to allow those 501 (c) (19) organizations to retain 100% of their generated revenue, including charitable gaming, for their own organizations' missions and operational expenses, and to remove the state mandate to donate a percentage of those revenues to outside organizations. The VFW and American Legion note severe impacts to their budgets, to the point that they are dipping

into their reserves. Potential is there for post or chapter closure if the current situation continues to or.

8. MOAA, with support from ROA, continues to seek state income tax relief for USPHS and NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps retirees. There are currently 311 such retirees in Virginia who would receive the same benefit as the Armed Services, and they are recognized as Uniformed Services by federal statute. Changing the Virginia code would then permit those retirees to receive exclusion of up to \$40K of their retirement income. I mentioned that I have already met with Delegate Reid and he is preparing to pre-file a bill.
9. VMSDEP. Much has been said of this program and prior initiatives sponsored by AUSA. The Secretary and the Commissioner ask that we allow the data gathering and analysis to take place to determine how to best stabilize and secure
10. This program has been in place for 96 years. This will remain an initiative with a lower priority as action is already under way.

JLC Day on the Hill planning to commence shortly, with members of the planning committee identified and invitations to JLC members to join extended. Public comments were rendered and meeting adjourned.

John F. Down
Vice Chair, JLC's of VSOs
MOAA Representative



John Down, Bill Mitchell and Pat Kelly at the September Luncheon

As announced by Chapter President John Warnecke at the September Luncheon, we are in need of volunteers to fill multiple impending vacancies on the CVC Board of Directors for 2027. Otherwise, the chapter will begin closing proceedings after the December 2026 Luncheon.

Surviving Spouse Corner: Add Your Voice on These Legislative Priorities

By: Pat Green



(Hyperlinks are active in digital version)

National MOAA's [Legislative Action Center](#) is a valuable resource for the surviving spouse community. This online tool provides intent and particulars of MOAA-support bills as well as the opportunity to contact your elected officials on the legislation. While all bills listed in the Legislative Action Center are important, a number of them deserve the attention of the surviving spouse community. Here are a few:

Strengthening Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) for Surviving Families: Under the [proposed provision](#) authored by Sharri Briley and Eric Edmundson, DIC would increase by 1% each year in addition to the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for three years, to a total of 3%. This incremental step toward parity with other federal DIC beneficiaries can help veteran families manage rising costs for basic necessities.

Allowing Survivors to Move Forward: [The Love Lives On Act](#) addresses the remarriage penalty burdening survivors. Currently, surviving spouses who remarry before reaching age 55 lose important benefits, such as DIC and survivor benefits. The Love Lives On Act would allow surviving spouses to retain these benefits regardless of remarriage at any age. TRICARE eligibility would be restored if a subsequent marriage ends in death, divorce, or annulment. The choice to rebuild a life and a family should not have these financial consequences. The veteran's sacrifice should be met with the nation's commitment to care for the family left behind.

Recognizing the Reality of ALS: The VA recognizes amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, ALS, as a presumptive service-connected condition for certain veterans that results in a 100% disability rating. Current law requires a veteran to have been totally disabled for eight continuous years prior to death for a surviving spouse to receive enhanced DIC. The average life expectancy of someone with ALS is two to five years after diagnosis. This is problematic — most sufferers with this disease don't live long enough to meet the eight-year requirement. The Justice for ALS Veterans Act is a remedy. It would allow eligible surviving spouses to receive increased DIC regardless how long the veteran lived with the disease.

Legislation is a fluid process, bills are written, amended, and recombined. At this time, the [Take Care of America's Veterans Act](#) combines the three acts mentioned above and gives Congress the opportunity to improve these programs at once.

As surviving spouses, we understand that no benefit can ever replace the person we lost, however, families and surviving spouses depend on this assistance. It is our duty to remind Congress that these benefits are part of the promise our nation makes to those who serve and the spouses and families who stand beside them.

MOAA CVC September Luncheon



Above from left to right: Chapter President John Warnecke with Captain Tucker Crain; Mary Lou Wassel with Colonel Chris Rankin; and Dr. Carolyn Still (Membership Director), Dr. Lucy Johnson (Secretary) with Joanne Hilty



Above from left to right: Gail Barber, Laura Coburn with Gretchen McKee; Marilyn and Paul LaBrie; and Art Beltrone, Ken Karr, and George Hamilton with Maurie Roesch



Martha and John Down with Mary Lou and Ray Wassel



Ken Karr and Mike McKee

LUNCHEON MEETING RESERVATION FORM

Thursday, 22 October 2026

11:00 a.m. Social Hour, 12:00 Noon Lunch

The Club at Glenmore

Guest Speaker: Dr. Bruce Chase, University of Delaware, Research Professor Emeritus.

Directions from Charlottesville: Route 250 East. One mile past Shadwell turn right into Glenmore. Turn right on Piper Way. If you are not a resident, please tell the gate guard that you are attending the MOAA luncheon. Proceed on Piper Way. The Club is on the right just past the tennis courts. Attire for men is suit/sport coat and tie or military uniform.



Menu Selections



Butternut Squash Bisque

Choice of entrée:

A. Pork Cutlets

or

B. Trout Amandine

or

C. Mushroom and Vegetable Wellington

Orzo Pasta

Sauteed Spinach

Black Forest Cake

Please Circle Entrée Selection

Member Name: _____ **A B C**

Guest Name(s): _____ **A B C**

_____ **A B C**

_____ **A B C**

Please make reservations for ____ @ \$35.00 each.

My current email address (if changed) is: _____

**Please remit with check payable to CVC MOAA. Reservations must be received
NO LATER THAN Friday, 16 October 2026.**

CVC MOAA

P.O. Box 6455

Charlottesville, VA 22906-6455

**Due to mail uncertainties and a need to ensure a timely head count, please confirm your attendance numbers and meal selection with John Warnecke by 16 October 2026
via email (warnecke@comcast.net) or phone (434) 981-8554.**



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