

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION of AMERICA
NEW HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
17 Sept 2026

Call to Order: The BOD meeting at the Backyard Brewery was called to order by President Larry Miller at 1200 hours. Larry provided the opening prayer. All members present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Attending: Balcolm, Breuder, Burdett, S. Day, Dunn, Frost (Chuck and Annette), P. Lipiri, Luti, McLean, Miller (Larry & Pat), Noveletsky, Rosa, Siemens. A quorum of members was present.

President's Opening Remarks: Larry had several topics to discuss including the following:

1. Larry attended a MOAA Communication Zoom meeting, and it was mentioned that MOAA has a channel on YouTube (there is a link on MOAA National's website under "MOAA Social Media"). The link is: <https://www.moaa.org/content/MOAA-social-media/>
2. Today, 17 Sep 26, is the USAF's 79th birthday and it's also Constitution Day in 1787 (239th anniversary). NH ratified the Constitution on 21 June 1788 which achieved the necessary 9th vote to finally ratify the Constitution and make it legal.
3. Take Care of America's Veterans Act (TCAVA) is part of the Omnibus Bill 61. MOAA is sponsoring the whole thing. There are some organizations that don't support it because of the fiscal offsets for tinnitus and sleep apnea. Jim Dunn reported that the VA could make this change on their own without legislation. Bill Luti reported that the US House has enough signatures already for a "discharge petition" on the "Richard Starr Act". This would allow them to bypass the House Rules Committee which has been blocking this legislation. He said that there is still one more hurdle to overcome before this can be acted upon, but the House is in recess until after the mid-term elections. He said that there are enough votes in both houses to pass it but can't get it out of committee due to cost rules due to cost offset requirements.

Immediate Past President Remarks: Jim was excused from the meeting. He did send out an email on 17 Sep 26 regarding potential nominations for officers and what to do about membership and committees but has not received any feedback on it. Sharon noted that Holly wasn't on the distribution list, so she needs to be added.

VP Remarks: Bob was not present, but he did send out a list of non-VP activities he has been or will be involved in from early June to 1 October.

Also, Bob, Chad, and Larry were out at the clambake trailer to conduct a routine inventory. All the propane tanks are okay, but there are a few small items that need to be purchased.

Also, it was mentioned that there were some problems with security at the Clambake and some people were turned away, supposedly because their names weren't on the list. It appears the list wasn't arranged the way security expected it, it also was being run through three different departments on base, and, as a result, Bob suggested that we consider moving the Clambake away from PNSY next year to "Peter's Barn" in Dover to avoid the security issue. Peter suggested that we try it for next year and then adjust as needed. Bill Luti asked if we followed the standard Navy process for getting people on base? There was an extended discussion of this topic.

Secretary's Report: Michael received one correction to the July minutes noting that Holly's surname was misspelled. This was corrected. A motion to approve the July BOD minutes was made, seconded, and approved by all present.

Bookkeeper's Report: Peter said that the TD checking account is \$1538.91, upcoming bills to the charge card are \$452. There is more money coming in from Cheddar Up. In SCU, there is \$8761.50 in checking, and \$7010.03 in the Money Market account at 0.55% interest.

We made about \$1395.09 on the Clambake. There were \$265 made in contributions to the Scholarship fund as well.

Peter has not yet worked on a draft of next year's budget which needs to be ready for the annual meeting. **ACTION #1 (Open):** Peter needs to prepare the 2027 proposed budget ASAP.

Peter also passed around a sheet of the Manchester VAMC walk-in Flu shot clinics at both Manchester and the CBOC's.

A motion to accept the Bookkeeper's report was made, seconded, and approved by all present.

Trustee of the Trust Fund: Drew stated that the markets have been on a downward trend recently and the Fed interest rate increased by 0.25%, and diesel oil for home heating is now at \$6.15/gallon and still climbing.

Surviving Spouse Liaison report:

I attended Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter, July 21, 2026. The speaker was Scott Ball from Department of Veteran Affairs speaking about Survivor Education Benefits and DIC.

In January, 2026 - Chapter 35- Home loans are available to Surviving Spouses in receipt of DIC. Surviving Spouses are to receive preference in Federal Employment, Life Insurance, and financial counseling.

45 members were on this virtual call.

There is a new publication, "VA Plan for your Legacy" can be downloaded.

Sent sympathy note to Catherine Marr regarding the death of Maj. John Marr, who died 7/11/25. Sympathy note to Suzanne Vitale, regarding Lt. Richard Vitale, USN. Emailed a note of sympathy to Andrea Barlick regarding Capt. Christopher Raymond.

Surviving Spouse Delores Lewis died 6/28/26. Left condolences on funeral website.

Attended memorial service at NH Veterans Cemetery for Capt. Christopher Raymond on 8/14/26. Spoke to his companion, Andrea Barlick and his son, Don and Daughter, Jennifer. MOAA-NH will donate \$25.00 to MOAA-NH Scholarship Fund in memory of Capt Raymond.

Gail Joyce spoke about Advocacy support Center available for information BEFORE one becomes a Surviving Spouse. Love Lives-On and Caring for Survivors Act part of Take Care of Veterans Health Care Act, TCAVA.

Other forms besides DD214 are NGB Form 22 for National Guard Retirement. DD1300, Active Duty Death.

On 9/11/26 attended 25th Anniversary of September 11, 2001, at the American Legion in Merrimack, NH.

On 9/15/26 I attended the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter with President and CEO of MOAA, General Brian Kelly as our speaker. He was encouraging all on the attendees to look at and consider all the benefits for Surviving Spouses as well as Veterans. General Kelly spoke about the TAKE CARE OF AMERICAN VETERANS ACT (TCAVA). There are 62 Bills all under this Act. Some, for example, The Love Lives-On Act, regarding Surviving Spouses that if they remarry under age 55, they lose all benefits. There is increased DIC compensation in this Act. We again are trying to pass the Richard Star Act, which enables combat-injured veterans medically retired with fewer than 20 years of service to receive their full military retirement pay and their VA compensation. Another is for the Caregiver of Veterans. General Kelly would like to take politics out of it!

He reminded everyone that TOTAL FORCE will take place February 2-3, 2027.

Larry also commented that Home Depot is now limiting veteran discounts to a maximum of \$400/year and not allowing the 10% discount on some items. Lowe's is also limiting the 10% veteran discount on some large items.

OLD BUSINESS:

Bench Dedication: Our memorial bench at the NH Veterans Cemetery has not been done yet. Larry is thinking of not having any CODEL's present and just making it a small ceremony. Date TBD.

NEW BUSINESS:

GSWA Nominees: Larry is considered two awards for 2027. Last year we presented three awards. Michael stated that the awards program is not covered in the chapter bylaws but is probably in the chapter handbook. In the past, Bruce Avery had set up some guidelines for selecting nominees. A list of prior winners is on our website.

The meeting was adjourned at 1240 for lunch and reconvened at 1300.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Government Relations (National/State/SVAC/MLT/Vets Count): Peter said the SVAC is on summer break. The next meeting will be 6 October. Peter felt that the session was successful overall. Everyone is invited to attend these meetings at the NH ARNG Training Center in Pembroke.

NH State Legislature: No report. Bill Luti was asked to write a position/policy paper regarding NH's need for a full-service hospital. He had previously sent a link to Senator Hassan's review of this issue with the VA Secretary at a 20 May 26 US Senate hearing. The theme of the paper he developed is that we want to have a full-service hospital but not at the expense of losing community care. In the budget, there is \$1.4 billion to replace the VAMC. He also noted that in 2018, the DOD made a concerted effort to offload as much of the dependent and veteran care as possible to save money,

but since then, the increasing cost of community care is driving an effort to bring back into the military health care system as much of that community care as possible. In addition, the reimbursement rates for community care are significantly higher for private insurance than they are for federal health care. Peter had spoken with Kevin Forest, the Manchester VAMC Director, who noted that the number of veterans signing up for care in VISN 1 is greater than all of the other VISN networks.

After some further discussion, Larry made a motion to accept the point paper, with a cover letter to our CODEL's, and publicized on our webpage, FaceBook, and published in upcoming issues of the Granite Slate. The motion was seconded and approved by all present. **ACTION #2 (Open):** Publicize the Point Paper as described above.

Public Affairs: Annette submitted her August Clambake article to MOAA National and received a response saying it would be published in the November issue. We are currently averaging about two articles a year. The last published article was last April. Annette had also submitted a similar article to the Manchester Union Leader and was told that its publication is forth coming.

She also mentioned that she and Chuck went to the NH Veteran's Home recently to deliver some material from the Boy Scouts. She asked if they have any needs, we could help them with and gave them a list of items. Michael mentioned that we already give them a \$500 yearly donation for any needs that they have.

Chuck gave information on Retiree Appreciation days at Ft. Drum (Saturday, 26 Sep) and Hanscom AFB on 6 Nov.

Membership: Michael said that since the last meeting, there were two new members plus one that was previously dropped, two deceased members, one deceased spouse, no dropped members, for a total membership count of 506. There were 24 who got dues reminders in June and will get their final reminder next January, and they will be dropped next year if they don't pay their dues. Michael will send out the list of the 24 people again to the BOD to see if they can contact them before they are permanently dropped.

Recruiting/Transition: No report. Position vacant.

Programs: Gerry was not present, but has Lt Gen Sims, the recently retired #3 on the JCS, as a speaker locked in for 7 November. Michael said that the Portsmouth Country Club is being very cooperative and waiving room charges, but the main menu, after adding taxes and service charges, comes to between \$43-\$46/plate. He is proposing in the flyer to limit member cost to \$39/person and that the chapter subsidize the difference. He feels that charging more than \$40/person would cost us attendance, and even at \$39, it would be the most expensive luncheon we've had. Peter proposed a motion to approve this subsidy.

Sharon also asked if anyone had volunteered to help Michael with the table check-ins. No one had volunteered yet, so Chuck and Annette Frost volunteered. Michael also mentioned that he wasn't going to do center pieces for the tables. Michael didn't know if the Country Club would put out center pieces. Annette suggested using Service flags instead. Pat said she would also bring candy for each table.

Sharon asked whether we were still doing a 50/50 raffle. Michael said we are but needed some volunteers for that too. Paul Lipari volunteered to assist.

For the Annual Business meeting, Michael said Portsmouth doesn't have a separate room we can use, so we will take over a portion of their restaurant for that meeting. We usually have around 25 members at that meeting.

Finally, our speaker will not require any audio-visual equipment.

Web page: Michael said that there were 113 hits in August. The web counter he uses says that about 29% of our "hits" are from web bots.

Travel Program: Tony Burdo sent a report stating that four travelers recently completed the Land and Cruise tour to Alaska. One traveler just booked the 2026 December Christmas Tour to Quebec and Montreal. He also sent a commission check of \$2,662.00 from Collette to Peter.

Scholarship Grant Program: Wayne Balcolm said that we have six current scholarship recipients, two are juniors or seniors, and four are freshman or sophomores. The grant is \$2000/year for freshman and sophomores, and \$4,000 for juniors and seniors for a total of \$12,000 over a four-year program. The funds are derived from the Vanguard Scholarship investments. Wayne currently has \$2,241.22 in his account and will need an additional \$8,000 for the rest of the academic year to cover the balances. Paul Lipari asked some questions about how the chapter funds these scholarships compared to how his alumni funds work. Wayne also mentioned that we received donations from the Clambake including purchases of any leftover food. Additionally, the scholarship doesn't have a "need based" requirement.

Nominations – Directors: Sharon said that CAPT Lynne Blankenkaker was supposed to be nominated to become a Director but a few days ago, she sent Sharon an email saying that last February she was appointed to a State Parole Board by Governor Ayotte, and it is a full-time job. She acts as a review judge in making parole decisions and felt that she didn't have enough time to take on a Director position as well. Therefore, her nomination was withdrawn and luckily, Bob Jaffin agreed to accept that nomination as he didn't want to remain Vice President. A motion to accept this change was made, seconded, and approved by all present.

Sharon also introduced Paul Lipari, and he gave a quick breakdown of his career. He has been working for 30 years as a systems engineer at BAE Systems in Nashua and will be retiring from that position in five weeks. He was in the USAF at Hanscom AFB and retired in 1997. After his AF retirement, he immediately moved into Sanders/Lockheed-Martin in contracting. He currently lives in Nashua, has four children, and is a graduate of Notre Dame. His wife's name is Mary Ann.

J/ROTC AWARDS: Jim Dunn said that in the 2026 award program, we presented 18 awards, an increase of three over last year which included a NH Civil Air Patrol unit, one for a Sea Cadet unit in Kittery, ME, and one for Nashua North High School which had dropped its program during Covid. He also wanted to thank three additional award presenters this year including Pat Miller, Holly Noveletsky, and Bob Jaffin. Drew, Chuck and Annette, and Carol Moore also made presentations.

For next year, potential additions include one CAP presentation and one additional Sea Cadet award.

The season starts with two presentations in April, one in June, and the remaining 15 are all in May, some of which are occurring at the same times as other award presentations. Jim is looking for additional help in presenting awards at these ceremonies. The most distant program is at the White Mountain Regional High School.

A major issue this year was the photo requirement that we get written parental permission from the awardee's parents to use the awardee's photo in the Granite Slate. Michael said that this was part of MOAA National's privacy concerns for chapters. In addition, many of the high schools no longer have their own photographers taking pictures of the awards.

Finally, Jim will need to purchase ten new perpetual plaques for several locations for the 2027 presentations. **ACTION #3 (OPEN):** Jim needs to submit a budget request for replacement award plaques to Pete as soon as possible.

Granite State Newsletter: Drew said the September newsletter is being worked on now. He mentioned that for the Annual Meeting, he and Betty need to attend a family wedding in Florida and will need Michael to record the proceedings and send him the audio file.

He has already copied Michael's report on the Clambake for the webpage and the names of new and deceased members. He also has an article Annette submitted regarding candidates seeking military academy appointments, and Sharon has a revision to position vacancies. He still needs the President's article and the Surviving Spouse article and any changes to the travel program and activities report. If there is sufficient space left over, he can add additional pictures from the Clambake and could try to add some of the "Full-Service Hospital" position paper. There is also a "Correction" on page 6 regarding the misidentification of her military service from the June newsletter.

Finally, there was some discussion regarding MOAA's Legislative Action Center and the need for members to log into it periodically and respond to emails for specific legislation.

Blast Emails: Michael sent out an email about the September brunch. He will send another about the annual meeting as we get closer to that date. He still has an issue of invalid email addresses. We will have a book at the annual meeting for attendees to update those addresses. The next membership directory will be in 2028 (every three years).

LIAISON REPORTS:

Manchester VAMC: Bernie sent a report. See **Attachment #2** for specific details.

September BOD meeting: A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 1415 hours which was seconded and accepted by all present.

Next BOD Meeting: 7 November at the Portsmouth Country Club.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael A. McLean
CDR, USN (Ret.)
Secretary
New Hampshire Chapter

MOAA-NH Policy Position: A Full-Service VA Hospital for New Hampshire

To: Members of the U.S. Congress, Department of Veterans Affairs, and NH policymakers
From: New Hampshire Chapter, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA-NH)
Subject: Support for a Full-Service VA Hospital While Preserving Veterans' Choice
Date: September 17, 2026

Position

The New Hampshire Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA-NH) strongly supports President Trump's Executive Order 14296 and the New Hampshire congressional delegation's efforts to establish a **full-service VA medical center in New Hampshire**. At the same time, MOAA-NH believes that expanding VA infrastructure must **not diminish a veteran's ability to receive timely, high-quality care from community providers**.

New Hampshire has long been an unacceptable exception in the nation's veterans' health-care system. It remains the only state in the contiguous United States without a full-service VA medical center. The Manchester VA currently provides important primary, specialty, mental health, long-term-care, and other services, but it does not provide the full range of hospital services available at a traditional VA medical center.

The VA's subsequent planning documents identify **new construction of a state-of-the-art replacement VA outpatient medical center in Manchester as the preferred alternative to a full-service hospital**, including expanded medical and surgical specialties, urgent care, mental health, radiology, rehabilitation, outpatient surgery, pathology and laboratory services, and other essential capabilities. It does not envision the full range of hospital services available at a traditional VA Medical Center as called for in the President's directive.

MOAA-NH also recognizes and commends the unified support of New Hampshire's four-member congressional delegation—Senators Jeanne Shaheen and Maggie Hassan and Representatives Chris Pappas and Maggie Goodlander—for advancing this objective. All four have called on the VA to move forward with the feasibility study and action plan necessary to establish a full-service VA hospital in New Hampshire.

Preserve Community Care and Veteran Choice

Building a full-service VA hospital should **complement—not replace—the Veterans Community Care Network**. Veterans should continue to have access to community physicians, hospitals, specialists, and other providers when community care is the best option based on clinical need, timely access, geographic convenience, or veteran preference under applicable VA rules.

The VA itself recognizes the importance of combining VA-based services with community care. Manchester VA has an established relationship with Concord Hospital for inpatient care, demonstrating that VA and community providers can work together to expand access for Granite State veterans. Additional relationships should be established state-wide like Vermont's White River Junction's full-service VA Hospital's relationship with Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center.

Establishing this full-service capability is even more imperative given the civilian health care system – especially in New Hampshire -- is under considerable stress. And VA officials considering further expansion of community care services should be aware of struggles faced by the TRICARE civilian-care system.

Together VA and the military health system (MHS) serve more than 18 million patients. Both systems were looking to transition more care into the civilian sector which has severe capacity challenges. VA patients will be competing with commercially insured patients who are more lucrative to civilian providers driving up cost and wait times.

And as the cost of community care rises – community care is almost half of the entire Manchester VA operations budget – fiscal pressures will necessitate bringing community care patients back into the direct care system. This is already underway in the MHS. Striking the right balance between direct and community care remains paramount.

Finally, and perhaps most important, health care for veteran's is **different** than civilian health care. Military service including combat, extended deployments, high-stress training and mental health requires **integrated veteran-centered care** not found in the civilian system. A modern full-service VA medical center would give New Hampshire veterans a strong **home base for integrated veteran-centered care**, while community care would provide a critical safety valve and additional capacity. The objective should be **more choices, not fewer**.

MOAA-NH Recommendations

MOAA-NH urges Congress and the Department of Veterans Affairs to:

1. **Fully implement Executive Order 14296** and proceed expeditiously with the establishment of a full-service VA medical center in New Hampshire.
2. **Fund a modern, appropriately sized replacement facility in Manchester** capable of meeting the long-term health-care needs of New Hampshire's 86,000 veterans.
3. **Preserve and strengthen community care**, ensuring veterans do not lose access to qualified community providers as VA hospital services expand.
4. **Maintain veteran choice and timely access to care**, using both VA and community resources according to clinical need and the veteran's circumstances.
5. **Integrate VA and community providers**, improving referrals, records sharing, care coordination, and continuity of care.
6. **Engage New Hampshire veterans and veterans' organizations** throughout planning, design, construction, and implementation.

Conclusion

New Hampshire veterans have earned the same access to comprehensive VA health care enjoyed by veterans in every other contiguous state. Establishing a full-service VA medical center is an important step toward fulfilling the nation's commitment to those who served.

MOAA-NH supports President Trump's Executive Order and the leadership of New Hampshire's congressional delegation. We urge the Administration, Congress, and VA to turn that commitment into action—**building a modern full-service VA hospital while protecting veterans' continued access to community care and the freedom to receive the right care, at the right place, at the right time.**

For New Hampshire veterans, the goal should be simple: a stronger VA, more choices, and better access to care.



**Manchester VA Medical Center
Blood Drive
(Veterans and Employees)**

**Thursday, Sept. 17, 2026 - 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
Friday, Sept. 18, 2026 - 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

Manchester VA Medical Center – Solarium
718 Smyth Road, Manchester, NH 03104

Be a HERO and make your appointment today at redcrossblood.org by searching
sponsor code "**VAMANCHESTER**" or by scanning the **QR code**



For an appointment, please visit RedCrossBlood.org
Or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

1-800-RED CROSS | 1-800-733-2767 | RedCrossBlood.org | Download the Blood Donor App

© 2026 The American National Red Cross | 50801-01-1-001-001

The Department of Veterans Affairs is mailing official "Choose VA" postcards to 3.8 million veterans not currently enrolled in VA health care to help them understand and apply for their health benefits. It's a VA communication designed to help Veterans learn about their health care eligibility and how to enroll. These are the different ways to apply for VA healthcare:

- Apply on-line or go to VA.gov/health-care/apply/application/introduction.
- By phone: Call VA's Health Enrollment Center at 877-222-8387.
- In-person: Find a nearby VA location at VA.gov/find-locations.

Conway VetTogether - Veteran Coffee Social:

Come for the coffee, stay for the connections.

When: Tue. Sep 15, 2026, 10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. ET

Where: Gibson Center

14 Grove Street

Conway, NH

For more details contact: Katie Hodge, LCSW at 603-624-4366, ext. 205320

Advance Care Planning Workshop for Veterans and Caregivers:

Meet with VA Social Workers and your peers to share experiences related to the process of planning for future health care needs, known as "advance care planning."

When: Tue. Sep 22, 2026, 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. ET

Where: Manchester VA Medical Center

Solarium (Ground Floor)

718 Smyth Road

Manchester, NH

Registration: Required

Discussion includes:

- How to complete a living will.
- Identify people you trust to make health care decisions for you if you cannot communicate them yourself.
- Goals and next steps toward completing an advance directive form.

For more information, or to register, call Julie McCabe, LICSW, at 603-203-6850

Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Claims Clinic for all Veterans and Survivors

When: Fri. Sep 25, 2026, 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. ET

Where: Tilton VA Clinic

630 West Main Street, Suite 400

Tilton, NH

VBA can assist with the following:

- Service connection claims.
- Updates, questions.
- Evidence submissions.
- Letters of intent.
- PACT Act questions.

This event is walk-in only, no appointments scheduled. Please call Lisa Fortson, LICSW with questions at 603-624-4366, ext. 205617.