



**Tennessee Council of Chapters**  
Military Officers Association of America



Minutes of the Meeting 17 April 2019

Tennessee Council of Chapters, MOAA met 17 April 2019 at Sammy B's, 705 Cadet Court, Lebanon, TN with **23** members present as follows:

Chattanooga: Ray Adkins, Bob Crates  
East Tennessee: No Representative  
Ft. Campbell: Ivan Adames, Monroe Gildersleeve, Tim Powers, Steve Singleton, Eddie Sumbler  
General Andrew Jackson: Phil Ponder, J. D. Rottero, John Wade  
Memphis: Kathy Desjarlais, John Dixon, Jim Thomasson  
Middle TN: Patricia Bergquist, Bob Bussey, Doug Minton, John Olinger  
Mountain Empire: Donald Thompson  
Stones River: Jim Parks, Tracy Thorpe  
Sumner County: Steve Petersen  
Upper Cumberland: Locke Kelly, Mark Pfaffenroth

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR: 2019 MEETING INFORMATION IN THE MINUTES!**

Mrs. Eunice Sumbler, spouse of Eddie Sumbler, and Mrs. Janet Singleton, spouse of Steve Singleton, were our guests at this meeting.

COL Doug Minton called the meeting to order at 11:15am.

Jim Thomasson led the pledge to the flag and Eddie Sumbler delivered the opening prayer.

**Financial Report**

Bob Bussey, Treasurer, reported that we received the MOAA 2019 Travel Incentive of \$580, and the fund balance is \$591.66. These funds are "restrictive" funds to be used only for travel expenses to chapters within the council by the Council President, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> VP.

On January 22, 2019 we transferred \$3,000 into an 18-month Certificate of Deposit (2.47% interest) at Regions Bank. If we need to withdraw any funds prior to the certificate maturity, the early withdrawal penalty is one month's interest on the amount withdrawn. Investment firms are not interested in these small accounts. Authorized signatures on the account are Doug Minton, Jim Thomasson, and Bob Bussey. \$6,555.29 is the ending balance of council funds. The Internal Revenue Service Form 990 was filed in March.

Doug Minton asked that the Council accept the Treasurer's Report as presented without question. All agreed.

## **Acceptance of Minutes**

Minutes of the 16 January 2019 meeting as amended were approved by acclamation.

## **Marvin J. Harris Communications Award Presentation**

Doug Minton presented the Marvin J. Harris Communications Award to the Chattanooga Chapter which was accepted by Ray Adkins and Bob Crates. Bob Crates reported that Chris Dooley is now the editor and he is the assistant editor. A photo was taken with Col. Terri Coles who expressed congratulations to the chapter.

## **Introductions**

Doug Minton introduced Col. Donald F. Thompson, USAF (Ret.), a new member of the MOAA Board of Directors (2018-2024), who resides in Bristol, TN. Col. Thompson is a physician and is working in Murfreesboro on contract. We hope he will be able to join us regularly and perhaps be a future speaker. Don is a member of the Mountain Empire Chapter.

Mark Pfaffenroth, Upper Cumberland Chapter and a stalwart attendee at the TN Council of Chapters meetings, was replaced as Chapter President in March by Capt. Locke Kelly, USN (Ret.). Doug welcomed Locke to the Council!

Bill Summers, Ft. Campbell Chapter, has been our Council Legislative Liaison while TVET was being implemented. TVET has been turned over to Steve Singleton. It is time to let Bill Summers be the Legislative Liaison for the Ft. Campbell Chapter, and Steve take over the role of Council Legislative Liaison.

Lunch was served and enjoyed and the meeting resumed at 11:45am.

Doug introduced Col. Terri Coles, USA (Ret.), MOAA Senior Director of Council & Chapters. Col. Coles has been with MOAA Council and Chapters two years. Her department has undergone some personnel changes due to health issues, etc. Victoria Twyne is still there.

Col. Coles thanked Doug for the invitation to visit the council as she tries to visit the councils at least once a year. She thanked Col. Thompson, MOAA Board Member, for his participation and attendance.

MOAA celebrated its 90<sup>th</sup> birthday in February. MOAA has 350,000 members and is the 4<sup>th</sup> largest lobby group behind the VFW, American Legion, and DAV. MOAA has ten lobbyists on the staff and has been named one of the 50 top lobbyists by *The Hill*.

MOAA Storm the Hill is a signature event done every year to speak to congressmen and senators from all 50 states about key issues impacting our active duty, retirees, survivors, and families. This year's event was a success. Staff are analyzing how well we did. They are developing metrics and data which will be shared in August.

Council and Chapters are trying to step up their game. Chapter members can pay their chapter dues online with 120 chapters utilizing it. MOAA wants to see more engagement. The newsletter template is available to assist chapters in developing their newsletters.

USAA provides \$40,000 per year in support of nationwide community engagement. Councils may apply for \$800 and chapters may apply for \$300 using a one-page application. Funds are on a first come, first serve basis. Most chapters use their funds to support their JROTC/ROTC programs.

Brennco Travel handles MOAA vacations. They offer a rebate to chapters when members use their services. Doug Minton stated that he learned that you can get a cost comparison from Brennco even if you do not book through them.

Another revenue generator for chapters is Mercer Insurance. Just run their ad in a newsletter or other publication on a one-time basis and get \$100 for the advertisement.

Col. Coles was surprised there is not more participation in the communication awards program due in March. Other awards available are: Leadership Award, President's Award, and Chairman's Award.

With electronic messaging chapters can op to reach out to those outside your catchment area and MOAA will do this twice a year. They need 45 -60 days lead time. This can help garner new members.

The *MOAA Newsletter* replaced the old *Affiliate*. MOAA is conservative in protecting our privacy. The campaign is to get council and chapter members to "opt-in" to get the newsletter.

Key dates for 2019 were reviewed. MOAA seeks to expand council and chapters content in the October issue of *Military Officers Magazine*. Please submit your information, photos, etc. to spotlight your chapter, members, or community no later than August 1 for publication in October.

MOAA has two "virtual" chapters now. These are an online experience, non-geographical affiliates, based on a community of interest. The Uniformed Services Nurses Advocacy Virtual Chapter has 185 members and the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter has 80. The Nurses Virtual Chapter brought unintended consequences with one-third of the members being active duty nurses and one-fourth became members of a local chapter. MOAA wants to form more virtual chapters.

Recruiting and retention of members is vital! The MOAA President sent out a letter to MOAA members requesting permission to share their email contact. With "Permission Granted" nearly 2,000 MOAA members were targeted for possible chapter membership. The lists were provided to appropriate chapters in March.

MOAA plans to roll out real time notification of new members later this Spring. With real time notification, MOAA will provide new MOAA member information within 30 days to chapters so they can work to recruit these members into their chapters. This will replace the information process that has been previously provided chapters only twice a year.

Kathy Desjarlais pointed out that the Basic Membership Form ask only for name, address, e-mail, etc. but no phone number. Col. Coles will check into that upon return to the office.

Col. Coles reminded everyone that chapters without a purpose or vision are in jeopardy!

Be sure to review the recruiting key points and top recruiting tips in Col. Coles PowerPoint slides that will be published with these minutes.

Doug Minton pointed out that when trying to get chapter members to also become MOAA National members too, the member must initiate the action to join MOAA.

The Memphis Chapter is due a rescheduled MOAA National visit as their last one was cancelled due to inclement weather.

Doug Minton told Col. Coles that it was an honor to have her visit the Council.

### **Tennessee Team *Storming the Hill* Event (TN Specific)** **Surviving Spouse Report**

As stated in January we are in our 20<sup>th</sup> year of the fight for repeal of the SBP/DIC Offset for military surviving spouses. The new bill in the House is H.R.553 sponsored by Congressman Wilson (SC) and Congressman Yarmouth (KY) who is Chairman of the House Budget Committee, and the bill has 228 co-sponsors. The Senate bill is S.622 sponsored by Senator Jones (AL) and has 57 co-sponsors. All Tennessee congressmen and senators had co-sponsored prior to the MOAA Storm the Hill event. Patricia thanked council members for their efforts in making this happen. Military surviving spouses and others continue the process of getting co-sponsors who will not only co-sponsor but vote "Yes" on the bills or amendments, and work to help find the pay go.

Today, the Change.Org petition which was shared with chapters via e-mail has 166,287 signatures.

The MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter (MSSVC-02) will hold its third quarterly meeting via FreeConferenceCall.com on April 27th at 12Noon CDT. Guest speakers on the call will be General Atkins, MOAA President, Col. Shane Ostrom, MOAA Benefit Services, and Mrs. Nancy Mullen, MOAA Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee member. Virtual Chapter information and membership applications were available at the council meeting for those interested.

Jim Thomasson reported that their chapter has held two annual surviving spouse luncheons. Each surviving spouse is sent a personal letter inviting them, their lunch is free, and 15-17 have attended each year. Patricia has attended both luncheons, and spoke at the last one encouraging surviving spouse chapter participation. The chapter has seen an increase in surviving spouse attendance.

## **General Comments**

Col. Thompson shared our storming experiences with our congressmen and senators on the other two issues: 1) military pay and benefits and 2) stabilizing TRICARE fees and copays. Most of our congressmen and their staff were familiar with our issues. Two of our congressmen were newly elected. One congressman and his legislative aide were on a steep learning curve. (They asked what is a billet and how do you spell it.)

Doug Minton stated that we needed to keep the pressure on to ensure that our elected representatives actually vote for these bills when a vote occurs.

Jim Thomasson stated that this was the first year in several years that we have had unanimous support on bills from our congressmen and senators.

## **TVET Update**

Steve Singleton provided a TVET historical review and update. This year TVET learned that when a fiscal note is attached to a bill, the bill is shelved, put behind the budget, or sent to summer session.

Veteran Suicide Prevention - disseminate resources and improve training in all state and county agencies to address the issue had a fiscal note attached due to the TN Veterans Service Department cost estimate.

Standardize naming for State Veteran Homes will involve the new Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Veteran Services, Courtney Rogers. Trying to get into to see Commissioner Rogers and develop a good working relationship is a challenge TVET faces.

TVET is working on recognition of women veterans and tuition for military children in-state.

\$800 will be needed for development of a website, etc. as a 501(c)19.

## **Good of the Council**

Doug Minton reported that 37 new MOAA Basic Memberships were signed during the bi-annual recruiting at the National Guard Association of Tennessee Conference (NGATN). Contact information was sent to each chapter for chapter recruitment purposes.

Further, on the "Permission Granted" list strike while they are hot.

Please send Doug Minton your Upcoming Dates of Interest for the July 2019 agenda.

Ivan Adames reported that Ft. Campbell Retiree Appreciation Day is May 18<sup>th</sup> from 10:00 to 16:00 Hours. Congressman Mark Green is scheduled to speak at 11:30a.m.

## **Next Meeting**

Our next meeting is scheduled for **17 July 2019** at 11:00am at Sammy B's in Lebanon.

**Future Meetings - Mark Your Calendar!**

TN CoC Meeting: 17 July 2019, Sammy B's  
TN CoC Meeting: 16 October 2019, Sammy B's

The meeting adjourned at 1:45pm.

Minutes prepared by Patricia Bergquist, Secretary and Council Surviving Spouse Liaison  
Respectfully submitted by Doug Minton, President, TN Council of Chapters