



Tennessee Council of Chapters
Military Officers Association of America



Minutes of the Meeting 17 July 2019

Tennessee Council of Chapters, MOAA met 17 July 2019 at Sammy B's, 705 Cadet Court, Lebanon, TN with **19** members present as follows:

Chattanooga: Ray Adkins, Bob Crates, Chris Dooley

East Tennessee: No Representative

Ft. Campbell: Ivan Adames, Monroe Gildersleeve, Tim Powers, Eddie Sumbler, Bill Summers, Howard French

General Andrew Jackson: J. D. Rottero, John Wade

Memphis: Jim Thomasson

Middle TN: Patricia Bergquist, Bob Bussey, Doug Minton, John Ohlinger

Mountain Empire: No Representative

Stones River: Pete Warner

Sumner County: Steve Petersen

Upper Cumberland: Locke Kelly

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: 2019 MEETING INFORMATION IN THE MINUTES!

Mrs. Eunice Sumbler, spouse of Eddie Sumbler, and Mrs. Clara French, spouse of Howard French, were our guests at this meeting.

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

Chaplain Eddie Sumbler delivered the opening prayer. Lunch was served and enjoyed. Then, Jim Thomasson led the pledge to the flag. At 11:40pm, COL Doug Minton reconvened the meeting.

Financial Report

Bob Bussey, Treasurer, reported that the Council is solvent! A "corrected" first quarter financial report was presented due to \$11.66 being posted to both restricted and non-restrictive funds. The second quarter financial report shows expenditure for travel reimbursement to Doug Minton for a chapter visit. Our 18-month Certificate of Deposit (2.47% interest) at Regions Bank has earned \$18.66 in interest. \$6,392.60 is the ending balance of council funds.

John Wade moved for approval of the finance report. Doug Minton asked that the Council accept the Treasurer's Report as presented without question. All agreed.

Acceptance of Minutes

Minutes of the 17 April 2019 meeting were approved by acclamation.

TVET Update

Bill Summers provided the TVET update stating that TVET has another good meeting in February. However, legislatively, this year was a perfect storm due to a new governor, new legislators, a disorganized veterans caucus, and TVET writing of the bills.

TVET is looking to go back and rewrite a couple of the bills for TVET Day on the Hill 2020.

TVET will meet in August with location to be determined. When Nancy Mullen changed jobs, they lost their meeting place.

TVET is 501(c)19 and funds are needed to file state fees to setup, website development, insurance, mailbox, etc. The twelve (12) member organizations will be assessed \$100 each. Doug Minton stated that he contacted TVET on where to send the check with no response to date. Bill will get information to Doug.

TVET is trying to get legislators on teams and concentrate on 3-4 bills. There was discussion about the veteran's license plate, both first and second plate, as well as whether the State charge for opening the grave for surviving spouses in a cemetery is resolved.

There was discussion about groups in TVET such as Veterans Farmers Group. Both American Legion and VFW are still not members of organization. Doug Minton offered that TVET is a marvelous idea and Bill Summers said they need to keep selling it. John Wade suggested that if TVET made American Legion and VFW issues its issues it would go a long way.

Surviving Spouse Report

The House Bill, H.R.553, sponsored by Congressman Wilson (SC) and Congressman Yarmouth (KY) who is Chairman of the House Budget Committee, has 375 co-sponsors. The Senate bill, S.622, sponsored by Senator Jones (AL) and has 75 co-sponsors. All Tennessee congressmen and senators have co-sponsored the respective bills.

The House did not include the Widow's Tax in their initial mark-up of the NDAA 2020. Representative Joe Wilson (SC) offered an amendment to repeal the SBP/DIC Offset, but it was later withdrawn because it was offered without a corresponding offset to pay for the provision. The congressmen's bill remained in motion as it met the threshold of support in the House to be placed on the "consensus calendar".

The Senate did not include the Widow's Tax in their version of the NDAA 2020. On June 27th, Senator Jones (AL) made a compelling speech before the Senate and called for a "Unanimous Consent" vote. Senator Inhofe blocked Senator Jones parliamentary move due to financial questions and another unnamed senator's objections.

On Friday, July 12th, MOAA has reported that the House passed its final version of the NDAA which included the SBP/DIC Repeal along with other MOAA supported initiatives. The differences between the House and Senate NDAA will be hashed out in the Conference Committee. The 40 Conference Committee conferees are yet to be named. MOAA stands ready to share its position and serve as a resource for the conferees on the issues impacting our currently serving, retirees, families, and survivors.

Nancy Mullen, member of the Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee has shared that there are two amendments: one to repeal the offset and one to suspend the rules.

COL Steve Strobridge, Former MOAA Director of Government Relations, posted on the Surviving Spouses of MOAA Facebook page, "now the need is to bury the Senate by mail and phone. Keep the pressure on House leaders to insist on retaining it in the final bill". Grassroots advocacy is needed via the following: visits to local congressional offices, visits to Town Halls, call DC utilizing the Capitol Switchboard (1-866-272-6622) and talk with staffers responsible for legislative/DOD issues, and e-mail both local and DC offices.

On June 12th, Congresswoman Jahana Hayes (CT) introduced HR 3221, "The Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Improvement Act of 2019". This bill will create a fund to pay additional money to those who receive DIC payments so that total compensation is equal to 55 percent of a single 100 percent disabled veteran's compensation and bring parity with other federal survivor programs. Because this is a separate fund, it would not affect the SBP/DIC Offset.

S.1047, the Senate bill, would align DIC payment with other federal benefits. Currently, DIC is paid at 40 percent of a single disabled veteran's compensation while other federal benefits are paid at 55 percent. *Do Not confuse this issue with the SBP/DIC Offset Repeal.*

The MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter (MSSVC-02) will hold its fourth quarterly meeting via FreeConferenceCall.com on Tuesday, July 30th, at 12Noon CDT and 1PM EST. Guest speakers on the call will be Kathy Thorp, Anne Hartline, and Micki Costello, MOAA Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee members. The dial in phone number will be published about a week before the meeting.

Doug Minton stated that per Don Johnson, MOAA Board of Directors, all the issues covered are being worked by MOAA. The simplest course of action is to contact our representatives.

Legislative Chair/Liaison Role Discussion

Doug Minton addressed the importance of the Legislative Chair/Liaison role in our chapters. The Chattanooga Chapter does this the best! Chris Dooley shared that they know their Congressman and Senators, participate in a military advisory group, invite the congressman to speak at their August meeting, and he and Ray Atkins hold a breakfast to develop a "personal relationship" with their area legislators.

Other chapters that have had legislators visit their chapters are the General Andrew Jackson Chapter, and Middle Tennessee has had visits in the last two years and now needs to schedule

visits again. Stones River is encouraged to schedule visits also. Ray Atkins reminded everyone that the legislative recess is in August and it is easy to get them to come speak then.

There was discussion about making contact with State Legislators also. John Ohlinger reported that the 8th Annual ROTC Service Academy Congressional Meeting will generate a complete summary of contacts for all the Tennessee Congressmen and Senators. He will share the information.

Everyone should receive the MOAA Legislative Update. Doug Minton encouraged everyone to hammer on members to receive the legislative update.

Special Presentation

Doug Minton presented Patricia Bergquist, TN Council Surviving Spouse Liaison and Secretary, with the MOAA Leadership Award signed by General Atkins, MOAA President, and a MOAA Leadership Lapel Pin. The award was given to recognize Patricia for her leadership while serving as the Surviving Spouse Liaison (2011-present) of the Tennessee Council of Chapters.

This is Patricia's second MOAA Leadership Award! MOAA normally only gives this award one time. Congratulations!

Chapter Candidates for 2nd VP

Lt.Col. Jim Thomasson stated that Doug Minton was about to end his two-year commitment as Council President. In January 2020, Jim will step up to President and Ivan Adames will step up to the 1st VP role. The Council is looking for someone for the 2nd VP role. Also, there is a chance that Patricia Bergquist will step down as Secretary since she has done it eight years. If someone would be interested in either the 2nd VP or Secretary role, please contact Jim Thomasson.

Doug Minton shared that there is a four-year window with the 2nd VP role. The first two years the 2nd VP is not too involved, the 1st VP is a bit more involved, and the President is very active.

At our October meeting, we will need to make the selection with induction in January 2020.

Good of the Council

Please send Doug Minton your upcoming dates of interest for the October 2019 agenda. Chapter leadership is encouraged to bring other chapter members to the council meetings too. The 2020 meeting dates are on the agenda today and they will also be in the meeting minutes.

Level of Excellence results will be published in August. As a MOAA cost saving strategy, Chapters will not travel to receive their awards this year.

Doug Minton encouraged everyone to subscribe to the MOAA Newsletter, if they are not already receiving it.

Steve Petersen shared his experience when inquiring of his membership about receipt of the newsletter. He prepared and distributed to his chapter a step by step instruction for signing up for the newsletter. Those instructions are attached to the minutes.

On Recruitment and Retention, Doug Minton reminded everyone that MOAA pays a \$250 incentive to those chapters that retain 80 percent of their membership. Further, nine out of ten chapters use the Committee Module.

Every chapter should have a visit from MOAA National member. If not, it is a speaker for your chapter meeting.

The Council President, 1st VP, and 2nd VP are authorized to use the MOAA Travel Incentive Funds to visit Tennessee chapters.

Jim Thomasson reported that Kathy Desjarlais did not attend due to illness, and it is probably the first meeting she has missed in nine years. Kathy just found out that she has received the "Volunteer of the Year" by the Tennessee Department of Chamber of Commerce. Congratulations to Kathy!

Fort Campbell has a golf tournament scheduled on August 16th. Welcome Home for Veterans will be held Thursday through Saturday, September 18-22. When chapters have an event, please let the Council President know so that the information can be shared within the council.

Next Meeting

Our next meeting is scheduled for **16 October 2019** at 11:00am at Sammy B's in Lebanon.

Future Meetings - Mark Your Calendar!

TN CoC Meeting:	16 October 2019, Sammy B's
TN CoC Meeting:	15 January 2020, Sammy B's
TN CoC Meeting:	15 April 2020, Sammy B's
TN CoC Meeting:	15 July 2020, Sammy B's
TN CoC Meeting:	21 October 2020, Sammy B's

The meeting adjourned at 1:00pm.

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

