



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



Minutes of the Meeting 15 January 2020

Tennessee Council of Chapters, MOAA met 15 January 2020 at Sammy B's, 705 Cadet Court, Lebanon, TN with **20** members present as follows:

Chattanooga: Ray Adkins, Bill Hewitt  
East Tennessee: No Representative  
Ft. Campbell: Ivan Adames, Howard French, Monroe Gildersleeve, Steve Singleton, Eddie Sumbler  
General Andrew Jackson: J.D. Rottero, John Wade  
Memphis: Kathy Desjarlais, John Dixon, Jim Thomasson  
Middle TN: Patricia Bergquist, Bob Bussey, Doug Minton  
Mountain Empire: Don Thompson  
Stones River: Pete Warner  
Sumner County: Steve Petersen  
Upper Cumberland: Scott Jacobsen, Locke Kelly

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR: 2020 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.

Jim Thomasson led the pledge to the flag. The Two Bell's Ceremony to honor Council members who died in the past year was explained by Ivan Adames. He suggested that individual chapters conduct the ceremony for their deceased chapter members also. Jim Thomasson read the Two Bell's script honoring the following members: CW2 Warren Evans, USA (Ft. Campbell), Rear Admiral Bobby Crates, USN (Chattanooga), CDR Maurice Tyler, USN (Memphis), and Major Vivian Fivecoat, USA (Ft. Campbell). Following the ceremony, Chaplain Eddie Sumbler delivered the opening prayer. Lunch was enjoyed during the meeting.

### **Acceptance of Minutes**

Minutes of the 17 October 2019 meeting were approved by acclimation.

### **Financial Report**

Bob Bussey, Treasurer, delivered the financial report for the period October 1 – December 31, 2019. There was not much activity. There were no expenditures in the Unrestricted Funds (operating account). *There is one outstanding check of \$100 dated September 27<sup>th</sup> payable to TVET covering the Council dues which should clear soon per Steve Singleton.*

There was one expenditure from our Restricted Funds covering travel reimbursement for the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President's visit to the General Andrew Jackson Chapter. Doug Minton reported that one-third of the MOAA Councils have been active in visiting chapters. Any Restricted Fund balance will be offset by the MOAA 2020 Council President Mileage Supplement, in an increased amount to cover 2,000 miles of travel at the IRS rate of 57.5 cents per mile. MOAA has informed us that we will receive a stipend of \$1,150 in our Council's bank account by mid-January to help fund our chapter visits.

Our 18-month Certificate of Deposit (2.47% interest) at Regions Bank has earned \$18.96 in quarterly interest. **\$6,154.13** is the ending balance of council funds.

Following this meeting, Bob Bussey will step down as Treasurer. Bob stated that he has enjoyed serving these past two years.

The Council accepted the Treasurer's Report as presented without question by vote.

### **Surviving Spouse Report**

The NDAA 2020 included the repeal of the SBP/DIC Offset Repeal. Everyone is asking how the repeal of the offset, often called the "Widow's Tax", will affect them and how much money they will get.

The law [just passed](#), and nothing happens in 2020. This year, lawyers will review and interpret the words. Policies, directives, and regulations will be written. Computer systems will be designed and tested to implement the processes and pay survivors. However, the actual pay implementation will not start until 2021.

Here's what we know, and how you can prepare moving forward:

- Spouse SBP annuitants subject to the DIC offset won't see the first change in their payments until the Feb. 1, 2021, payment.
- You do not need to notify your pay agency that your SBP payment is affected by this change in the law. The pay agencies know who you are — they are docking your SBP now.
- Make sure your SBP account information is up to date and includes your correct mailing address so pay agencies can contact you. Establish a DFAS "myPay" or a USCG "Direct-Access (DA) Self-Service" account now, and add your email address if you aren't already on DFAS or the USCG online programs (learn more at DFAS.mil for DoD or <https://www.dcms.uscg.mil/ppc/ras/> for Coast Guard).
- Pay agencies cannot provide individual estimates of spouse SBP annuity payments at this time. Please do not call their Customer Service Centers to request an individual estimate.
- Survivors will not have to pay back any premium refunds if you previously received a refund of SBP premiums due to the SBP-DIC offset.

- The "Repeal of Authority for Optional Annuity for Dependent Children" and "Restoration of Eligibility for Previously Eligible Spouses" in the law only affects those spouses and children of servicemembers who died on active duty when the surviving spouse previously elected to transfer the SBP annuity to a child or children. They do not affect previous or future SBP elections by retirees or SBP annuities for a retiree's beneficiaries.
- The law is not retroactive, so there will not be any back payments for past offset amounts. The law starts as of the law's passage and going forward.

MOAA does not have any more information at this time, but they will share further details as they develop. To get updates on any developments, please be sure to subscribe to [The MOAA Newsletter](#). Further, surviving spouses may track developments at the DFAS website: <https://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary/survivors/SBP-DIC-News>

Please contact your Congressmen and Senators and thank them for their support in the SBP/DIC Offset Repeal. Our Tennessee congressional leadership has supported us in this effort more than they ever have in the past. Let's acknowledge their support and thank them. We will need them again, no doubt, on other issues that impact our active duty, retirees, families, and survivors!

In case you need to know, the SSIA 2020 is \$323 per month, and the DIC flat rate is \$1,340.14 per month.

The MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter (MSSVC-02) will hold its quarterly meeting via FreeConferenceCall.com on Tuesday, January 21st, at 12Noon CDT and 1PM EST. The dial in phone number is 712-775-7270 and Meeting ID is 966850. Chapter Surviving Spouse Liaisons will be e-mailed the information as soon as it is available.

MOAA "Storming the Hill" will be March 25, 2020. Likely issues on this year's storming agenda are: Healthcare/Pharmacy fees and co-pays, compensation for those medically discharged prior to achievement of 20-years of service, and commissary benefits. Grassroots advocacy is always extremely important in addition to MOAA's advocacy on Capitol Hill! So, please use MOAA's Take Action and the Legislative Updates as well as contact your Congressman and Senators to participate.

Remember: you can utilize MOAA's Capitol Switchboard (**1-866-272-6622**) to call the offices in DC and talk with staffers responsible for legislative/DOD issues. We suggest members call and e-mail both local and DC offices.

### **TVET Update**

Steve Singleton reported that TVET President, Monica Meeks and he met with Courtney Rogers, TDVS Commissioner, and Tim Goins, TDVS Assistant Commissioner, to open lines of communication and talk about bills: suicide prevention training and standardizing the naming of veteran homes.

A meeting with the Legislative Veteran Caucus was held at the Cordell Hull Building 10 January 2020.

The MOAA State Legislative Coalition was created to coordinate state issues through MOAA state councils/chapters. Teleconference calls provide the opportunity to share experiences, best practices, etc. Next teleconference is January 16<sup>th</sup>.

*Please see the attached "MOAA Council Legislative Update" for in-depth information about the meeting with the TDVS, Legislative Veterans Caucus, and the MOAA State Legislation Coalition.*

Proposed bills for 2020 are as follows:

- 1) Restore Disabled Veteran Tag: In 2014 Disabled Veteran tag was changed from 2 to 1. Bill language to "restore" emphasizes TVET is not requesting anything new. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Purple Heart tag can be removed as it was not there initially and the 2<sup>nd</sup> tag increases state revenue loss.
- 2) Mental Health Training for TDVS staff: TDVS required to provide training (1-2 hours required) for all staff interacting with veterans to recognize suicide risk in veterans. Bill should not dictate length of time training to be done. VSO and CSO suicide prevention training can be done through TDVS.
- 3) Standardize Naming TN Veteran Homes: Former TDVS Commissioner, Many-Bears Grinder opposed this bill, and considered eliminating the practice of naming homes for individuals. TVET believes veteran groups involved in getting these homes funded deserve input in the naming of the home, and to name parts of the home (dining areas, chapels, etc.). TDVS is concerned that language may open "pandora's box" with unrestricted naming. The option not to name should remain open.
- 4) Women Veteran Recognition: TVET seeks a resolution to recognize Women Veterans role in our nation's defense.

TVET has new legislative issues related to Veteran Farmers. Many veterans farm for a second career income and also to treat PTSD. Consequently, more slaughter houses are needed to address all of the products farmers produce. More hemp processing facilities are needed too.

*Please see the attached "Proposed Bills for 2020" for in-depth information on these bills.*

Mark your calendars: **February 5, 2020 is TN Veteran's Day on the Hill.**  
Please plan to participate!

Registration can be accomplished at:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdOo6X1r3XcaiO4Bs54sFbKJaYUXDqU7vV7L8UGkqte-iPsDw/viewform?vc=0&c=0&w=1>.

The TVET Secretary role will be open this summer once the legislative session is finished.

## **MOAA Guidance From The Most Recent Webinar**

### *Liability Insurance:*

MOAA partners with Mercer who offers liability insurance. Monroe Gildersleeve shared that Ft. Campbell Chapter got their liability coverage through Mercer and found them very easy to work with on it. Their cost was \$400 and Mercer offers \$100 rebate when you run their ad in the chapter newsletter at least once. So, final cost for their coverage was \$300.

Billy Hewitt shared that Chattanooga has Errors and Omissions Insurance, but they thought they were covered under MOAA National for liability. Doug Minton reported that chapters are affiliates of MOAA National. MOAA National guides chapters, but chapters are not protected under their umbrella for liability coverage.

### *Chapters as affiliates of MOAA must always be politically non-partisan:*

Doug Minton shared that the Middle TN Chapter does not have someone as a speaker in the year they are running for an office. Kathy Desjarlais said that if one person who is running speaks, then others need to be invited also.

### *USAA Grants:*

USAA Grants are now being approved at MOAA, rather than USAA as in the past. When available, these grants offer a great way to spend dollars on worthy events.

### *MOAA Storming the Hill:*

MOAA "Storms the Hill" on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Chapters are encouraged to contact and develop a relationship with their Congressman and Senators. Please contact Congressman Roe to thank him for his tireless efforts for veterans.

## **For The Good of the Council**

Please send Jim Thomasson your upcoming dates of interest for the April 2020 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 are also in the meeting minutes.

Jim Thomasson reminded members that the Council 2<sup>nd</sup> VP and Secretary positions remain open. Please consider stepping up for one of these important Council roles. Patricia Bergquist will continue in the role as Council Surviving Spouse Liaison.

## **2020 Chapter President Changes**

John Davenport - Chattanooga  
Ivan Adames- Ft. Campbell  
Pete Warner – General Andrew Jackson  
Mike Patenaude – Middle TN Chapter

Doug Minton thanked everyone for their participation and input over the last two years. He said it had been a pleasure working with two old friends, Patricia Bergquist and Bob Bussey. Both

Bob and Patricia are stepping off their roles after today and they have left things better than they found them for us. Everyone applauded!

### **2020-2022 TN CoC Leadership**

Don Thompson, MOAA Board Member and Mountain Empire Chapter member, installed the new Council officers for the term 2020-2022:

President: Jim Thomasson – Memphis Chapter

1<sup>st</sup> VP: Ivan Adames – Fort Campbell Chapter

Treasurer: John Dixon, Memphis Chapter

Following the oath and installation of officers, the Past President and President exchanged pins.

Jim Thomasson, President, commended Doug Minton, Past President, on an outstanding job over the past two years and said Doug had left things better. Jim is looking forward to the next two years! Even though he has a lot to learn, he said that it is going to be fun!

Col Thompson, MOAA Board Member and Mountain Empire Chapter member, thanked the Council for inviting him to the meeting. He thanked Doug Minton for his leadership over the past two years. He said that under Doug's leadership the Council had been involved in a lot of "beta" testing which had been of great value to MOAA Councils and Chapters. The President's Award along with an engraved glass paperweight was presented to Doug Minton.

Col Thompson will be speaking January 28<sup>th</sup> at the Memphis MOAA Chapter meeting and on February 25<sup>th</sup> at the Middle TN Chapter of MOAA meeting.

### **Important Deadline Dates for Chapters:**

1. COL Marvin J Harris Communication Award for Calendar Year 2019 (print, e-newsletter and website) Submission: NLT 1 February 2020
2. TN Veterans Day on Hill: 5 February 2020
3. MOAA Community Outreach Grants Submission NLT 29 February 2020
4. MOAA Levels of Excellence Award (LOE): Membership data in CM can be updated as late as 31 March. Submission NLT 30 April 2020
5. IRS 990 due NLT May 2020
6. MOAA National Meeting will be held in Kansas City, MO on 23 October 2020.
7. MOAA Chapter Leaders Training Workshop will be held 13-14 November 2020. Invitations will be for (4) from each Chapter: President, Membership Chair, Legislative Chair, and Surviving Spouse Liaison. Invitations will be based on Committee Module assignments, so Chapters need to work to see that all (4) positions are filled for the new year.

### **Next Meeting**

Our next meeting is scheduled for **15 April 2020** at 11:00am at Sammy B's in Lebanon.

### **Future Meetings** - Mark Your Calendar!

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 12:30pm.

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