



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



**Minutes of the Meeting 20 April 22**

Tennessee Council of Chapters, MOAA met 20 April 2022 in-person at Sammy B's Restaurant

Chattanooga: Ray Atkins, Billy Hewitt, Carol Grohn,  
East Tennessee: No Representative  
Ft. Campbell: Ivan Adames, Eddie Sumbler, Eunice Sumbler, Monroe Gildersleeve,  
General Andrew Jackson: John Wade  
Memphis: John Dixon, Jim Thomasson, Kathy Desjarlais,  
Middle TN: Doug Minton, John Olinger  
Mountain Empire: No Representative  
Stones River: Pete Warner  
Sumner County: Steve Petersen  
Upper Cumberland: No Representative

The meeting did not have a guest speaker.

***MARK YOUR CALENDAR: 2022 MEETING INFORMATION IN THE MINUTES!***

Council President Ivan Adames began the meeting at 11:35 am.

Council Vice President Pete Warner led the pledge to the flag. Following the pledge allegiance to the flag. Chaplain Eddie Sumbler said a short prayer of opening the meeting and blessing the meals provided.

**Acceptance of Minutes**

An amended minutes of the 19 January 2022 meeting had been sent out on 14 February 2022 to all the chapter presidents and Council members. Kathy Desjarlais moved that the minutes be accepted as amended. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

## **Financial Report**

John Dixon, Treasurer, delivered the financial report for the period of January 1, 2022 to March 31, 2022. The Council had no receipts during the quarter. The only expense was the annual invoice for our Zoom capability for \$163.76 Total funds on hand at the end of the quarter were \$6,503.48, which included restricted travel funds of \$1,150.0.

The Council accepted the Treasurer's Report.

Doug Minton reports that the Past President has a last duty to perform in accordance with Section 3, Article IV of the Tennessee Council of Chapters Bylaws approved 16 January 2019, I have performed a review of the Council's financial accounts in order certify the funds on hand effective this date.

I found no abnormalities in the determination of the funds on hand or in the accounting practices in use by CAPT John Dixon, Treasurer for the period 1 January 2020 through 31 March 2022, and accordingly certify the ending balance of \$6503.48.

## **Surviving Spouse Report**

The following report was provided by Mrs. Patricia Bergquist, the Council Surviving Spouse representative.

TN COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS  
SURVIVING SPOUSE REPORT  
April 20, 2022

Chapter Presidents are requested to update their Chapter Surviving Spouse Liaison information (name, phone, and e-mail address) with Patricia. Please e-mail your information to p\_bergq@hotmail.com so Patricia can communicate with your Surviving Spouse Liaison about legislative issues impacting surviving spouses.

H.R.2214 and S.1669 - "Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act" would allow for retention of the full final month's retired pay by the surviving spouse or other designated survivor, of a military retiree for the month in which the member was alive for at least 24 hours.

The legislation would allow for repayment over a 12-month period and gives the Secretary of Defense the option to forgive the payment.

*H.R.2214 has 40 co-sponsors (2 from TN: Cohen and DesJarlais)  
S.1669 has 7 co-sponsors with NONE from TN*

Please contact your Congressman and Senators for co-sponsorship for H.R. 2214 and S.1669 as this bill is important for all "future" military surviving spouses.

H.R.3402 and S.976 – “Caring for Survivors Act of 2021” are to improve and expand eligibility for the DIC Increase from 43% of a single, 100% disabled veteran’s compensation to 55%. The 2022 DIC rate is \$1,437.66 per month.

Please contact your Congressman and Senators for co-sponsorship:

*H.R.3402 has 60 co-sponsors (2 from TN: Steve Cohen and Jim Cooper)  
S.976 has 12 with co-sponsors NONE from TN*

H.R.2827 - CAPT James C. Edge Gold Star Spouse Equity Act “Remarriage Bill 2021” has 23 co-sponsors with NONE from TN.

Surviving military spouses are not allowed to remarry before the arbitrary age of 55 without losing ALL their benefits. Only 7.4% (30,045) of surviving spouse DIC recipients are under the age of 56. The Gold Star Equity Act seeks to correct this injustice by preventing the termination of benefits to a surviving spouse due to remarriage. A Senate companion bill is in progress. Please contact your Congressman for co-sponsorship for H.R. 2827

H.R. 6849 - “Supporting All Veterans Families Act” has 3 co-sponsors with NONE from TN. This act would update certain terminology related to marriage under Title 38, US Code Section 101(3) and Section 5120(b) administered by the VA. It is understood that the language has not been updated since inception, and the terminology is archaic and should be removed. No other federal survivor program or beneficiary has inference of marriage.

Please contact your Congressman for co-sponsorship of H.R.6849

The *most active* surviving spouses Face Book groups following these bills are:

- “Military Widows: SBP/DIC Offset”
- “Supporting All Veteran Families Act”
- “Military Survivors DFAS/SBP Issues”
- “DIC Surviving Spouses/DIC Increase Advocacy”

### **TNVET Update**

Doug Minton reads the Press release:

News Release From Tennessee Veterans (TNVET - <https://tnvet.org/> )

Wednesday, April 27, 2022

Nashville, TN – On April 19, 2022, Gov. Lee signed into law a bill that will ensure Tennessee veteran spouses and families can rightfully obtain federal survivor benefits they may qualify for when COVID, or other pandemic, is a contributory cause in the veteran’s death.

The issue for Tennessee and the nation has been when a veteran passes from COVID-19 and service-connected disabilities were a contributing factor, this vital information may not be documented on the death certificate. When this happens, the qualified surviving spouse, child, or parent of a service member who died in the line of duty, or the survivor of a veteran who died from a service-related injury or illness, may not be able to receive the monetary benefit called Veteran Administration Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). Thus, a time-consuming effort begins to correct the death certificate from just listing COVID (or other disease) to reflect all factors that may have contributed to the death.

This important bill, as proposed by the veteran organization “Tennessee Veterans” (TNVET), was a collaborative between TNVET, Tennessee legislators and the Tennessee Medical Association. The bill (HB2220/SB2306) carried by Rep. Jason Hodges (Clarksville/Montgomery County) and Sen Heidi Campbell (Nashville/Davidson County) passed by unanimous vote in the state legislature. ( <https://wapp.capitol.tn.gov/apps/BillInfo/Default.aspx?BillNumber=HB2220> )

Efforts at the US Congressional level (S.89 - Ensuring Survivor Benefits during COVID-19 Act of 2021 - <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/senate-bill/89> ) to address this issue have been stalled for a year. The federal bill is also reactive in its approach to address the problem; it only fixes the death certificate after the documentation error occurs. Whereas the Tennessee law is proactive enabling the family to immediately notify and provide the medical attendees documentation that shows the patient is a veteran with service-connected conditions upon entering a medical facility. This action can assist the attending physicians in treatment and documentation actions. Tennessee’s efforts to address this problem for its veterans makes it one of the few, if not the only, state to take such proactive legislative action.

DIC is a vital financial benefit potentially providing monthly monetary payments of several hundred to several thousand dollars. TNVET brings public awareness to this vital VA benefit via news releases, Veteran Service Organizations, and social media. Signing this legislation in to law is only the beginning, we must now make known to those deserving this benefit. TNVET asks that anyone filing for DIC, please contact their local County or State accredited Veterans Service Officer.

### **Separate Legislative Update**

Chris Dooley, Col, USAF, (Ret) of the Chattanooga chapter briefed on the effort in the legislature to update the non-profit liability laws to limit or eliminate legal liability for the directors of the non-profits 501 (c) (19), which are military or veteran related organizations. He stated that he expected that this would be passed without difficulty as there was good support for this change in the state legislature.

**Guest Speaker:** No guest speaker

## **Advocacy in Action (legislative)**

Jim Thomasson - AIA Chairman spoke on TN AIA Team to visit each TN U.S. Senators and the nine TN District U.S. Congressional Representative.

**BACKGROUND:** The Military Officers Association of America had a signature program called “Storming the Hill”. This involved bringing representatives from each state to Washington DC to visit every member of Congress, House AND Senate, in a single day with information from MOAA’s legislative staff. This effort has been instrumental in gaining significant support for issues affecting military members, retired members and their families. When the pandemic ended the opportunity for in person visits, attempts to establish virtual connections have been developed

**CURRENT SITUATION:** MOAA is developing a program to expand its visibility to Congressional members through virtual links that can be accessed by all MOAA members, called Advocacy in Action. As with any Congressional contact, it’s the numbers that count, and there will be an opportunity for every member to join in on virtual conferences during the month of April. TN team members are also encouraged to make contact with their representatives while they are in their home districts over the spring break.

**DISCUSSION:** The 2022 AIA event will be held virtually from April 1-29. Based on Capitol Hill security measures and nationwide health challenges, we will again exercise appropriate measures of caution to bring our messages to legislators via virtual engagements.

This year’s advocacy topics:

- **Support the Major Richard Star Act (concurrent receipt for combat-injured servicemembers)** This legislation impacts over 50,000 combat-injured service members who were not able to serve their full 20 years due to those injuries. Passage of this bill will also impact current and future members who may face the same fate of early retirements due to combat injuries.
- **Reduce TRICARE Mental Health Copayments** MOAA supports the Stop Copay Overpay Act ([H.R. 4824](#)) – mental health is increasingly important, and the issue is getting attention on the Hill due to pandemic impacts and the effects of social media on children’s well-being. This topic acknowledges the national shortfall of access to quality mental health care and addresses TRICARE’s financial barrier to care when it is available – a problem MOAA can help fix. This legislation will benefit our currently serving families on TRICARE Select and our working-age retirees and their families.
- **Enact an appropriate Military Pay Raise [in keeping with the impact of inflation] in the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)** This will be worked in the FY 2023

NDAAs with insights in the president's budget and input from the Armed Services Committees in both chambers. Some legislators are interested in [adjusting pay tables for the junior enlisted](#).

#### NEXT STEPS:

**Stay Informed.** Be sure to subscribe to the weekly *MOAA Newsletter* for the latest AIA news and updates. Keep up with all the latest advocacy news at [MOAA's Advocacy News page](#).

Visit the MOAA website and navigate to the Advocacy in Action page to find out about virtual conferences and legislative visits to make your voice heard. Remember that its numbers as well as the message that counts.

#### MOAA discussion

1. **MOAA National is 93-year-old** as of February 2022.
2. Congratulations to Middle TN Chapter for being selected to assist in the **MOAA USAA Community Outreach Program** – a 100 Car Nation-wide Give-A-Way (refurbish vehicle) to prospective qualifying veterans (11 cars for Nashville / TN Greater Area).
3. CDR Adames highly suggest all Chapters to submit their inputs for the **MOAA Levels of Excellence Award** – deadline May 01, 2022.
4. **Blue Angels Airshow in Memphis** (18-19 June) is good opportunity for recruiting potential members and for MOAA brand exposure.
5. **Revitalization of the East TN (Knoxville) Chapter (TN02)** Looking set up a small group to re-recruit members in Knoxville area (possible overnight visit). **Blue Angels Airshow** in 10/11 September at the Knoxville Airport)

#### Transfer of Responsibilities of Council Officers for 2022-2023 Term

The transfer of responsibilities and with signatures took place at Regions Bank on April 20, 2022 in-person. The Second Vice President volunteer is still needed, as well as an appointed position of secretary still needs a volunteer.

#### Other Chapter Business:

- The MOAA Levels of Excellence Awards submissions deadline is May 1, 2022. Suggestion for all Chapter to submit for the LOE awards.
- Ivan Adames shared some items from **MOAA online store** some lapel pins for new recruited chapter members and some MOAA shirts.

- Ivan Adames suggested and recommended after the meeting for the TN CoC submit for MOAA LOE Award.
- Later in May to submitted Patricia Bergquist from Middle TN Chapter, for the nomination for Surviving Spouse Liaison Award, and also the Team of Steve Singleton & Bill Summers, from the Fort Campbell Chapter, for the nominations for COL Steve Strobridge Legislative Award.

## **Chapter Updates**

### **Memphis – Written update not provided.**

Kathy Desjarlais comments...

- Last month the Chapter will restart in-person meeting.
- Members to help sponsor dinners for the homeless veterans.
- Legislation for homeless veterans.

### **Ft Campbell – Thomasa Ross: written commented as follows:**

The Fort Campbell Chapter continues its in-person and virtual monthly luncheon meetings

**February 2022** – Chapter participated in Veterans Day on the Hill February 22, 2022 in Nashville, Tennessee.

1. February 19, 2022 Virtual Meeting - Our guest speakers were Nick Nicholson (President - Executive Director) and Dr. Tyler Nolting (Director of Education and Engagement) of Mt. Olive Cemetery Historical Preservation Society. The mission of the Mt. Olive Cemetery Historical Preservation Society is to emphasize the influence and contributions of African-Americans regarding the history, education, development, growth and culture of the Clarksville, Tennessee area. As of November 2020, the Mt. Olive Cemetery is now listed on The National Register of Historic Places.
2. Chapter members attended the seventh annual Operation Stand Down Tennessee Heroes Breakfast (Thursday, February 10, 2022). This event sponsored by the Maynard family, was a fundraiser for the nonprofit organization that connects veterans and their families with services that focus on transition, employment, housing, benefits, engagement, volunteerism and connection to the community. The Keynote speaker was Noah Galloway, who served in the Army with the 502<sup>nd</sup> Infantry, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. Galloway was deployed during Operation Iraqi Freedom and lost his left arm above the elbow and left leg above the knee after an IED attack.

3. On February 26, 2022, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Fort Campbell Chapter member, CW4 Joe Shakeenab, USA (Ret) participated in the reenactment at Fort Donelson National Battlefield. They fired muzzle loaders and discussed how Black Soldiers supported the Union Army during the Civil War.
4. Chapter member CW4 Ritter, USA (Ret) who is the conductor for Cumberland Winds performed a Cumberland Winds Black History Month Program at the Roxy Theatre (Wednesday, February 23, 2022).

**March 2022** – Chapter participated in MOAA’s annual Advocacy in Action (AiA) Virtual Training

1. Chapter members attended the Christian County (Kentucky) Military Affairs Committee Annual Eagle Ambassador Breakfast (Wednesday, March 2, 2022). The keynote speaker was COL Stephen Shrader, Chief of Staff, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division. Our Chapter is a member of the Christian County Chamber of Commerce and is a Military Affairs Eagle Ambassador.
2. Chapter members attended the S.A.F.E. Breakfast (Thu., March 10, 2022) S.A.F.E is a local nonprofit organization that delivers mental health services to those who serve, those who served, and the families that continue to support them. United States Congressman Mark Green was the guest speaker.
3. Chapter member CW4 Ritter, USA (Ret) who is the conductor for Cumberland Winds performed a Jazz Project at the Roxy Theatre. (Wednesday, March 30, 2022)

**April 2022** – April 16, 2022 In-Person Luncheon Business Meeting – Tennessee State Senator Bill Power was our guest speaker. He discussed and answered questions on many legislative issues involving veterans.

1. Participated in JROTC award ceremonies in Clarksville-Montgomery County School System (Tennessee) and Christian County (Kentucky)
2. Participated in ROTC award ceremony at Austin Peay State University
3. Chapter members supported the Fort Campbell Spouses Club V.I.C.E. Night (Saturday, April 2, 2022) as many Chapter member spouses are members. V.I.C.E stands for Very Important Charity Event. The Fort Campbell Spouses’ Club is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of life for military families and the surrounding families and the surrounding communities. All money raised at V.I.C.E. Night and other events throughout the year goes toward giving back to the community through scholarships and welfare grants.
4. Chapter members attended the Commanding General Turkey Hunt at Lake Kyle at Ft. Campbell (Saturday, April 9, 2022).
5. During our April 16, 2022 Chapter Luncheon Meeting the following awards were presented: 3 MOAA Leadership Awards and 2 MOAA Outstanding Service Awards. Senator Bill Powers read and presented a resolution to a Chapter member who was a 2021 Governor’s Volunteer Stars Award Honoree.

6. Chapter President attended and supported Fort Campbell High School JROTC Ball at the request of the JROTC department (Friday, April 29, 2022)

The Chapter President is still working on connecting with the Tennessee contact in regards to the Purple Star Program and will brief Kentucky Council of Chapters at next meeting.

**Mountain Empire – Written update not provided.**

**East Tennessee (Knoxville) - Written update not provided**

**General Andrew Jackson – Written update not provided.**

**John Wade comments as follows:**

- Chapter struggled through the COVID period.
- Attendance did drop from mid-20's to mid-teens.
- Beginning to do in-person meeting in July.
- To have MOAA speaker in August.

**Middle Tennessee – Doug Minton: commented as follows:**

- Our January program was our annual year in review of 2021. Our February program featured Metro Police Chief John Drake. Our March program featured a Veterans Service Officer (Jeff Vaughan, USMC) from Williamson County, and our April program will feature Dr. Jackie Pair (CSM USA) a Vocational Specialist from the Nashville VA.
- We submitted three Community Outreach Grant requests in Feb and are awaiting final decisions from MOAA later this month.
- Our chapter was selected by MOAA to participate in a joint USAA/NABC 100 Car Giveaway campaign. Nomination requests have been sent out to gather candidates.

- We are in the midst of ROTC/JROTC presentation season, with 3 ROTC and 14 JROTC certificates to present.
- We will submit our 10<sup>th</sup> LOE package to MOAA in a few days.
- We are in the process of a thorough review of our Chapter Bylaws.
- We are experiencing some difficulty filling leadership positions this year. Fortunately, we have had several officers willing to cover multiple roles this year.

**Upper Cumberland – Written update not provided**

**Sumner County – Written update not provided.**

**Steve Petersen: commented as follows:**

- We had a total of two monthly dinner meetings, one zoom meeting. For one of the dinner meetings, we had a MSGT attend, be our guest speaker and do an excellent presentation what to be done when a passing of a spouse.
- We did still participate in and present scholarships and National MOAA certificates to members of our three JROTC high schools.

**Stones River – Pete Warner: Written update provided as follows**

- New President - (COL) Betty Moshea; New 1VP - (CW4) Keith Prather
- March Meeting Guest Speaker - LTC Aric Raus, MOAA Board Member
- March Meeting Donation to Hazel and Charlie Daniels Veterans Transition Center at MTSU
- April 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting Guest Speaker - MG Tommy Baker, TN Dept. of Veterans Services
- 
- Chapter strength at 88 members
- Chapter is supporting 11 JROTC and MTSU ROTC with MOAA Leadership awards presentations
- Chapter members have recently begun volunteering at the USO at the Nashville Airport with President Betty Moshea taking the lead.

**Chattanooga – Carol Grohn written comments as follows:**

Two important things we accomplished in 2022

- Are completion of the rewritten, updated, redesigned Membership Directory and our By-Laws. It contains our mission and purpose, lists all of the officers and board members and contact information, lists past chapter presidents since 1977, lists member of the year awards, lists the Charles H. Coolidge Medal of Honor Veteran of the Year Awardees since 1989; provides a brief history of the Chattanooga Chapter, lists deceased chapter members and surviving spouses since 20 July 2018, and contains a roster with each members names and contact information, and our new By-Laws that we updated just this year.
- In Dec 2021, Chattanooga's MOAA continued the tradition of Salvation Army bell ringing, Veterans Day ceremonies and wreath laying at the National Cemetery occurred. Our chapter donated \$500 to Wreaths Across Chattanooga and an Additional \$500 to Salvation Army.
- Our last reported total members = 164; of those 29 are regular emeritus, 13 are surviving spouses, 5 are surviving spouse emeritus, and 6 are member spouses.
- At our December gala, we helped 2LT Cline celebrate his 102nd Birthday which was actually on Jan 20, 2022. His lovely wife Libby and three children attended. In honor of Bo's service as a WWII veteran pilot and surviving POW, Freedom Sings USA and her crew and professional musicians out of Nashville prepared a video taken during a special interview. One can play the youtube at <https://youtu.be/Aw3aKnjxN38>
- LTC Ray Adkins presented Bo with a MOAA polo shirt and our chapter gave him our chapter coin.
- On May 6th, 2022, we will have our 73rd annually continuous Chattanooga Armed Forces Day Parade followed by a luncheon at the convention center with local military speaker.
- Every year our Scholarship Chair engages high school and collegiate ROTC and JROTC Cadets and spearheads the competition for scholarship dollars for 4 cadets at \$1000 each. The success of this mission is dependent on the generosity of our members/guests. Since 1996, our COL Wm L. Ray Memorial Scholarship Program has awarded 74 merit scholarships for a total value of \$92,800.
- On February 22, 2022, Our Chattanooga Chapter of MOAA had a national visit by CAPT Frank Michael. He spoke about MOAA National's relationships with all the chapters, issues facing MOAA as a whole, legislative successes and local chapter initiatives. He discussed best practices concepts and advised that we apply for LOE, which we have done. In the end, he described our chapter as a very good one with sound succession practices. At that meeting we also held installation of officers and our new board, who were inducted by a local judge.

- At our most recent dinner meeting attended by 55, we hosted 3 of 7 military academy appointees & their parents 4/26/2022. MG Bill Raines informed us about the history and significance of challenge coins before giving one to each appointee. Our official speakers for the evening were two local police (asst chief and patrol officer and canine officer). The patrol officer was a LTC USA (Ret) with Canine Officer QUEST.
- Legislative success for our chapter: A big issue for our Chapter this year was director liability coverage. After researching the issue, we worked closely with our Tennessee Senator and others to initiate legislation to extend to IRS 501(c)19 military organizations such as ours the Tennessee law on liability coverage that exists for IRS 501(c)3 organizations. Reviewing our most recent Newsletter issue (Mar/Apr 2022) under the Legislative Affairs section, besides the above matter that our Chapter (specifically COL Chris Dooley and company) initiated, we have a plethora of other topics related to pay, TRICARE, pharmacy benefit, barriers to proper health care, housing, PCS, childcare, youth programs, financial counseling, toxic exposure, protection of honors at Arlington National Cemetery for those allowed, etc.

### **Conclusion of Meeting**

Chaplain Eddie Sumbler ended the meeting with a closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned about 13:35 CST.

### **Next Meetings and Future Events**

1. **MOAA Virtual Monthly Roundtable of Chapter Leaders: (all at 7 pm EST)**  
     **April 28, Crisis Relief Grant Program**  
     **May 26, Media Exposure/October Military Officer Issue**  
     **June 30, Recruiting**  
     **July 28, Event Planning**
2. **\*\*MOAA Level of Excellence Award Submissions due no later than May 01, 2022**
3. **Col. Steve Strobridge Legislative Award Nomination submission due by June 01**
4. **Surviving Liaison Spouse Excellence Award Nomination due by June 01**
5. **\*\*Council Presidents/Independent Chapter Presidents virtual meeting, May 25, 2:00 PM EST**
6. **\*\*\*Mid-Atlantic Leadership Training Workshop - Raleigh, N.C. (August 12-13)**
7. **\*\*\*MOAA National Annual LOE Conference, Kansas City, KS - (October 27-28)**

Our next meeting is scheduled for **October 19, 2022** at 11:00. The meeting will likely be in-person, but the decision has not been made.

**Future Meetings – at Sammy B’s or on Zoom!**

TN CoC Meeting:	19 October 2022
TN CoC Meeting	18 January 2023
TN CoC Meeting:	19 April 2023
TN CoC Meeting:	19 July 2023
TN CoC Meeting:	18 October 2023

Minutes prepared and submitted by Ivan Adames, President.