



Tennessee Council of Chapters
Military Officers Association of America



Minutes of the Meeting 19 January 22

Tennessee Council of Chapters, MOAA met 19 January 2022 via Zoom.

Chattanooga: John Davenport, Ray Atkins, Billy Hewitt, Carol Grohn, Chris Dooley

East Tennessee: No Representative

Ft. Campbell: Ivan Adames, Eddie Sumbler, Monroe Gildersleeve, Bill Summers, Joe Shakeenab

General Andrew Jackson: J. D. Rottero

Memphis: John Dixon, Jim Thomasson, Kathy Desjarlais,

Middle TN: Doug Minton, Ted Edwards, Patricia Bergquist

Mountain Empire: Don Thompson

Stones River: Pete Warner

Sumner County: Steve Petersen

Upper Cumberland: Laughlin Kelly

The meeting did not have a guest speaker.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR: 2022 MEETING INFORMATION IN THE MINUTES!

Council President Jim Thomasson began the meeting at 11:05 am.

Council Vice President Ivan Adames led the pledge to the flag. Following the pledge allegiance to the flag, the traditional Navy Two Bell ceremony was held to remember those Council and Chapter members and their spouses who have passed away in the last two years. The names of 30 people were read by Council President Thomasson and noted by the ringing of the bell by Vice President Adames. The list of the names with the date of passing and related chapter are included in an attachment to the minutes. Council President Thomasson said a short prayer at the conclusion of the reading the names.

Acceptance of Minutes

An amended minutes of the 20 October 2022 meeting had been sent out on 14 November 2021 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 October 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021. 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.

Surviving Spouse Report

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

TN COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS SURVIVING SPOUSE REPORT January 19, 2022

Section One: The second part of the SBP/DIC Offset Phase Out effective January 2022 will be received in the February SBP payment. DFAS sent letters in December providing impacted surviving spouses an "estimated benefit" of what to expect in the February SBP payment.

Annuitant Statements and 1099R are available in the individual "My Pay" accounts on the DFAS website.

Again, if there is still confusion, please call Patricia at 615-948-4960. Alternately, surviving spouses may text their name, phone number, identity as a surviving spouse, and she will call them.

The *most active* surviving spouses Facebook groups:

- "Military Widows: SBP/DIC Offset"
- "DIC Surviving Spouses and Friends"
- "HR2827 Remarriage Bill 2021"
- "Military Survivors DFAS/SBP Issues"
- "DIC Surviving Spouses/DIC Increase Advocacy"

Section Two: **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 39 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.

Section Three: **H.R.3402** and **S.976** 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.

Note: A new Facebook page, “DIC Surviving Spouses/DIC Increase Advocacy”, has been established to advocate for these bills. To participate, request to join the group.

Please contact your Congressman and Senators for co-sponsorship:

H.R.3402 — *Caring for Survivors Act of 2021*
Co-sponsors: 42 – with two from TN (Steve Cohen and Jim Cooper)

S.976 — *Caring for Survivors Act of 2021*
Co-sponsors: 10 with NONE from TN

Section Four: **H.R.2827** CAPT James C. Edge Gold Star Spouse Equity Act “Remarriage Bill 2021” has 22 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

TNVET Update

Doug Minton deferred to Bill Summers who has been very active in TNVET planning for 2022. Bill briefed that TNVET is working the same 4 issues that they have been focused on in recent years:

For the 2022 legislative session, TNVET will be proposing the same four (4) bills below, as described by Doug Minton at our last Council meeting in October 2021:

1. Electronic Voting for Active Duty. Legislation to allow a pilot program to test electronic voting for active-duty military and civilians deployed overseas (includes National Guard and Reserves) service members.

2. Medical Marijuana. Legislation to allow the medical prescribing and usage. Studies report that medical cannabis has possible benefit for several conditions often experienced by veterans due to their military duty.

3. COVID-DIC – Request legislation to require coroners and physicians who fill out death certificates for veterans to review VA disability status to determine relationship between veteran’s death and service-connected disability.

4. Restoring 2nd Free of Charge Disabled Veteran License Plate. Second free plate was removed in the 2014 legislative session. Veterans who qualified for the current one free plate would be restored the privilege to automatically qualify for a free second plate, if needed.

TNVET is also working to increase the property tax exemption for 100% disabled veterans from \$175,000 to \$250,000. He stated this update would recognize the inflation of recent years and bring the exemption back in line with current prices.

The TNVET Legislative Day is scheduled for 2 February 2022.

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

Swearing In of Council Officers for 2022-2023 Term

The slate of officers for the Tennessee Council of Chapters was sworn in by Don Thompson, USAF, Col, (Ret), a current member of the national board of directors of MOAA:

- President – Ivan Adames of the Ft Campbell chapter
- First Vice President – Pete Warner of the Stones River chapter
- Second Vice President – no nomination. A volunteer is still needed

The appointed position of Treasurer will be filled by Monroe Gildersleeve of the Ft Campbell chapter. The transfer is expected in April 2022 when the board can meet in-person. The appointed position of secretary still needs a volunteer.

Other Chapter Business:

- The communications awards deadline is February 1, 2022.
- Doug Minton provided an email address from MOAA for ordering presentation materials at <https://.estore.shop/>. This is a temporary address. He was assured by MOAA national that they are working to get the permanent store open as soon as possible.
- Doug Minton also advised that chapter members who have a strong interest in supporting charitable organizations, those approved 501(c) 3 and 501(c) 19 entities that include your MOAA Chapter, should read the IRS rules contained in IRS Publication 590-B (2020). Members who are over 70 1/2 and must meet Minimum Distribution Requirements (MDRs) may receive a tax benefit as well as increase their charitable support via a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD). ***This should not be construed as financial planning advice***; however, it may be worth looking into by your membership.
- Ivan Adames later advised after the meeting that the Fort Campbell Chapter did make and did receive their ordered JROTC/ROTC Presentation materials in December before the New Year 2022. I checked the website, on January 20th; they are out of the JROTC certificates but do have the medals, ROTC certificates and folders.

Chapter Updates

Memphis – Written update not provided.

Ft Campbell – Ivan Adames: commented as follows:

In November,

- Chapter participated in the local Veterans Parade and showed its' presence at the USMC/MCL Birthday Ball.
- At the Chapter luncheon, at the Pioneer Complex in Hopkinsville, KY. Election of new chapter officers. Welcomed Jimmy Wiesner, of Team Red, White Blue, as an Honorary Chapter Member.
- Presented ***Bravo Zulu Awards*** to two Chapter members; and a framed poem titled ***“Warrior”*** to a Chapter spouse.

In December, the Chapter showed its' presence Gander Memorial Ceremony in Hopkinsville, KY.

- Participated in the Ceremonial wreath laying at Wealth Across America at two cemeteries.
- Volunteered in assisting with the *Great Gift Give Away* at the USO.
- At the Chapter Christmas meeting luncheon at the Clarksville Area Realtor (CAR) Building.
- Also, It's our Army/Navy pre-game face-off challenge.
- Presented **Bravo Zulu Awards** to three Chapter members; and a framed poem titled "**Warrior**" to five Chapter spouse.

In January,

- The Chapter showed a strong presence at the **Annual Mayors' Power Breakfast** with twenty Chapter members.
- At the Chapter Luncheon at the Oakland Manor in Hopkinsville, KY, Duly installed the **2022 Chapter Officers:**

President	CPT Thomasa Ross, USA (Fm
1 st r) V.P.	CW4 Joe Shakeenab, USA (Ret)
2 nd V.P.	CW4 Brian Lynch, USA (Ret)

Completed Events:

MOAA Marvin J. Harris Communication Award submission – **Completed**

Up Coming Events:

- TNVET on the State Capitol Hill (Wed, Feb 02, 2022)
- OSDTN Heroes Breakfast - Clarksville (Thu, Feb 10, 2022)
- Eagle Ambassador Breakfast – Hopkinsville, KY (Wed, Mar 02, 2022)
- S.A.F.E. Breakfast (Thu, Mar 10, 2022)
- Veterans EXPO - VA Clinic (Wed, Mar 30, 2022)
- Fort Campbell Spouse Club V.I.C.E. NIGHT – Bruce Convention Center, Hopkinsville (Sat, Apr 2, 2022)
- CG's Annual Turkey Hunt – Fort Campbell reservation (Apr 2022)

Mountain Empire – Don Thompson (had to leave the meeting before updates were given)

General Andrew Jackson – Written update not provided.

Middle Tennessee – Doug Minton: commented as follows:

- New leadership team will take effect on 25 January 2022 at our January meeting. Our new President will be Lt. Col. Karon Uzzell-Baggett (ret), USAF. We have two unfilled positions as of this time for the upcoming term of office (1st VP and Treasurer).
- Our January meeting will focus on the presentation of our Annual Report and provide the general membership an opportunity to provide input on the direction of the Chapter
- As of 19 January, we have 249 members, which includes 4 new members that we have already picked up in 2022.
- We raised over \$8000 in scholarship contributions in 2021. This amount funded a \$1000 one-time scholarship for Veterans at Belmont and Lipscomb Universities. It also provided funds to continue to build on endowed scholarships at Lipscomb University, and for the MOAA Scholarship Fund (we are working on our fourth endowed MOAA scholarship).

Upper Cumberland – Laughlin Kelly

- Installed a new VP and two new (replacement) members to the board in Jan 22;
- Had each of our quarterly meetings in 2021. Each was well attended;
- Awarded one 2k scholarship in 2021 and donated \$1210.00 to Toys For Tots at Christmas;
- Oldest member of UCC, Ed Keyes, LtCol USMC (Ret), WWII vet, turned 97 on 18 Jan 22.

Sumner County – Steve Petersen: commented as follows:

- In 2021, we had a total of two monthly dinner meetings, one zoom meeting, and our Christmas Party. For one of the dinner meetings, in 10/2021, we had COL Donald Thompson, a member of National MOAA Board of Directors, attend and be our guest speaker.
- We did still participate in and present scholarships and National MOAA certificates to members of our three JROTC high schools.

- Over the last two years, we lost five active members of our chapter who passed, three of them were active or previous Chapter Board Members.

Stones River – Pete Warner: commented as follows

- New Chapter Officers: COL Betty Moshea (President) and CWO4 Keith Prather (1VP)
- We recently contracted with MERCER INSURANCE (as recommended by MOAA Nat'l) for Chapter Liability Insurance
- Great attendance at our last three dinner meetings, especially our Christmas program with nearly 55 attendees
- Current Chapter membership stands at 88 voting members

Chattanooga – Written update not provided:

Conclusion of Meeting

Chaplain Eddie Sumbler ended the meeting with a closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned about 12:20 CST.

Next Meetings and Future Events

Our next meeting is scheduled for **20 April 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:	20 July 2022
TN CoC Meeting:	19 October 2022

Minutes prepared and submitted by Jim Thomasson, President.