



Tennessee Council of Chapters Military Officers Association of America



Minutes of the Meeting 12 April 2017

Tennessee Council of Chapters, MOAA met 12 April 2017 at the Ward Agriculture Center, Building E in Lebanon, TN with 21 members present as follows:

Chattanooga: Billy Hewitt, Chris Dooley, Carol Grohn

East Tennessee: No Representative

Ft. Campbell: Ivan Adames, Warren Evans, Bill Summers, Steve Singleton,
Howard French, Tim Powers

General Andrew Jackson: John Lloyd, John Wade, Jim Perkinson

Memphis: Kathy Desjarlais, Jim Thomasson, John Dixon

Middle TN: Doug Minton, Patricia Bergquist, John Olinger, Kent Crossley

Mountain Empire: No Representative

Stones River: Jim Parks, Gail Tharpe

Sumner County: No Representative

Upper Cumberland: No Representative

IMPORTANT! JULY 2017 MEETING INFORMATION IN THE MINUTES!

We were delighted to have Mrs. Nancy Evans, Chapter Auxiliary Liaison for the Ft. Campbell Chapter and spouse of Warren Evans, as our guest at this meeting.

LCDR Kathy Desjarlais called the meeting to order at 11:00am and welcomed everyone. Jim Dixon delivered our opening prayer and Kathy led the pledge to the flag.

Kathy reported that Mark Pfaffenroth had stepped down as Chapter President due to family medical issues. The 1st Vice President, Jack Miller, has stepped up as Interim President. Please keep Mark and his family in your prayers.

Jim Thomasson, Treasurer, reported that we neither received nor expended any funds and \$6,179.98 is our current balance. Motion made and seconded to approve the report.

Minutes of the January 2017 meetings were accepted. Remember meeting minutes do not require motions and approval only acceptance.

Bill Summers reported that the Governor's Gas Tax Bill and the Veterans Property Tax Bill have been thrown together. The House has separated the Veterans Property Tax Bill out of the Gas Tax Bill but not the Senate. Both House and Senate raised the property tax value exclusion to \$135,000 versus \$175,000. We have to get away from the Gas Tax Bill! The Veteran's Caucus sent a strongly worded letter to Representatives stating that it was despicable to include veterans in the Gas Tax Bill.

The Veterans Preference for Hiring in the Private Sector Bill has gone to the Governor.

The heat is on over the next couple of weeks. They will be asking for e-mails to be sent to Representatives requesting support for restoration of the property tax value exclusion to \$175,000 for handicapped, 100% disabled veterans.

TVET will work to pull veteran organizations under one umbrella for political purposes. The legislators will have moved into a remodeled building with more meeting space by TN Veterans Day on the Hill 2018. They are working with the Tennessee Veteran Affairs Office.

Mid-summer there will be a meeting to work on TVET. Copies of the constitution will be sent out. Doug Minton stated that once a funding model is established, we need to be ready to step-up, if a reasonable model. Bill explained how the KY model works and it has been functioning for 50 years.

Steve Singleton offered that the biggest concern after Veterans Day on the Hill is what means of communication can be used to blast for "Take Action" on an issue? As bills happen now, there is a 48 hour window to reach out and respond.

Join FaceBook: "Veterans Day on the Hill" that was used to provide latest information as quickly as possible. An e-mail list is being created by Sherry Pickering. Kathy stated that the Memphis Chapter has a FaceBook page which has 1 member and 1 spouse who is not a member on it. In their chapter, only half have e-mail.

Kathy thanked Doug Minton for getting all the e-mails out about the meeting while she was in D.C. She reported that MOAA Insurance Plans through Mercer offers chapters an opportunity to receive \$100 if you agree to put their ad in your newsletter or on your website during the year. The original deadline was Saturday, April 15th, but it is now extended to April 30th. This was also in The Affiliate newsletter and every chapter should have someone to receive and handle the newsletter. Doug will forward The Affiliate to John Wade.

Two things are to be updated with MOAA National every year: 1) Chapter Roster and 2) Chapter Officers. General Andrew Jackson Chapter does not have a Roster update. Jim Perkinson stated that they have never gotten the file. Kathy will contact Victoria Twyne in Council and Chapter Affairs.

Ft. Campbell belongs to two State Councils and all reporting goes to the KY Council. Congratulations to Ft. Campbell Chapter on their 5 Star Communication Award. Also, congratulations to the Chattanooga Chapter on the 4 Star Communication Award for their newsletter. MOAA will mail their ribbon.

The April issue of Military Officer Magazine has postcards to mail to Senators/Congressmen. Be sure to pull those and mail them.

Ray Adkins, who is in the hospital due to a possible heart attack, was the recipient of the "Charles H. Coolidge Veteran of the Year Award" from the Chattanooga Area Veterans Council.

Senator Mark Green, Ft. Campbell Chapter, has been nominated for Secretary of the Army.

Kathy reported that the change on the Hill affected success in getting appointments with Representatives. We were able to meet with Congressmen Blackburn and Fleischman. Kathy will meet with Representative Kustoff in August. Congressman Roe is the newest co-sponsor on H.R. 846.

A good address was delivered by Secretary of Veteran Affairs, David Shulkin, at lunch on Tuesday, April 4th. He seemed frustrated with changing the Federal process to fire problem employees. He is working to extend the Choice Act Program.

MOAA is planning to hold a Regional Conference (AL, AR, KY, LA, MS, MO, and TN) in Memphis with an Icebreaker Reception on Friday, September 15th, and training Saturday, the 16th, from 8am to 12pm. They are in the process of finalizing the location. Per Carol Robertson, MOAA Councils and Chapters, invitations will go out in June. Information from the MOAA database will be used to invite the Chapter Presidents, Membership Chairs, and Legislative Liaisons. The Chapter President and Membership Chair may send a substitute, but the Legislative Chair may not. SAVE THE DATE!

Level of Excellence (LOE) packages were submitted by Memphis and Middle TN Chapters. Effective immediately the LOE Award Ceremony will be every other year (next year 2018). This is driven by MOAA's money issue. Several recommendations were made at the meeting in DC on presentation of the award: 1) Council Presidents at the April Storming Meeting, 2) At Regional Conferences, and 3) by a MOAA National speaker at a Chapter/Council meeting. Terri Coles, Director of Council and Chapters, understands how Chapters feel about the change, but she has her marching orders.

Discussion ensued regarding MOAA National's money issue. Their investment funds have not performed as predicted. National staff is down to 84. The BUR cut 10% out of Council and Chapter Affairs and 90% out of the MOAA National budget.

Tennessee has 6,823 MOAA members with the majority at-large members. Half of retirees are 65 and older. 17,011 TN retirees are VA Offset and 20% of surviving spouses are SBP/DIC Offset. There is a push to get spouses more involved in chapters, especially Storming the Hill.

MOAA Military Family Initiative (MMFI) has grant funds up to \$25,000 available to help fund projects. See MOAA.org/foundation for details.

Doug Minton reported on our efforts at The National Guard Association Tennessee Conference (NGATN) on March 24 and 25, 2017 in Murfreesboro, TN. He thanked the Chapters whose chapter members participated by taking shifts on those days. He provided an overview on how we conducted the recruiting opportunity prior to 2015. In 2015, we employed a more proactive, up close and personal approach that resulted in 62 new BASIC MOAA memberships. We used the same model this year, and we obtained 58 new BASIC MOAA memberships (free, three year basic membership). MOAA provided 40 pieces of Stella and Dot jewelry, and Patricia conducted two drawings: one on Friday afternoon and another on Saturday mid-day. Winners were excited! After the conference, copies of the new BASIC membership cards were made and provided to each Chapter. This offers the chapters the opportunity to follow-up and possibly recruit these officers into their chapters.

Patricia reported on the Storming the Hill and the SBP/DIC issue. Three MOAA fact sheets, a State by State Analysis of Military Retirees and SBP Survivors at end of FY16, a List of H.R. 846 Co-sponsors, and a List of Tennessee Senators and Congressmen Staff Information were given to Council members.

On March 30 and 31, 12 surviving spouses and 5 Gold Star children walked the halls of Congress and visited 170 House and Senate Offices to explain the offset and request its repeal. Their efforts resulted in an increase in co-sponsors before MOAA stormers hit the Hill. MOAA is in their 16th year of lobbying for the repeal of the offset!

On April 5th, over 165 MOAA BoD and staff, Council Presidents, Currently Serving Council, Currently Serving Spouse Council, and Surviving Spouse Advisory Committee members stormed the Hill. The two top issues were: 1) Sequestration – end the harmful effects by supporting a bipartisan debt reduction package avoiding disproportionate penalties on DoD impacting servicemembers, retirees, and their families; and 2) The SBP/DIC Offset – Repeal the offset and, if not, then extend the SSIA 10 years with incremental increases to the monthly amount to impacted survivors. Congressmen and Senators were asked to co-sponsor legislation and engage senior House and Senate leaders, members of the Budget, Appropriations, and House Ways and Means Committee as solutions will require all their support. Legislation to repeal the offset are: **H.R. 846** with 76 co-sponsors and **S. 339** with 21 co-sponsors.

Stormers left behind a fact sheet on TRICARE to lay groundwork for the future. There is anticipation that DoD will propose premium and co-pay increases. Everyone was

encouraged to contact their Senators and Congressmen on these issues. We recommend a call followed by an e-mail. Then, wait several days and make a follow-up call. If you prefer, use the MOAA Capitol Switchboard toll-free number: **1-866-272-6622**, request operator to connect you to the office of your Senator or Congressman. Then, ask to speak with the Military Legislative Assistant or Legislative Assistant.

April 5th was declared Gold Star Spouses Day. 13 Gold Star spouses and 3 Gold Star children were invited to the White House to visit with Vice President Pence and Mrs. Pence. Then, they met with President Trump. MOAA "Storm the Hill" packets were given to both the President and Vice President. The SBP/DIC Offset was explained and Gold Star spouses were told the issue would be taken to their policy advisors.

Kathy reported that in Mobile, AL a parade truck with a MOAA banner on it ran through the band. It is recommended that if a chapter is going to be involved in a parade, etc. that they get liability insurance. MOAA is working with Mercer to get reasonable coverage.

Bill Summers and Billy Hewitt reported that local insurance companies have some reasonable coverage for an occurrence. It is important to protect yourself, the chapter, and the MOAA name!

As is the tradition of the TN Council, each Chapter President or representative shared an update of their Chapter recent activities as follows:

Chattanooga – Again, please keep Ray Adkins who is hospitalized due to a heart attack in your prayers. The chapter has a new coin which cost \$5 or \$7, if by mail. The JROTC Banquet will be held this month with 52 Cadets. Last year 142 attended. They expect about the same this year. There are four scholarships totaling \$4,000 to be presented at the Banquet. June 2017 will be the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. There will be a program and Vietnam veterans who served in-country will give a 5 minute talk from their time in Vietnam.

Ft. Campbell – Ivan Adames reported that one of their surviving spouses recently died. Senator Mark Green was scheduled to speak at their next meeting, but his schedule prevents it. So, Brooke Young will speak.

In May, they will host a dinner and present four scholarships (3 TN and 1 KY). Veterans Homecoming will be September 13-16. This will include the Veteran's Wall, LST 325 from Evansville, and Bill Robinson, POW, will speak on Friday. Several of the events will take place at The Winery. They helped with the WWI Centennial Proclamation.

If anyone would like to have MOAA Logo chapter ball caps, shirts, canvas brief cases, etc. made, Steve Singleton's e-mailed information on Queensboro is provided here:

Other than t-shirts & some "conference items" (like pens,), minimum order is **4 pieces**.

The offer below is for new customers and saves you the cost of logo set-up (usually \$25, he believes). MOAA Ft. Campbell Chapter logo is Design #16190128. If you call them or use the little icon to talk to a rep, give them the design number. Since the new MOAA logo is already set up, it may save you some time to have them change the chapter name.

Items shown on website are often not low price to high price, so browse. Sales happen on different items a couple times a week. They carry everything from their own line of clothing to higher fashion brands, men's and women's styles. Steve has been pleased with their merchandise quality with only one inferior item in his years of using the company.

With the offer below, you can try them out without investing a lot of money.

April 13, 2017

40% Custom Embroidered Apparel!

This is your chance to save big on custom embroidery by taking 40% off your order. We'll also throw in FREE shipping, logo setup and embroidery!

<http://www.queensboro.com/lin/NNMQREMNRSN/P17413>

Thanks for taking a look!

Fred Meyers, President and Founder

fred@queensboro.com

Gen. Andrew Jackson Chapter – John Wade reported that their President, Phil Ponder, was absent today due to a meeting with a Congressman. Their average attendance is up from 20 to 35. They participated with the Exchange Club on the Field of Honor at Hermitage. Scholarship program was reported on too.

Memphis – John Dixon reported they had installed new Board of Directors and Chapter Officers. They will soon have their 3rd luncheon meeting. They are trying to find what gets more members to the meetings. Further, they met with the Navy Nurses Association at their Spring meeting (TN, AR, MS, AL, and KY). JROTC/ROTC presentations continue with 19 presentations this year. Bylaws were updated and are now in place. An offsite Board Meeting was held to review what has or has not been done that could improve their chapter.

Middle TN Chapter – Doug Minton reported they are in the middle of JROTC/ROTC. One of each has been done and 14 more are coming up. This is the first year the chapter has had to buy award medals, but civic involvement is so important!

He highlighted the upcoming speakers for April, May, and June: CAPT Aileen Teague, LT Gary Slaughter, and Brigadier General Dan Cherry. The 7th OSD TN Annual Heroes Breakfast will be held August 18th at the Omni Hotel.

Stones River Chapter – Welcome back! Jim Parks reported their chapter is undergoing significant changes. They have replaced every officer. They have members presenting for JROTC. Their chapter elected not to purchase medals. One school system, Rutherford County, purchased their medals and called on Stones River to present. They continue to present to MTSU. Chapter continues to support the Fisher House as well as Healing Waters which teaches mostly disabled veterans to fly fish. They are trying to get more members.

There was a discussion about having a speaker on “Human Trafficking” at our next meeting. There was no interest.

Council is looking for a new 2nd VP to take office January 2018. Ivan Adames will consider the position.

Our next meeting is scheduled for **19 July 2017** at 11:00am (subject to change based on space availability either at the Fairgrounds or new Veterans Center at the Wilson County Courthouse).

Mark Your Calendar! Future Meeting Date: October 18, 2017

The meeting adjourned at 1:15pm.

Minutes prepared by Patricia Bergquist, Secretary and Council Auxiliary Liaison
Respectfully Submitted by Kathy Desjarlais, President, TN Council of Chapters