



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



Minutes of the Meeting 13 January 2021

Tennessee Council of Chapters, MOAA met 13 January 2021 on-line in a Zoom meeting with 11 members on-line and Cory Titus from MOAA national as follows:

Chattanooga: No Representative  
East Tennessee: No Representative  
Ft. Campbell: Ivan Adames, Eddie Sumbler, Thomasa Ross  
General Andrew Jackson: No Representative  
Memphis: Kathy Desjarlais, John Dixon, Jim Thomasson  
Middle TN: Patricia Bergquist, Doug Minton, Mike Patenaude  
Mountain Empire: No Representative  
Stones River: Pete Warner  
Sumner County: Steve Petersen  
Upper Cumberland: No Representative

***MARK YOUR CALENDAR: 2021 MEETING INFORMATION IN THE MINUTES!***

Cory Titus, MOAA Director of Veterans and Guard/Reserve Affairs joined the meeting via Zoom.

No guests attended on Zoom.

Council President Jim Thomasson began the meeting at 11:30am.

Ivan Adames led the pledge to the flag. Council Chaplain Eddie Sumbler said a prayer for the attendees of the meeting and their families, for those In-uniform for our country, and our country.

**Acceptance of Minutes**

Minutes of the 21 October 2020 meeting were approved by acclamation.

**Financial Report**

John Dixon, Treasurer, delivered the financial report for the period October 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020. The Council paid a Zoom subscription of \$163.76 this quarter. No other activity was recorded. Total funds on hand at the end of the quarter were \$6,837.24, which included in restricted travel funds of \$1,322.73.

Doug Minton suggested that the Council make a \$250 contribution to the MOAA Covid-19 Relief Fund for the new year. This was approved by the Council.

The Council accepted the Treasurer's Report after a short discussion.

### **Surviving Spouse Report**

Patricia Bergquist, our surviving spouse representative, gave the following report:

#### **On the SBP/DIC Offset update:**

- DFAS sent out letters with a pre-estimate to all surviving spouses impacted by the offset repeal in December.
- Despite the fact that the letter was well done and easy to understand, there has been confusion among the surviving spouse demographic.
- The first repeal of the SBP/DIC Offset will show up in the February 2021 SBP payment. Surviving spouses with questions should contact DFAS. Then, if they are still confused, they can call Patricia at 615-948-4960. Alternately, surviving spouses may text me their name, number, identity as a surviving spouse, and I will call them.

Again, surviving spouses may be interested in a new Face Book group that has been started "Military Surviving Spouses DFAS Issues". This group is administered by a surviving spouse who has connections within DFAS.

#### **MOAA and The Military Coalition continue building a foundation on the following:**

- To update surviving spouse language in the law to remove the language "holding yourself out as a married person", along with "opposite sex" as the VA honors same sex marriages.
- To align the DIC rate being paid at 55% vs 43% again like other Federal Programs.

Surviving Spouses impacted by the DIC rate in #2 above may want to join the Face Book page "DIC Surviving Spouses and Friends".

Chapter leadership is encouraged during their respective "Personal Affairs" meetings to remind members to review/update their personal affairs and go over military related survivor benefits with their spouse and a family member who will assist the spouse should the service member pre-decease the spouse. This is important not only for preparedness but also promotes understanding and lessens confusion in the future.

#### **NDAAs 2021 signed into law Jan 5 provided the following for survivors:**

- Expand eligibility for the [Fry Scholarship](#) to children of certain deceased members of the armed forces.
- Lowers from age 57 to 55 years, the age at which a surviving spouse may still receive Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits at the point of remarriage.

- Also, the NDAA 2021 included the addition of bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinson's disease to the list of conditions linked to Agent Orange.

*Note: 1) Surviving spouses need to be aware that remarriage results in loss of Tricare or Tricare-For-Life unless they marry another service member.*

- 2) *Also, remember that the SBP/DIC Offset Repeal does not require repayment of the premiums that were refunded by Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) to the surviving spouse when they were awarded Dependency Indemnity Compensation (DIC) from the VA.*

*However, we understand the SBP/DIC Offset Repeal phases out the offset over three years (2021, 2022, and 2023) and that surviving spouses who remarry before the phase out is completed in February 2023 will be required to repay the premiums refunded as described above. Premium refunds are recouped with interest.*

- 3) *Surviving spouses are encouraged to perform due diligence and consider all the ramifications of remarriage relative to their military survivor benefits and entitlements.*

## **TVET Update**

Col Doug Minton, USA, (Ret), who is the Council's representative to TVET stated that the annual storming the Nashville hill has been cancelled for 2021. There were no other issues to brief. Chaplain Eddie Sumbler is the newly elected president of TVET.

## **MOAA Presentation by Cory Titus**

In light of recent events, the annual Storming-the-Hill that MOAA conducts annually will be renamed. Also, as last year, it will probably be a month-long campaign where members meet their Congregational delegations via Zoom.

Cory's other comments are related to his PowerPoint presentation, which is attached.

## **Council President**

The following items were briefed/discussed:

During the November 2020 Webinar, a MOAA instructor provided guidance to Council presidents on how to approach potential new members about joining MOAA. Council president Thomasson thought the training was more appropriate for chapter member.

When Ivan Adames stated that the deadline was February 1 for the Col Marvin J. Harris Communications Award, President Thomasson urged the chapters to submit a nomination

package. At least 3 chapters have outstanding newsletters ever month. Last year none were nominated for an award. Additionally, chapter web sites can be nominated, which Memphis did last year and won a 5 Star for its web site.

The deadline for Level of Excellence awards is May 1, 2021. Last year 170 of 173 nominations won either a 4 star or 5 Star award. It's not rocket science. Again, President Thomasson urged chapters to submit a nomination package.

Terri Coles has retired from MOAA Councils and Chapters and is replaced by Erin Stone, CAPT, Navy (Retired).

## **Chapter Updates**

### **Memphis - Kathy Desjarlais/John Dixon**

1. The chapter supported the VA Christmas food basket program which supported 142 veterans.
2. Monthly BOD meetings have continued with zoom meetings. No chapter meetings since February.
3. The chapter is looking to conduct a general membership meeting by zoom in March. Members will have to be contacted by letter because so few open or read their emails from the chapter.

### **Ft Campbell – Ivan Adames**

1. COVID Impacts:

#### **October -**

- Last in-person Chapter Luncheon was Saturday October 17th at Fort Campbell at the Cole Park Commons with 38 attendees.

#### **November -**

- The Chapter participated in the Montgomery County Veterans Parade 'Salute to Veteran in Health Care' theme and with a MOAA float entry 'Battlefield Angels'; which won the 1st Place float.
- Some members attended the Marine Corps League Ball.

#### **December -**

- We attended in the **Gander Memorial Ceremonies** at Fort Campbell and Hopkinsville.
- We participated in (2) **Wreath Across America** Ceremonies - Riverview Cemetery and Resthaven Cemetery.
- Some members volunteered at the USO's Great Gift Give Away for military families.
- We are continuing to have our monthly Executive Board meeting via Zoom.

2. We are having our first 2021 MOAA **BYOL (Bring Your Own Lunch)** January Chapter Meeting to your desktop computer.

- (Old school - Brown Bag Luncheon).

### **Mountain Empire** – No representative

#### **General Andrew Jackson** – J. D. Rottero (via email)

1. In-person meetings have not resumed, at least partially due the normal location not allowing on-site meetings.
2. Chapter members have stayed in touch via email and conference call since then.

### **Middle Tennessee** – Mike Patenaude

1. In-person monthly meetings from September to November.
2. The chapter contributed donations to Wreaths Across America but did not physically participate.
3. January BOD meeting was held via Zoom.

### **Upper Cumberland** – No representative

#### **Sumner County** – Steve Petersen

1. Last in-person meeting was in June 2020.
2. The BOD is meeting every other month and the newsletter is going out every other month also.
3. Steve asked about the rules changing for burial at Arlington National Cemetery. Cory Titus wasn't sure about what the current rules are, but thinks current veterans would be grandfathered to be buried at Arlington if they chose.
4. In response to a question after his discussion of the experience of a recent widow in his chapter, Steve provided the following information by email:
  - *The name of the company I mentioned was the American Armed Forces Mutual Aid Association (AAFMAA). (tel:1-800-522-5221, email: [SurvivorBenefits@aafmaa.com](mailto:SurvivorBenefits@aafmaa.com), website: [www.aafmaa.com](http://www.aafmaa.com). They are located on Ft, Myer, VA and have been around since 1879. I signed up with them in 1988. They offer life insurance and also a separate survivor assistance service. This assistance service includes electronic storage of your essential claims-related documents (DD-214, wills, life insurance policies, social security card, etc.), and direct assistance in filing your DFAS, social security, VA, life insurance, etc. All the widow has to do is call them upon your death and they initiate and walk you through all the paperwork and actions needed to be done. The latest cost is on-time \$495.*

#### **Stones River** – Pete Warner (email)

1. On the good news front, we have lost no members (Thank God), due to COVID-19 thus far.
2. Our online dues collection thru MOAA National has been a huge success! We even had some members make direct donations to the chapter's fund because of it.
3. Despite the lockdown, we continue to recruit new members. Just these past two months we have recruited three new members with a possible fourth coming on board – not bad given present circumstances.
4. Our chapter is in the final stages of completing our application for tax exempt status via IRS Form 1024. We are seeking recognition as a 501(c) (19) Veterans

Organization. Once our financials have been approved by our treasurer, we are mailing the application form and associated documents to the IRS for approval.

5. Finally, our chapter has been asked to assist in identifying veterans nearing the century mark in our local area who are willing to tell their story on the radio (WGNS), and have it recorded for prosperity. This Salute to Veterans is being led by patriotic citizens associated with the Century Club of Rutherford and Bedford Counties.

**Chattanooga** – No representative

### **Conclusion of Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned about 12:50 CST.

### **Upcoming Dates**

1. MOAA National Meeting for 2021 will be virtual. On-line only.
2. All meetings in 2021 are likely to be virtual, or on-line. No dates events or dates were announced.

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

Our next meeting is scheduled for **21 April 2021** at 11:30 am in another Zoom meeting.

**Future Meetings** – at **Sammy B's** or on Zoom **Mark Your Calendar!**

Deadline for Col Marvin J. Harris Communications Award	1 February 2021
Community Grant Applications	28 February 2021
TN CoC Meeting:	21 April 2021
Level of Excellence Awards	1 May 2021
TN CoC Meeting:	21 July 2021
TN CoC Meeting:	20 October 2021

Minutes prepared by Jim Thomasson, President and Secretary  
Respectfully submitted by Jim Thomasson, President, TN Council of Chapters