



## Tennessee Council of Chapters Military Officers Association of America



### Minutes of the Meeting 19 April 2023

Tennessee Council of Chapters, MOAA met 19 April 2023 in person/via zoom, 11:30 AM CST.

Chattanooga (TN01): Ray Atkins, Bill Hewitt, Ray Mitchell, Carol Grohn, Scott Bryant.

East Tennessee (TN02): Doug Goins via zoom.

Memphis (TN03): Jim Thomasson, Pat Thomasson, Kathy Desjarlais via zoom.

Middle Tennessee (TN04): Karon Uzzell Baggett, Patricia Bergquist via zoom.

Mountain Empire (TN05): Dr. Don Thompson via zoom.

Upper Cumberland (TN06): No Representative

Ft. Campbell (TN07): Brian Lynch, Eunice Sumbler, Eddie Sumbler, Ivan Adames. Monroe Gildersleeve via zoom.

Stones River (TN10): Betty Moshea, Pete Warner, Sandy Warner.

Sumner County (TN11): Steve Petersen via zoom.

General Andrew Jackson (TN12): Bobbie Bell.

The meeting did not have a guest speaker.

### ***MARK YOUR CALENDAR: 2023 MEETING INFORMATION IN THE MINUTES!***

Council President Ivan Adames began the meeting at 11:30 am.

Council Vice President Pete Warner led the pledge to the flag. Following the pledge allegiance to the flag. Chaplain Eddie Sumbler said a prayer of opening for the meeting.

### **Acceptance of Minutes**

An amended minutes of the 19 January 2023 meeting had been sent out on 14 January 2023 to all the chapter presidents and Council members. Betty Moshea moved that the minutes be accepted as amended. The motion was seconded by Pete Warner and approved unanimously.

### **Financial Report**

Monroe Gildersleeve, Treasurer, delivered the financial report for the period of January 01, 2023 to March 31, 2023. Total funds on hand at the end of the quarter were \$6,339.30.

The Council accepted the Treasurer's Report.

### **Surviving Spouse Report written update provided by Patricia Bergquist as follows:**

Chapter Presidents of all Tennessee MOAA Chapters have provided their Surviving Spouse Liaison information except *East TN, General Andrew Jackson, and Upper Cumberland*. Those Chapter Presidents need to send their Chapter Surviving Spouse Liaison information (name, phone, and e-mail address) to Patricia by e-mail at [p\\_bergq@hotmail.com](mailto:p_bergq@hotmail.com) so that contact information can be updated.

When Chapter Surviving Spouse Liaisons need assistance helping a surviving spouse, please call Patricia (615-948-4960) or e-mail her for advice. The Surviving Spouse Representative on the MOAA National Board of Directors should not be called as she gives the surviving spouse Patricia's name and calls Patricia herself to tell her what advice, if any, she offered which often is not the best path. Our Surviving Spouses deserve accurate information, compassion, understanding, and hand-holding through the process.

### ADVOCACY/LEGISLATION

We need the focus and diligence of all MOAA Chapter members and surviving spouses to personally contact their Congressmen and Senators on these issues as we advocate for more legislative changes for our surviving spouses as follows:

H.R.1083 and S.414 "Caring for Survivors Act of 2023" are to improve and expand eligibility for the DIC Increase from 43% of a single, 100% disabled veteran's compensation to 55%. The 2023 DIC flat rate is \$1,564.74 per month.

*H.R. 1803 has 18 co-sponsors NONE from TN*

*S.414 has 2 co-sponsors NONE from TN*

Everyone needs to be aware that the bill has a "special rule" section that penalizes 16,572 (3% of all DIC spouses) pre-1993 rank-based DIC recipients.

The understanding is that if a rank-based DIC recipient is receiving more than the flat rate, there would be no increase, and if he/she is receiving less than the flat rate, then he/she would be brought to flat rate.

Rank-based surviving spouses who would be impacted if the bill becomes law need to call or e-mail Congresswoman Johanna Hayes (202-225-4476), and Senator Jon Tester (202-224-2644) to express concern over this limiting language in the bill.

### H.R. 854 CAPT James C. Edge Gold Star Spouse Equity Act

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. *No Senate Bill yet.*

*H.R. 854 has 5 co-sponsors with NONE from TN.*

To contact your Congressman or Senators, use MOAA Capitol Switchboard 1-866-272-6622, ask to be connected to your Congressman or Senators office, once connected ask to speak with the Military Legislative Assistant.

"Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act" and "Supporting All Veterans Families Act" do not have 2023-2024 Bill numbers yet. *The Bills will be reintroduced in the House and Senate and Bill numbers will be provided when available.*

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

- "DIC Surviving Spouses/DIC Increase Advocacy"
- "Eliminate the Remarriage Penalty"

- “Love Lives On Act of 2023 Advocacy”
- “Supporting All Veteran Families Act”
- “Military Survivors DFAS/SBP Issues”
- “MOAA Surviving Spouses and Friends”

The PACT Act included 22 additional presumptive causes of death from toxins. Surviving spouses who were previously denied VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation should contact a Veteran Service Office to see if they can file a claim under the PACT Act. The VA has said they will contact those surviving spouses, but surviving spouses do not need to wait for their contact. Be proactive!

In the April 2023 issue of Military Officer, there is an article titled “The Final Chapter” (Pages 52-55 and 67). Please read and encourage your chapter members to do so as well. We cannot encourage preparedness enough!

### **TNVET Update no written update**

### **Advocacy in Action (legislative) written update provided by Pete Warner as follows:**

MOAA Advocacy in Action Campaign 26 April 2023, Washington D.C.

- 1) Restore the TRICARE Pharmacy Network
- 2) Pay Full Housing Cost for Service Members (Restore BAH to 100%)
- 3) Support the All-Volunteer Force (AVF)

Tennessee Team Members:

Col (Dr.) Don Thompson – MOAA National Board Member

Ms. Nancy Mullins – MOAA National Surviving Spouse Committee Member

Lt Col Pete Warner – TN Council of Chapters

Our team met with designated staffers in every TN delegation office (9 representatives and 2 senators) with one exception – Representative Scott

DesJarlis met with us personally at the end of the day and listened to our pitch.

### **Separate Legislative Update**

It is strongly encouraged for the Chapter Leaders, Chapter Officers, and Chapter members to register with the MOAA Legislative Action Center. This helps each member have a connection and to stay in contact with your U.S. Senators and Congressional Legislators.

**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**

VA/DoD Survivor Forum – Thursday, 26 Jan, 9 AM EST via Microsoft Teams meeting  
2023 MOAA Chapter Leader Workshop –  
Advocacy in Action – Mon- Thur 24-26 April, Washington D.C. Legislative Action Center – Chapter member registration  
MOAA Levels of Excellence Award (LOE) submission by 01 May 2023 (2022 - 6 Chapters & COC)  
East TN Chapter (TN02) MOAA JROTC Awards & Certificates (19 High Schools) Revitalization (Chapter rescue) (Knoxville area) – Requested

Next meeting - July 19, 2023 at Sammy B's restaurant In Lebanon, TN

### **Other Chapter Business:**

#### **A LETTER FROM YOUR COUNCIL PRESIDENT:**

Chapter leaders,

**Congratulations to the Five Tennessee Chapters who submitted for the Communication Award.**

**The annual Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Awards recognize councils and chapters that achieve excellence in communicating with their members and communities. MOAA affiliates nominated themselves in two categories: newsletters (print or electronic) and websites. Submissions were judged on design and content.**

**For the 2022 program year, eleven councils and 134 chapters received 152 five-star awards and 77 four-star awards.**

**Please use this link: <https://www.moaa.org/Harris-2022> to access the complete list of awardees and level of recognition.**

**These awards will be presented on April 27<sup>th</sup> to respective council representatives during a luncheon at the Council President's Seminar during Advocacy in Action (AiA) week. Awards that are not picked up at that time will be mailed to the winners.**

**A Super Congratulations to our Tennessee Chapters winners:**

**Chattanooga Chapter (TN01) - MOAA Newsletter 5 Star  
MOAA Memphis Chapter (TN03) - MOAA Website 4 Star  
Middle Tennessee Chapter (TN04) - MOAA Website 4 Star  
Mountain Empire Chapter (TN05) - MOAA Website 5 Star,  
Fort Campbell Chapter (TN07) - MOAA Website 5 Star,**

**MOAA Newsletter 4 Star  
MOAA Newsletter 5 Star**

**Again Congratulations.**

**Never Stop Serving.**

**Sincerely,  
Ivan Adames  
TN COC**

Second Vice President volunteer is still needed.

It is strongly recommended and encouraged for each Chapter Leaders and Chapter Officers to register with the MOAA Legislative Action Center. This helps you stay in contact with your U.S. Senators and Congressional Legislators; and gain credit points towards the MOAA LOE Awards.

From the Council members: the TN Council President will need to write and to inform the East TN Chapter President, Bill Potter, that the TN Council makes an appeal to arrange a Chapter “rescue” to revitalize the East Tennessee Chapter (TN02).

## **Chapter Updates**

### **Chattanooga TN01 - Carol Grohn written comments as follows:**

Dual Member/Surviving Spouse: Our chapter experienced an unexpected death in December of one of our members who was just 40 years old. His death was consistent with many covered under the PACT Act. The couple had been married only a few months and he had young children. I have remained in contact with the surviving spouse and now new member. If desired by the surviving spouse, our chapter’s by-laws allow the surviving spouse to continue the membership of the deceased member for a year following the death. The deceased also had a basic membership with National MOAA. In January, I got the spouse in touch with National who counseled her on her options to continue his basic membership or increase the level. She is in the process of making that decision as she continues with managing the estate and now “mentoring” the children. She will come to dinner meetings and has accepted an offer to be a volunteer on a major project that our chapter is embarking on. I hope that she will work with our current surviving spouse liaison to change the direction of our current group away from a purely social group that is a mix of long-term regular spouses and surviving spouses.

Brainstorms: In January various members of the incoming board gathered several times to brainstorm about our structure, types of dinner speakers for the year, and, importantly, social events for the year. We discussed fundraising options, how we wanted to give ourselves a new look and feel and broaden the appeal to attract new and younger members. It so far seems to be working out well. We have a new “living document” organizational chart that has a business look to it even with dotted lines of communication, committees, etc. This chart also has job descriptions. Our social planning lead is the wife of our Webmaster.

Installation: February 28th: Installation of our new board occurred per a popular new local judge. For the first time, our chapter has had its first female president.

Grant: We have applied for our first grant to provide for final rites and processing for homeless indigent veterans unclaimed by families.

Golf tournament: To raise funds for our JROTC SROTC scholarship grants, we are planning a golf tournament to be held Oct 6th. It appears we have several golfers in our midst and currently the golf enthusiasts are meeting frequently to get it well off the ground soon.

A family social outing is planned watching our local AA Baseball team, the Chattanooga Lookouts, play at our stadium from a covered picnic pavilion, with full banquet for \$25 per person.

Engaging: We have begun to engage with and have more presence with various other Veteran entities and outreach events.

New website: We have a new board member who also doubles as our webmaster. We hope to have the beginning of our website up and running by the end of this month.

LOE regarding last year: submitted well in advance of the deadline.

Dinner meeting: Plans for our April dinner meeting will honor two JROTC scholarship awardees and a few anticipated academy appointees and family members. A panel of service academy graduates will be available for questions and our own 2VP/Membership Chair will be our guest speaker; Lt. Col. Tony Crowder (Ret) was USAF pilot but also a Federal Senior Executive Service member for Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection, NATO, CAP, etc. He has had and still has a very distinguished career and will speak to the young people about What is Success (service academy not required).

Parade: We have special plans to appear in our Armed Forces Day parade with a real towed float presence, decorations, followed by luncheon at Chattanooga Convention Center.

Scholarship team/board got together at the home of our President and a very helpful and lively discussion ensued. Our scholarship original documents were found in a notebook which clarified selection processes and legal matters; we need to change our by-laws a bit and we have found a conundrum for which our Treasurer will seek advice from experts at MOAA National. Our scholarship team is actually its own board, and operates separately from our Executive Board.

None of the above would have been possible without the superior keen interest and talent of our 1VP, Ray Mitchell. We have a solid board, but I look forward to what more will be possible when Ray takes the helm.

Finally, we have revamped our membership application to also include a National membership application. Thank you, LTC Karon, Uzzell-Baggett for the assist.

### **East Tennessee TN02 (Knoxville) - Written update not provided**

### **MOAA Memphis TN03 – Kathy Desjarlais: written update provided as follows:**

4 Star Comms Award

Great uptick in attendees at meetings. Have had two quite interesting speakers talking about historical events.

Working coffee call at VA in months with 5th Thursday

Providing clothing items to VA as needed and requested

### **Middle Tennessee TN04 - Karon Uzzell - Baggett: written comments as follows:**

Luncheon Meetings

January 2023 – Chapter members gathered for a review of 2022 accomplishments and reports from various directors. The meeting drew 41 attendees, which is large for this topic. The Chapter's financial status was reviewed and upcoming National and State legislative issues were highlighted. Members approved revised Chapter bylaws and eight new appendices outlining director duties.

February 2023 – The chapter gathered to hear a presentation on the Battle of Nashville

and the contributions of the United States Colored Troops in recognition of African American History Month. There were 47 attendees at Old Natchez Trace Country Club.

March 2023 – Chapter members learned about The Mission Continues, a non-profit focusing on veterans engaged in community-based volunteer projects. The meeting was led by a past Chapter President due to the current President being at a conference.

#### Advocacy

Members received reminders about advocating for various legislation benefiting the military community at every meeting. The MOAA Legislative Action Center was frequently mentioned.

The Legislative Liaison highlighted important issues pending before the 118th Congress. He stressed encouraging legislators to resubmit the Major Richard Star Act, support restoration of BAH to 100% and reverse cuts to TRICARE pharmacies.

#### Community Outreach

Members completed the final 2022 MOAA Community Outreach Grant on Saturday, March 4, 2023, at Matthew 25, a local non-profit focusing on rehabilitating formerly homeless veterans. The non-profit received two new computers and printers for the men to use in job pursuits. Chapter members delivered an in-person presentation to 22 men on resume development, interview techniques and other job placement topics.

Three new grant requests for 2023 were researched and submitted to MOAA.

Award – The chapter submitted its second website nomination for the Colonel Marvin J. Harris Communications Award.

#### Other

The chapter submitted a \$300 request under the MOAA Community Outreach Sponsorship program to purchase a tablecloth and flag emblazoned with the chapter's name. These items will be used during chapter recruiting events.

A community trip to the Tennessee State Museum was scheduled on March 23, 2023, as a follow-up to the February 2023 speaker presentation. Members enjoyed a complete tour of key museum exhibits.

Key leadership vacancies still exist, but dedicated volunteers keep the chapter going forward.

#### **Mountain Empire TN05 – Don Thompson: Written update provided as follows**

MECMOAA members sponsored a table at the East Tennessee State University Veterans Day event on 27 March 2023. Ivan Adames, Tennessee Council President participated in the event. TNVETS sponsored a table next to the MOAA table.

Five veterans completed MOAA and MECMOAA membership applications.

## ROTC:

MECMOAA members will be presenting awards to cadets at 13 high school JRROTC groups in northeast Tennessee in April and May. MECMOAA has doubled the numbers of awards and scholarships from one to two ROTC scholarships of \$1000 each, and from one to two JRROTC awards of \$500 each. MECMOAA will be awarding the ROTC scholarships at the annual awards ceremony at the next Chapter meeting on 7 May 2023, at 1230.

## Membership

We gained 5 new members at the 27 March 2023 Veterans Day event at East Tennessee State University.

Next monthly meeting: 7 May 2023 at 1230 at the Blackthorn Club.

## **Upper Cumberland TN06– Written update not provided. Written update extracted from Newsletter Membership letter written by Mary K. Jacobsen as follows:**

Membership Update - current membership 83.

Recruiting Efforts – placed an announcement in the Crossville Chronicle and the Glade Sun that netted 4 inquiries, with net 2 members.

Legislative Update – Kathie Clark provided an update on legislative activities both at MOAA National and TNVET. April 26th is the date for MOAA members to visit with their federal and state representatives.

## New Business/Announcements

“Get Involved” Expo – to be held Wednesday, April 19th from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm at the Fairfield Glade Center. MOAA-UCC will have a recruiting table. Members were asked to in sign up to assist with recruiting. Shifts are 1 hour and members can do 1 or more shifts.

TTU ROTC Golden Eagle Battalion “Gold Bar Scramble” – to be held Saturday, April 29th at White Plains Golf Course in Algood, TN. Check-in at 0700 with a Shotgun Start at 0800. Cost is \$50/person that includes lunch, 18 holes golf, and prizes! MOAA UCC is asking members to form teams.

Veterans and First Responders Memorial at Fairfield Glade: Our Chapter Board of Directors voted to buy a brick in honor of COL Ed Keyes, USMC(Ret) who passed away in January of this year.

Elections for 2024 Positions: 2 Board of Director positions will open for the 2024-2026

## Introduction of new VSO, LCDR James R. Dignan, USN (Ret)

VSO Dignan provided indepth information on the Burn Pit Registry, Death Benefits, and VA Disability application.

ROTC/JROTC Roundup - Members were given a quick review of activities at each of our sponsored programs by the Liaisons who serve those programs. Liaisons are needed for Cookeville, York, and TTU.



**Ft Campbell TN07 – Brian Lynch Verbal-written update provided as follows:**

No luncheons were held during either January or February. We did however hold executive committee meetings both months.

In March we restarted our monthly luncheons, meeting at the Oak Grove, KY Community Center. Catering was coordinated through Melissa Lynch, the Center Director. We discussed the future of our Chapter e.g., how often should we meet, where, etc...post-Covid enthusiasm seems to have waned somewhat.

Our April luncheon was held at Pablo's Mexican restaurant in Clarksville. Our guest speaker was Frank Ketcham, the District Manager for Operation Stand Down. Mr. Ketcham gave a briefing on Operation Stand Down's functions the north central portion of Tennessee. We also learned that due to the diligence and hard work of both Thomasa Ross and J.T Smith the Chapter had won 5 Star Awards for both our newsletter and website.

**Stones River TN10 – Written update provided by Betty Moshea as follows:**

The Stones River Chapter of MOAA did not meet in February 2023 due to severe weather in the area.

At the March meeting the VA patient advocate gave us a very informative briefing on the care we receive at the VA Medical Center.

April continues to be a very busy month: we supported 13 JROTC Programs with medals and certificates. The Stones River Chapter of MOAA presented these medals and certificates to a deserving JROTC members. We supported two local ROTC programs with certificates and medals.

Our Chapter has appointed a Scholarship Committee to develop our scholarship program.

We have 96 Chapter members, which includes 11 surviving spouses.

The Stones River Chapter of MOAA is planning an outing to Arnold Air Force Base on Friday, September 8, 2023.

The Stones River Chapter of MOAA is also planning a trip to Edelweiss in Germany, Sep 21-October 1, 2023. Approximately 25 members have signed up.

**Sumner County TN11– Steve Petersen: Written update provided as follows:**

Chapter Board election and installation of officers was conducted in February, 2023.

Input was provided by the three high schools with JROTC Programs in Sumner County for awarding a \$500 scholarship to a deserving senior who will be attending a college or school of higher learning, and the MOAA Medal to a deserving junior. Awards will be provided at each school JROTC awards ceremony by a member of our Chapter in the next couple of weeks. In addition, the MOAA Medal will be awarded to a member of the Springfield High School, TN

AFROTC at their awards ceremony by a member of our MOAA Chapter. Springfield High School is located in Robertson County, TN and the Middle Tennessee MOAA Chapter had previously provided this award. Sumner County is closer and we have followed up on presenting the award to Springfield High School.

Sumner County MOAA has a new Chapter Chaplain, Otis Clayton. We have not had a Chaplain since 2020 when Reverend Dr. Floyd Lacey passed.

### **General Andrew Jackson TN12 – Bobbie A. Bell: written update provided as follows:**

January 2023 – election & installation of new officers & board members; speaker from Tennessee Archives spoke on the USS Tennessee & Pearl Harbor (WW II) events.

February 2023 – meeting canceled due to inclement weather.

March 2023 – speaker was Betsy Thorpe who spoke on Dutchman’s Curve Train Wreck

April 2023 – speakers (David Westhorp & Lynn Williams) spoke on Astronomy in Your backyard. Birthday party was held for Phil Ponder’s 90th Birthday.

Death The founding president of our chapter, COL John Lloyd, DDS, died 26 March at age 9; he had 25 years of military service. Several members were able to attend his visitation, funeral, & burial.

Membership We have started a membership drive & reconnection with members who are on our rolls but have not been attending. Attendance has been slow to recovery after the pandemic, and our meeting location has changed several times due to forces beyond our control. Currently we have about 50 people that are on our rolls and average 20-25 attending meetings.

Awards & JROTC We are in the process of attending the various JROTC awards programs for the schools we support. We will be awarding our scholarship to the Lebanon High School AFJROTC cadet on 26 April.

#### Advocacy

Members have been reminded of the national issues & encouraged to contact their congressional representative.

### **Conclusion of Meeting**

The meeting was adjourned about 13:15 CST.

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

MOAA Virtual Monthly Roundtable of Chapter Leaders: (7 PM EST) Last Thursday of month.  
\*\*\*2023 MOAA Chapter Leader Workshop – Mid South February 24-25 (TBA)

Our next meeting is scheduled for **July 19, 2023** at 11:30 AM. The meeting will be in-person at Sammy B’s in Lebanon, TN.

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

TN CoC Meeting:	18 October 2023	Sammy B's
TN CoC Meeting:	17 January 2024	
TN CoC Meeting:	17 April 2024	
TN CoC Meeting:	17 July 2024	
TN CoC Meeting:	16 October 2024	

Minutes prepared and submitted by Sandy Warner, Secretary, TN Council of Chapter