

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA
SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER

MINUTES - BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

15 February 2024

Call to Order

President Gary Powers called the meeting of the Board of Directors of The Southwest Virginia Chapter, Military Officers Association to order at 1002 hours Eastern Standard Time on 15 February 2024.

Chapter Officers and Directors Present

President and Public Affairs Officer Gary Powers; 2nd Vice President, Community Services Volunteer and Transition Team Representative Dan Karnes; Treasurer and Membership Chair Robert Brown; Chaplain and Bereavement Committee Officer David Gilleran; VCOC Representative and Past President Matt Haag; Secretary and Personal Affairs Representative Steve Jamison; Legislative Affairs Representative and Awards Chair Robert Habermann; Facebook Editor Lee Ensley; Sergeant–At-Arms Larry Johnson; Surviving Spouse Representative Mary Lou Summers; Director John Miller; Director and News Letter Editor Tom Dalzell; Director Don Sowder; Director Evelyn Cox.

Chapter Officers and Directors Absent

Director Roger Burnett; Webmaster Klaus (Ted) Lonitz.

Opening Prayer

Director Don Sowder led the Board of Directors in prayer.

Pledge of Allegiance

Sergeant–At-Arms Larry Johnson led The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag recited by all present.

Approval of Board of Directors Meetings Minutes

Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting of 18 January 2024 were approved as submitted.

President's Report

- President Gary Powers welcomed all members and indicated continued movement to implement his plan "Operation Outreach" with the 3 areas: Outreach within Chapter, Outreach in the Community and Outreach at the State and National Level.
- Reported that he was not able to secure the new DOD ID card. Will travel to Norfolk to find out the procedure. Will notify the membership on his findings and procedures.
- VCOC reports due 30 June and 30 December.
- VCOC dues - \$0.90 per member; \$0.50 per surviving spouse.

Secretary's Report

- Adjustments made to the chapter roster based primarily on non-payment of dues brought our roster down to 84 members as of 31 December 2023. In the process of making the adjustments in the national database, Committee Module.
- Renewal of Chapter General Liability Insurance Policy – a very basic general liability policy as our activities expose us to minimal risk. Cost is \$245/year effective 1 March 2024 to 1 March 2025
- Visitor and new member today COL David E. Corman, USAF (Ret)

Treasurer's Report

- Income and Expenses Budget vs. Actual through 31 January 2024 was presented – Copy provided to each Board member. Income exceeded expenses for the year with income of \$965.00 and expenditures of \$850.29.
- Checking Account balance through 31 January 2024 – \$9,614.59.
- Savings Account balance through 31 January 2024 is - \$4,166.91.
- Audit required. Last audit was in 2020. CDR Lee Ensley stated we had not done one for several years and suggested that we should do another before the next Community Outreach Grant cycle, which will start late this year. COL Bob Brown did the last audit of BGEN Scott Van Cleef's books. CAPT Matt Haag will conduct an audit of the last two years.

1st Vice President's Report

- No report.

Membership Chair Report

- Five leads identified on the February Near Real Time (NRT). All sent a letter of invitation.

Program Directors Report

- Meeting programs scheduled for 2024.
 - **15 February 2024** - Board of Directors meeting. Program: CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret). **History of the 303rd Bomb Group, RAF Molesworth, UK.**
 - **21 March 2024** - 21 March 2024 - Tentative: Mr. Mike Stewart, Director, Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport. **Update on Airport Programs.**
 - **18 April 2024** - Board of Directors meeting. Program by Christine Link-Owens, Volunteer Coordination Group Manager, Virginia Tech Transportation Institute on the **Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (The Smart Road) and its many Divisions that engage to improve all types of transportation.**
 - **16 May 2024** - Chapter Membership BBQ meeting at the American Legion Post 3 shelter facility in Salem, Virginia catered by Mission BBQ in Roanoke. State and area legislators invited. Musical program by Richard Kiser...

Surviving Spouse Representative Report

- Six (6) spouses contacted each month on the chapter meetings.
- Presented a copy from the newspaper "The Patriot/The Southwest Times" dated 22 December 2023 with an article "Area Students Participate in 11th Annual Wreath Laying". The article included pictures and information on the wreath laying ceremony and members of the Southwest Virginia Chapter who participated in the ceremony.

Public Relations Report

- Chapter Newsletter *The Communiqué* – 4th quarter 2023 (OCT-NOV-DEC) published on 30 December 2023
- Chapter Newsletter *The Communiqué* – 1st quarter 2024 (JAN-FEB-MARCH) in the works.
- MOAA Chapter Level of Excellence Award for 2023 submitted 22 January 2024
- MOAA Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Award for 2023 submitted 23 January 2024

- Chapter Website & Face book – Up and running. The chapter Website Manager LCDR Ted Lonitz is going to add a link to prior documents, Newsletters and Board of Directors Minutes, at the bottom of the web page. That way anyone wanting to view past documents would have access. The web site will display two years of newsletters and two years of Board of Directors minutes, the current year and the previous year.
- Director and News Letter Editor Tom Dalzell confirmed receipt of email addresses for elected representatives and has added their names to email list for Communiqué.

Past President's Report

- No report.

Directors Report's

- COL Sowder - There is a wealth of potential at Virginia Tech for members and possible gatherings. Will look into those possibilities.
- COL Miller –
 - **The Roanoke Rail Dawgs** Ice Hockey Team is holding a **Military Appreciation Night on Saturday, 17 February 2024**, honoring all servicemen and women. Active and retired military personnel can purchase \$10 anywhere tickets to this game at the box office with ID present. Available while supplies last. Gates open at 1800 hours, puck drops at 1905 hours. The Dawgs will be wearing military-themed specialty jerseys that will be auctioned off after the game.
 - National Vietnam War Veterans Day is celebrated on 29 March 2024 in the US and was recently made a recognized annual holiday in 2017 when it was signed into law by President Trump. 29 March is the day that the last of the troops were withdrawn in 1973.
 - There will be a National Vietnam War Veterans Recognition day on 6 April 2024 from 1400 to 1530 hours at the American Legion Post 3, 710 Apperson Drive, Salem, Virginia. The event is hosted by Vietnam Veterans Roanoke Valley Chapter 81 and the AUSA.
 - There is a great need for food donations in the Southwest Virginia area to support the “Soldiers Pantry”, “Vittles For Vets”, “Feeding Southwest Virginia Food Bank” that serves 26-counties and 9 city regions and local church/congregational food pantries.
 - The Disabled American Veterans Chapter 3 has closed down permanently.
- CDR Ensley – The Chapter should consider holding an event n the Virginia Tech Blacksburg area in the future.

Legislative Liaison Report - LTC Habermann

- MOAA'S LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES FOR THE 118TH CONGRESS
 - As the legislative slate is wiped clean for the 118th Congress, grassroots support becomes even more vital to achieving MOAA's advocacy

objectives. MOAA needs your help to keep momentum for existing priorities such as the Major Richard Star Act, which would benefit tens of thousands of combat-injured veterans and had the support of two-thirds of Congress at the end of last session. We also need your work on behalf of new objectives and emergent issues, often via immediate action to keep up with the stop-and-go pace of legislation. To keep connected, ensure you are signed up for *The MOAA Newsletter* and register as an advocate at our Legislative Action Center.

- Here is a look at MOAA's priorities, in support of the 50th anniversary of our all-volunteer force and to address the challenges facing our uniformed community. Note: Our advocacy team remains active on many other issues not listed here; our priorities will be shaped throughout the year depending on concurrent successes or emerging issues that warrant an all-hands approach. Additionally, we share many interests with The Military Coalition and other stakeholder groups, and leverage those relationships to expand our reach on Capitol Hill.
 - ✓ Compensation and Service-Earned Benefits
 - ✓ Military Housing
 - ✓ Health Care for Currently Serving and Retirees
 - ✓ Health Care and Benefits for Veterans
 - ✓ Service Families
 - ✓ Survivors
 - ✓ Guard and Reserve
- As protecting health care and service-earned benefits is a challenge, MOAA will press forward to engage Congress to shape outcomes in these vital areas. There are steep hills before us. Our nation has a rising debt of more than \$30 trillion and a deficit of more than \$3 trillion. Because of this, MOAA anticipates robust attempts to control federal budgets, reduce or eliminate unprogrammed expenditures, and reduce entitlements. MOAA needs you to be ready to reach out to your legislators and keep that engagement going as necessary to make sure your voice is heard. Details at <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/advocacy/tricare-for-life,-star-act,-housing-help-will-anchor-moaas-spring-advocacy-push/>

VCOC Report - CAPT Matt Haag/CAPT Gary Powers

- First Quarter VCOC 18 JAN 2024 - CAPT Powers attended by ZOOM
 - New President Diana Kupchella presided
 - VCOC continues to look for 1st VP (Communications & Public Affairs, Secretary & Chaplain
 - Increase in Chapter Dues \$0.90/member \$0.50/surviving spouses. Dues based on EOY2023 membership
 - "The Crier: Newsletter is ending
- VIRGINIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS/JOINT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL 2024 INITIATIVES (Adopted at the September 20 and December 14, 2023 JLC meetings)

- JLC 2024-01 Expand Tax Relief for Surviving Spouses of Military Services Members “Killed in Action” to also include “Died on Active Duty”.
- JLC 2024-02 Stop Unscrupulous Firms from Exploiting Veterans
- JLC 2024-03 Virginia National Guard Tuition Assistance Waiver
- JLC 2024-04 Enhanced Emergency Response Medical Protections
- A summary of the approved 2024 JLC Initiatives Policy papers for each initiative can be accessed on the JLC webpage at: <https://www.dvs.virginia.gov/dvs/joint-leadership-council-veterans-service-organizations-2>
- Next meeting in April 2024

Committee Chairperson’s Report

- **Awards Chair** – LTC Habermann
 - Notifications to 15 JROTC high schools, 3 ROTC units, 3 CAP units and 1 Sea Cadets unit for the 2024 Chapter Leadership Awards, Archer Awards and MOAA ROTC and JROTC Medal Awards were sent out on 2 February 2024. Will require chapter members to volunteer to attend the award ceremonies and present the awards.
- **Community Services Volunteer Representative** – No report.

Old Business

- Recognition of Chapter members – criteria? Committee recommendations?
- “Vittles For Veterans” Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was approved by the Board of Directors. CDR Ensley and CAPT Powers will sit as members of the VFV Board of Directors and will attend the first VFV Board meeting on 22Feb2024.

New Business

- **Should the Chapter consider applying for grant funding for:**
 - Project Healing Waters - Funds used to: (1) Purchase fly tying supplies as well as loner rods, reels, waders, and boots for participants to use on trips or to replace repair items already in inventory. (2) Purchase meals and cover gas for trips more than 50 miles from Roanoke. (3) Cover costs to access some private waters. Estimates of participants in the program are between 50 to 75 with additional 25 to 30 volunteers.
 - The chapter voted to apply for a single grant request to MOAA for \$5,000 for Vittles For Vets to be used to support food and essential support items for qualified veterans. CDR Ensley submitted the

grant request and procedures to ensure compliance with MOAA grant guidelines. Support to Project Healing Waters will continue with the possibility of considering a chapter donation.

Adjourn – President

- Meeting adjourned at 1130 hours.