

**MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**  
**SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER**

**MINUTES - BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**20 April 2023**

**Call to Order**

President Matthew Haag called the meeting of the Board of Directors of The Southwest Virginia Chapter, Military Officers Association to order at 1000 hours Eastern Standard Time on 20April 2023.

**Directors and Chapter Officers Present**

1st Vice President and VCOG Representative Gary Powers; 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Treasurer and Membership Chair Robert Brown; Secretary Steve Jamison; Chaplain David Gilleran; Community Services Volunteer Representative Dan Karnes; Smith Mountain Lake Satellite Representative Rick Cocrane; Past President Lee Ensley; Surviving Spouse Representative Mary Lou Summers; Sergeant At Arms Michael Kasnick; Director Tom Dalzell; Director Don Sowder; Director Larry Johnson.

**Directors and Chapter Officers Absent**

Legislative Affairs Representative and Awards Chair Robert Habermann; Transition Team and Director Michael Leigh; Director John Miller; Director Roger Burnett; Webmaster Klaus (Ted) Lonitz.

**Opening Prayer**

Director Don Sowder led the Board of Directors in prayer.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

1st Vice President Gary Powers 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 16 February 2023 were approved as submitted.

**President's Report**

- On Tuesday 2 May 2023 Chapter members President Matt Haag, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Gary Powers, Director Larry Johnson, Director Tom Dalzell, and Past President Lee Ensley will meet at 1230 hours at Mission BBQ in Towers Mall to discuss the process and procedures for recognition of Chapter members.

**Secretary's Report**

- Six members updated their chapter membership dues.
- Twenty members responded to the request for financial support donating \$2,750.

## **Treasurer's Report**

- Income and Expenses Budget vs. Actual through 17 April 2023 discussed – Copy provided to each Board member. No issues.
- Prime Checking Account balance as of 17 April – \$8,967.36. Note - \$1,500 in un-cashed awards checks. Awards programs scheduled.
- Proposed bus trip to Richmond paid \$2,315 to be refunded if the trip is cancelled.
- Leadership Savings balance is - \$3,873.58.

## **1<sup>st</sup> Vice President's Report**

- No report.

## **Membership Chair Report**

- Still using MOAA's Real Time Report leads to check for members and addresses in our catchment area. Sent out eight recruiting letters in 2023.

## **Program Directors Report**

- 20 April 2023 – Board of Directors meeting. Program by Ms. Rebecca J Stackhouse, CTRS, FACHE, Executive Director Salem VA Health Care System with an update on the Salem VA Health Care System.
- 18 May 2023 – Bus trip to the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond, Virginia to include a tour of the Virginia War Memorial and lunch.

## **Surviving Spouse Representative Report**

- Six ladies part or full time participation. Twelve members on the roster. Sent Easter Cards to all, three responded.
- Virginia Veterans Cemetery Ambassadors are present at every burial at the cemetery to assist families.
- The military jeep and trailer used to transport the coffin at each burial was donated by the local American Legion Post 58, Dublin, Virginia.
- Work is underway to form a permanent Honor Guard with at least fifteen members to provide burial services for each funeral.

## **Smith Mountain Lake Satellite Report**

- LtCol Charles R. Allen, Jr., USMC (Ret) will replace CAPT Rick Cocrane as the Smith Mountain Satellite representative.
- The May meeting will host the Franklin County Air Force JROTC unit
- The June meeting will host the SWVA Chapter President CAPT Matt Haag.

## **Public Relations Report**

- Communiqué Newsletter – 1st quarter 2023 (JAN-FEB-MARCH) published by email on 29 March 2023.

- Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Award submitted to MOAA on 11 January 2023.
- Chapter 2022 Level of Excellence application submitted to MOAA on 6 April 2023.
- Chapter Website & Face book – Up and running. According to WIX Traffic Overview, there have been 38 visits so far this year. This is down 74% for the same period last year. About 3/4 of the visits were from people directly accessing the site (i.e. most likely had the website bookmarked), with the remainder getting there via a search engine (i.e. Google, etc.).

### **Past President's Report**

- Chapter member CAPT Jude Lahr, USN (Ret) in intensive care at Lewis Gale hospital due to a stroke.
- Discussed the status of the chapter “cups” given as presentation mementoes. Lee Ensley, Steve Jamison and Bob Brown to discuss.

### **Directors Report's**

- CAPT Burnett – No report.
- LTC Gilleran – No report.
- COL Miller – No report.
- Capt Johnson – No report.

### **Legislative Liaison Report** - LTC Habermann –

- **MOAA's Legislative Priorities** for advocacy as the 118th Congress continues its work. Their focus remains on all seven of the uniformed services and their service-earned entitlements.
  - 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/2023-news-articles/advocacy/moaas-legislative-priorities-118th-Congress/>

## **VCOC Report**

- **JLC 2023 Initiatives:** JLC 2023 Approved Initiatives
  - JLC 2023-01 Expand Tax Relief for Surviving Spouses of Military Service Members to also include “Died in the Line-of-Duty”
  - JLC 2023-02 Real Property Tax Exemption Effective Date.
  - JLC 2023-03 Removal of Age Requirement Income Tax Subtraction
  - JLC 2023-04 Appropriate \$400,000 (GF) for State Veterans Cemeteries; Eliminate Spouse/Dependent and Guard/Reserve Burial Fees
  - JLC 2023-05 Virginia National Guard State Park Admission
  - JLC 2023-06 Virginia National Guard Income Tax Exemption
- A summary of the approved 2023 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>

## **Committee Chairperson’s Report**

- **Awards Chair** – LTC Habermann
  - Notifications to the JROTC, ROTC, CAP units for the 2023 Chapter Leadership Awards, Archer Awards and MOAA ROTC and JROTC Medal Awards sent out on 3 February 2023 requesting nominations.
    - 2023 MOAA ROTC Awards – Virginia Tech
      - Senior Air Force Cadet Jacob Osborn
      - Senior Army Cadet Ian Ecktrom
      - Senior Navy Cadet Elijah Swan
    - 2023 Chapter Leadership Awards
      - The General William B. Rosson Leadership Award to Cadet Shelby J. Valade, Army ROTC Radford University.
      - The Major General Lloyd B. Ramsey Leadership Award to Cadet Jacob A. Osborn, Air Force ROTC Virginia Tech.
    - JROTC/CAP Awards
- **Community Services Volunteer Representative** – LTC Karnes
  - On 24 March 2023 attended the rededication of the Virginia National Guard’s Fort Pickett to Fort Barfoot in honor of Col. Van T. Barfoot, a World War II Medal of Honor recipient with extensive Virginia ties. Since Barfoot was a member of the Choctaw Tribe, there was a significant presence of Native American tribal members from the area who performed authentic songs and dances and honored one of their own.
  - Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC) will meet on Tuesday 9 May 2023 at 1100 hours at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond.
  - On Monday 29 May 2023 the Roanoke Valley Veterans Council will conduct a Memorial Day Wreath laying Ceremony at 0930 hours at the Roanoke Valley War Memorial-Freedom Plaza downtown Roanoke.

## Old Business

- Recognition of Chapter members - criteria. Committee to meet 2 May 2023 1230 hours Mission BBQ Towers Mall.
- Military Family Support Center/Soldiers Pantry? Still looking at what can be done.
- Results on the letter to the membership requesting financial support and requesting correct contact information resulted in 20 members donating \$2,750.
- Vietnam Veterans night Vinton War Memorial 29 March 2023 1800 hours.
- Southwest Virginia Chapter participation in Opera Roanoke's Veterans Fair 24 and 26 February 2023. Thanks to Robert Habermann, Gary Powers, and
  - Joseph Obenshain who volunteered to participate and man the SWVC information table.
- Affinity Care of Virginia: A hospice organization operating out of the Roanoke area approached the Southwest Virginia Chapter with a request to participate in the "**We Honor Veterans**" program, a partnership between the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization (NHPCO) and the Department of Veterans Affairs. The program offers care for veteran-specific physical or emotional issues that may arise near the end of life.
  - Affinity Care of Virginia has recently gotten involved with the "**We Honor Veterans**" program and some pinning ceremonies with some of the individuals they serve. These "**Pinning Ceremonies**" offer a more purposeful experience for the veteran and their family.
  - They have approached the Southwest Virginia Chapter seeking volunteers who may desire to participate in this program.
- On Tuesday 11 April 2023 Chapter President Matt Haag and First Vice President Gary Powers participated in a MOAA ZOOM meeting. MOAA representatives to visit members of Congress on 25 and 26 April called "Advocacy For Action" to discuss the erosion of TRICARE benefits. MOAA also stressing to chapters look at actions and steps to meet recruiting challenges within the chapters and MOAA

## New Business

- Bus trip to the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond, Virginia to include a tour of the Virginia War Memorial and lunch cancelled due to lack of interest. Chapter will receive refund paid for the bus trip. Email notice to be sent to the membership.
- The Board recommended a BBQ lunch meeting at the American Legion Post 3 for the May 2023 membership meeting.
- The Board of Directors approved the donation of \$100 as a memorial gift in connection with the death of LTC Jim Flynn, Jr., USA (Ret) to the VTCC Class of 1964 Vietnam Memorial Scholarship Fund thru the Virginia Tech Foundation.
- President Matt Haag provided information to the membership about getting embroidered Chapter Logo on shirts.

## Adjourn –

1130 hours