

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

21March 2019

Call to Order

A meeting of the Board of Directors of The Southwest Virginia Chapter, Military Officers Association was held on 21 March 2019 at 1000 hours Eastern Standard Time at the Hidden Valley Country Club, Salem Virginia.

Directors and Chapter Officers Present

President David Gilleran, Secretary Steve Jamison, Treasurer Scott Van Cleef, Chaplain Roger Talmadge, Sergeant At Arms Michael Kasnick, Smith Mountain Lake Satellite Representative Rick Cocrane; Past President Dan Karnes, Director Larry Johnson, Director John Miller, Surviving Spouse Liaison Mary Lou Summers, Director Emeritus Tom Dalzell.

Directors and Chapter Officers Absent

1st Vice President and Membership Chair Donna Fore, 2nd Vice President Lee Ensley, Personal Affairs Officer and Legislative Affairs Representative Jim Flynn, VCOC Representative and Public Relations Representative and Newsletter Editor Gary Powers, Awards Chair Robert Habermann, Director Michael Leigh.

Call to Order

President David Gilleran called the meeting to order at 1005 hours. A quorum of directors was present, and the meeting was convened.

Opening Prayer

Chaplain Roger Talmadge led the Directors in prayer.

Pledge of Allegiance

President David Gilleran led The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag recited by all present.

Approval of Board of Directors Meeting Minutes:

- Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting of 21 February 2019 were approved as submitted.

President's Report

- Discussion on the resignation of Gary Powers from the SWVC and relinquishing of his roles as Board Member, Chapter Public Affairs Officer, VCOC Representative, Newsletter Editor and Webmaster effective 25 February 2019.

Secretary's Report:

- Secretary Steve Jamison reported on the Chapter membership. One new member joined, John Chan US Navy. Chapter roster, membership dues update.
- Proposed logistic plans for the VT membership trip for the 18 April meeting. Steve will drive a 15 passenger van and his wife will drive a 9 passenger van. Meet at the "Park and Go" exit 311, I-81 in Salem.
- Chapter member name tags with MOAA Logo – cost \$10 each. No minimum number. Approved by the Board. Details later this summer to order.

Treasurer's Report:

- Checking account balance - \$7885.44.
- The Profit and Loss statement, Budget vs. Actual 1 January through 20 March 2019 was presented.
- Leadership and savings fund balance - \$7,403.03, of which \$2,250 is in savings, \$3,750 from the VFW gift and \$1,430.03 in the Leadership Awards fund.
- Chaplain Roger Talmadge reported that the audit of the SWVC finance records and documents was successfully completed.

Chaplains Report

- Eleven volunteers from AUSA, The Stonewall Jackson Chapter, assisted at the Military Family Support Center food pantry on 21 March 2019 .

1st Vice President's Report:

- No report.

2nd Vice President's Report:

- No Report

Membership Chair Report:

- No Report

Program Directors Report

- 21 March 2019 – Mark Castillo, USMC (Ret). Topic: History of the Purple Heart.
- 18 April 2019 – -_MGEN Randy Fullhart, USAF (Ret) Commandant of Cadets. Topic: Status of the Corps of Cadets and a tour of the new Corps of Cadets facilities on the upper quad. This meeting will be held at the Inn at Virginia Tech. This trip and program at Virginia Tech will be in lieu of the normal spring dinner meeting.
- 16 May 2019 - Mr. Dennis Finch - United States Secret Service (Ret). Topic: The Presidential Protective Division.
- 19 September 2019 – TBD - Lunch meeting with Board meeting
- 17 October 2019 – TBD - Dinner meeting
- 21 November 2019 – TBD - Lunch meeting with Board meeting
- 19 December 2019 – TBD - Lunch meeting installation of officers

Surviving Spouse Representative Report:

- Ms. Mary Lou Summers reminded her ladies' about the April lunch meeting at Virginia Tech. Several ladies's indicated they plan to attend.
- Reviewing the MOAA Face book site on Surviving Spouses.
- A Memorial Service is in the planning stages for deceased member Pat Green in late May or early June. Details will be promulgated when they are finalized.

Legislative Liaison Report:

- See Legislative Matters attached.

VCOC Representative Report

- COL John Miller will represent the Chapter at the VCOC meeting on 3 April 2019 in Richmond.
- The VCOC proposal to do a chapter leader training program - postponed.
- VCOC grants to chapters, approximately \$250 to support recruiting, e.g. to cover cost of lunch for prospective members. ??
- Date for Spring Congressional luncheon. ??
- Future meetings starting at 1000 hours at American Legion, 1708 Commonwealth Ave. Richmond, 17 July 2019 and 9 October 2019.

Public Affairs Report

- No report. Discussion relative to resignation of Gary Powers and abdication of all SWVC Chapter responsibilities.
 - Public Affairs/Media - VCOC website: <http://www.virginiamoaa.com>
 - Sponsorships – Sponsors: Anderson, Desimone & Green, P.C., Ann McGee Green, Esq. and New York Life, Donna L. Fore, Agent.
 - Upcoming PR opportunities - Military Family Support Center grant, Bernard Marie 75th D-Day Anniversary Dinner, Renovation Alliance Roanoke Community Renovation Day 27 April 2019.

Sergeant At Arms Report

- No report.

Past President's Report:

- No report.

Director Reports

- Smith Mountain Lake Satellite representative Rick Cocrane reported on the health status of Art Sommers.

Committee Chairperson's Report

- SWVC Chapter, Smith Mountain Lake Satellite. Rick Cocrane reported on upcoming speakers and programs of the Smith Mountain Lake Satellite. Presentation of Leadership Award from MOAA in recognition for Art Sommers.
- Awards Chair.

- JROTC and ROTC Medal Awards being presented. Bob Habermann sent out nomination requests to 16 high schools. Two high schools have dropped the JROTC program – Patrick County High School and William Byrd High School. Volunteers to make presentations of all the ROTC and JROTC awards.
- Chapter Leadership Awards 2019. An awards board convened to select the two Leadership Awards from the eight nominations submitted. Non-winners presented with an appropriate letter of recognition.

Old Business

- Corps of Cadets Awards Program to be held 25 April 2019.
- Pantry Dates for the Military Family Support Center. (5/16; 6/18; 7/18; 8/15; 9/19)
- Future programs for membership meeting. Possibilities: "Ghost Army" - POC Steve Jamison, James Baum; New PMS's at VT - POC Jim Flynn.
- Renovation Alliance Community Renovation Day Saturday 27 April 2019.
- The Annual Brain Injury Services event to be held on Monday, 1 April 2019, from 5:30 to 7 PM in the Main Dining Room of the Shenandoah Club. The Guest Speaker will be Lance Jones, CEO Lewis-Gale Medical Center.
- 2019 MOAA Level of Excellence Award submission due 1 May 2019 was submitted on 8 March 2019. Copy to VCOC.

New Business

- The entire membership needs to help us find a member to step in at this time, on a temporary basis, to fill the role of newsletter editor, webmaster, handle news releases or press releases and be the chapter Virginia, Council of Chapter (VCOC) representative. Gary Powers indicated that he is willing to assist with the transition of responsibilities. We are looking for an immediate short term action plan thru May and can look to regroup over the summer. Please let me know as soon as possible if you can take on any of these responsibilities. We all need to work together at this time to ensure these functions are taken care of.
- Blue Star: The Moneta Garden Club has obtained permission from Bedford Public Library System to install a Blue Star Memorial Marker on the grounds at Moneta-Smith Mountain Lake Library. The Blue Star Memorial Marker that honors the Armed Forces of American. The National Garden Club started this project and now Moneta Garden Club has found the perfect location to place this Marker at SML. The marker has arrived and is currently in storage. The dedication ceremony is scheduled for 18 May 2019 at 11:00 A.M. The Moneta Garden Club would like to invite Military Officers Association of American to attend the dedication ceremony. Point of contact is Linda Bosiger, Secretary Moneta Garden Club at lebosiger@aol.com or 540-297-8802.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board of Directors, the meeting was adjourned at 1134 hours. The next Board of Directors meeting will be at 1000 hours on Thursday, 16 May 2019, at Hidden Valley Country Club.

Respectfully submitted,

Stephen L. Jamison

Legislative Matters

Commonwealth of Virginia Level

Summary of 2019 JLC Policy Initiatives

The Virginia General Assembly convened on January 9th for the 2019 Session. The 2019 Joint Leadership Council (JLC) Policy Initiatives for the collective military and veteran community include its status in the following in priority order:

1. JLC 2019-01 - Increased State Active Duty (SAD) Pay.

Recommendation - That the Governor and General Assembly appropriate \$50,000 to ensure that all Virginia National Guardsmen are paid at least at the E6 rate.

Status: January 25, it passed the Senate (40-0) and referred to House Appropriations Committee

2. JLC 2019-02 - Income Tax Subtraction for Certain Low-Income 100% Disabled Veterans.

Recommendation - That the Governor and General Assembly approve an individual income tax subtraction for 100% service-connected disabled veterans with a federally adjusted gross income, not exceeding 150% of the federal poverty level for a four-person household, who have not already claimed another exemption.

Status: January 30, the Senate Finance Committee referred it to the House Appropriations Committee where it died.

3. JLC 2019-03 - Electronic Ballot Return.

Recommendation - That the Governor and General Assembly enact legislation and provide budget support of a pilot program at the Virginia State Board of Elections for \$100,000 and funding for one FTE, for a limited pilot program for the electronic return of absentee ballots by Virginia's deployed military service members.

Status: the Senate failed to report it out of committee, and it died.

4. JLC 2019-04 - Personal Property Tax Relief for Certain Disabled Veterans.

Recommendation - That the Governor and General Assembly approve legislation creating a standardized, statewide personal property tax exemption for one vehicle for 100% service-connected, total and permanent disabled veterans.

Status: It passed the House with substitute language creating a local option (92-4) and sent to the Senate which agreed to the modification (38-0) and referred back to the House for legislative action.

5. JLC 2019-05 - Free Tuition for Virginia National Guardsmen.

Recommendation - That the Governor and General Assembly provide budget support of approximately a \$1 million increase in the annual State Tuition Assistance program for a pilot program to cover the estimated 3.5% of Guardsmen seeking a degree who are not currently entirely covered by federal and state tuition assistance.

Status: January 28, it passed the Senate (40-0) and referred to House Appropriations Committee

6. JLC 2019-06 - VMSDEP.

Recommendation - That the Governor and General Assembly remove the requirement that a veteran's disability rating be combat related. Instead, a permanent service-connected disability rating of at least 90%, plus the satisfaction of the other requirements currently in the Code, would qualify a veteran's spouse or child for VMSDEP benefits.

Status: January 30, it passed the Senate (40-0) and referred to House Appropriations Committee

7. JLC 2019-07 - Phased-in System for Partial State Tax Exemption for Military Retirement Income.

Recommendation - That the Governor and General Assembly support changes to the current Virginia tax laws for a phased-in system to reduce state tax on military retirement income up to \$40,000 for retirees 65 years of age or older.

Status: no movement recently.

Other Commonwealth Legislative Initiatives

Approximately thirty additional pieces of legislation involving issues of the military, members of the armed forces, and dependents are pending before the House and Senate. These run the full gambit of subjects, such as tax exemptions, drones, retirement benefits, tuition refunds, taxation matters, and duty pay. Should you wish to learn more about these matters, please contact me.

Storming the Hill Day

On the Commonwealth level, the ongoing 4-year renovation of the original General Assembly and the move to Pocahontas Building has resulted in reduced space for conducting an annual 'Storming the Hill' Day as done in previous years. This year VCOC representatives were invited to join in several events on the JLC Day at the General Assembly on January 16. The day began with the Military, and Veteran Caucus mentioned above at 0800, followed by individually scheduled meetings with delegates, senators, and legislative aids from 0900 to 1115. Visits to either the House or Senate Galleries then followed before lunch.

COL John Miller represented our Chapter at 'Storming the Hill' during JLC day at the General Assembly. MOAA joined JLC instead of hosting its own 'Storming' session. Eight MOAA representatives attended the meeting with about 30 other individuals.

In an after-action message dated January 18, 2019, COL Miler reported on the events and noted that our representatives had the opportunity to meet personally with several of our local legislators to keep them fully informed on matters which impact the memberships of MOAA and the other military groups and organizations.

COL Miller also advised that all of our legislators indicated support for the JLC initiatives, but they caveated that budgetary constraints would be the biggest hurdle, especially this year with much General Assembly time devoted primarily to 'tax conformity' with federal legislation, broadband access, redistricting, expanding I-81, etc.

Finally, COL Miller noted that all of our legislators expressed support for our local agenda.

Federal Level

The 2019 MOAA Initiatives for the collective military and veteran community include the following in priority order:

1) Ensure that any TRICARE reform sustains access to top-quality care.

Recommendation – Strengthen our partnership with The Defense Health Agency (DHA) working groups and executive sessions. Engage The Military Coalition's Healthcare Committee. Continue to administer and drive the results of MOAA's healthcare surveys. Closely monitor the new role DHA has for oversight of The Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs).

2) Prevent disproportional TRICARE fee increases.

Recommendation – Reverse or significantly decrease the 2018 TRICARE Prime copayment for grandfathered/Group A beneficiaries to reduce out-of-pocket costs for successive specialty appointments, such as physical therapy or mental health care. Protect TRICARE For Life as a second payer to Medicare Part B.

3) Sustain Military pay comparability with the private sector.

Recommendation – Maintain continuous, unified messaging to legislators and service leadership, advising annual military pay raises approved by Congress correlate with the Employment Cost Index (ECI). Correlate with The Military Coalition to address this wide-reaching imperative of support to those in uniform, and seek closure of the 2.6 percent gap as soon as feasible.

4) Stop erosion of compensation and non-pay quality-of-life benefits.

Recommendation – Continue to oppose proposals to reduce compensation or undermine long-term retention. Assess the progress of The Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation and potential changes to a salary system.

5) End financial penalties for military survivors.

Recommendation - Ensure that legislation is introduced in the 116th Congress to address survivor benefits. Educate legislators, staffers, and other stakeholders about the inequities. Mobilize the members of MOAA and The Military Coalition to engage and press for legislation to be included in The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

6) End concurrent receipt penalties for military retirees.

Recommendation – Ensure that legislation is introduced in the 116th Congress to address Chapter 61 inequities. Educate legislators and congressional staffers about the impact these penalties have on some of our most vulnerable retirees. Mobilize our membership and The Military Coalition to engage Capitol Hill.

7) Achieve equity of benefits for Guard and Reserve members with their active duty counterparts.

Recommendation – Encourage Congress to advance equal pay and benefits for similar services performed by Guard and Reserve components relative to active duty troops. Build partnerships with Federal Agencies such as The Department of Labor, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserves, and state governors to expand and strengthen

employer support for Guard and Reserve Members. Appeal to The Military Coalition to expand influence and reach in all areas affecting pay and benefits issues.

8) Strengthen DoD-VA collaboration and services to support wounded warriors and expanding populations of women veterans.

Recommendation – Monitor the FY-2019 NDAA requirement for a review and assessment of DoD and service wounded warrior programs. Seek legalization forcing the VA to address known gaps in benefits to veterans. Involve The Military Coalition’s Veterans’ Committee to expand influence and reach in all areas affecting veterans’ issues. Engage and advocate of the behalf of the VA – when needed – to ensure that the agency is adequately resourced and equipped to deliver benefits to the veterans without backlogs or delays. Preserve the integrity of and access to DoD and VA health systems for dually eligible beneficiaries.

9) Ensure timely access to service-earned VA benefits.

Recommendation - Oppose efforts to use veteran’ disability benefits compensation or other benefits to pay for VA system improvements and diminish or restrict access to service-earned benefits. Press DoD and the VA to improve true interoperability of electronic media, personnel, and benefits records to improve medical outcomes and delivery of benefits. Mandate DoD and the VA to develop protocols and establish a mechanism to address service-connected illnesses and environmental exposures and institute a framework for managing toxic exposures that might happen in the future.

10) Protect military and veteran family support programs and policies.

Recommendation – Educate Members of Congress and their staffers on the importance of military family readiness and issues affecting military and veteran families. Protect programming and subsidies essential to MWR and family readiness. Eliminate health and safety hazards in military based housing. Decrease military spouse unemployment and underemployment. Ensure their quality of life and health of military and veteran families.

Recent Federal Legislative Gains

Active / Reserve Force Issues – the principal legislative achievements are as follows:

- 2.4 percent active duty pay raise.
- Unchanged Basic Allowance for House (BAH) calculation.
- Increase in force end strength levels.
- Won increased travel reimbursement for Guard/Reserve training beyond commuting distance.
- Extended Post 9/11 GI Bill eligibility to Guard/Reserve serving on pre-planned missions and medical hold.

- Eliminated 15-year time limit thus making Post-9/11 GI bill permanent for service members entering the military beginning Jan 1, 2018, and other educational enhancements for families-survivors.

Military Family / Survivors / Veterans / Other Issues – the principal achievements are as follows:

- Protected individual unemployability/COLA benefits for disabled veterans.
- Permanently extended the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) and indexed future increases to COLA.
- Improved VA claims appeals to reduce long waits and complex decisions.
- Won legislation to provide VA additional authorities to hold employees accountable
- Extended VA Choice Program authority and funding to provide health care in the community.
- Ensured veterans affected by chemical testing attain presumptive status for claims.
- Actively engaged Commissary reform efforts.

Matters that are still pending and which will need to be resolved in FY 2019:

- Will Congress pass a full-year VA appropriation or adopt a 3-4 month short-term appropriations?
- Will VA replace the Choice Program and reform community care?
- Will Congress pass a full year appropriations bill for the FY 2018 NDAA?
- TRICARE: Despite yearlong efforts to prevent TRICARE fee increases, the final NDAA included progressive year-over-year increases in pharmacy copayments. Beneficiaries will see steady gains in their cost shares across all medication tiers, which will save DoD more than \$2.1 billion by 2022 and fund improvements in military readiness and SSIA. Most of the increases will be through the retail pharmacy sector, but beneficiaries still can obtain medications at military pharmacies free. The new fees will include mail-order generic prescriptions as well, and begin on Jan 1, 2018.

Storming the Hill in DC

On the national level, MOAA will hold their Annual Storming in April on a date to be announced in Washington, D.C. Dates are also being discussed for the Annual Congressional Appreciation Luncheon and will be shared when available.

Several of Our Local Legislators

- 1) John Edwards – John@edwardsva.com – Senator
- 2) Chris Head – chris.head@homeinstead.com - Delegate
- 3) Sam Rasoul – sam@envigor.net - Delegate
- 4) Chris Hurst – Christlhurst@gmail.com - Delegate