

Minutes of Maryland Council of Chapters, MOAA, Quarterly Meeting

Saturday, 12 September 2015

Arnold, Maryland

A meeting of the Military Officers Association of America – Maryland Council of Chapters was held at O’Loughlin’s Restaurant, 1258 Bay Dale Drive, Arnold, MD 21012 [410-349-0200]. Nine of ten Chapters were represented, as follows: Annapolis (COL Andy Fallon; also Council President), Montgomery County (CAPT David Peterson; also Director and MD Veterans Commission LNO), Fort Meade (Major John Whitman; also Past Council President), Southern Maryland (CDR Phil Campbell), Prince George’s County (COL Duane DeVance), Susquehanna (Annie Brock), Upper Eastern Shore (MG James Adkins), Upper Potomac (COL Robert Fenimore), Star Spangled Banner (COL Tom Seybold). Gen. Smallwood Chapter was not represented due to a previously scheduled Chapter function. Other Council Officers present were COL Harvey T. Kaplan (1st Vice President), LTC Bryon Hartzog (2nd Vice President), CDR Greg Dalke (Treasurer), Major James Shiffrin (Webmaster), Major James P. Dittbrenner (TOPS Liaison Officer). Following lunch, the meeting was called to order by Council President, COL Andrew Fallon, USA (Ret.) at 1230 hours. A copy of the Agenda for the meeting was distributed, and the formal portion of the meeting was preceded by the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. **Minutes.** The minutes of the 11 April 2015 Council meeting were approved without correction.
2. **President’s Highlights.** Andy Fallon updated the Council on a number of issues of significance for all members, with special emphasis on the upcoming 5th Annual Congressional Luncheon. It will be held this year in room B369 of the Rayburn Building; we had used that room once before. MOAA National Headquarters will be represented by 20 people, for whom we will be reimbursed. At present we are expecting all members of the Maryland Delegation except Senator Mikulski and Congressman Cummings. Harvey Kaplan passed around drafts of the tri-fold program for final editing prior to printing. There will be a seating chart at the door. Representatives of Chapters should be asked to bring MOAA name tags if they have them. Adhesive blanks (with the new MOAA logo) will be available at the door for those who do not bring name tags. Three sets of reproduced fact sheets (formerly used by us for Storming the Hill earlier this spring) will be placed on each table for information purposes.
3. **Legislative Affairs.** In Jack Fringer’s absence, President Fallon reminded all present to use the MOAA website (and State Council website) to keep all members up to date. He again emphasized that “democracy is a contact sport,” in which all of our Chapters and members need to remain involved. He urged Chapter Presidents to encourage all of our members to sign up with National MOAA for legislative updates. The budget process is

still in play and important matters are involved (e.g., pharmacy use and costs, TRICARE adjustments, age 26 “cut offs” for members of military families, etc.). Early this fall, Jack Fringer is planning to hold a meeting on legislative initiatives for 2016. We need to select our three (approximately) major legislative issues for emphasis during the upcoming General Assembly session; the House of Delegates and Maryland Senate are again scheduled to convene in early January 2016. Dave Peterson volunteered to become a member of Jack’s Legislative Affairs Committee of the MOAA Maryland Council. It was agreed that we need to maintain contact with our members of the General Assembly more than once per year. Michael Busch and Sheila Hixson were identified as targets for Council attention. We also need to work with Secretary of Veterans Affairs George Owings and with the Governor’s Office. There needs to be a “check-off” on the Maryland State Tax Return to designate contributions for the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund. Comptroller Peter Franchot has supported that change. There also need to be expanded educational benefits for members of military families. Further, we need to encourage all members of the Senate and House of Delegates to become members of the Maryland Veterans Caucus (and, of course, to support Caucus issues and concerns). Finally, we need to identify an inexpensive and pleasant venue in Annapolis for MOAA to host members of the General Assembly.

4. **Annual Meeting of MOAA.** The Council and all five Chapters that have won Levels of Excellence Awards are planning to attend the gathering in Orlando, FL, from 29-31 October 2015.
5. **Financial Report.** Members of the Council were given copies of the report prepared by Treasurer Greg Dalke. We had a total of \$9,341.72 in our accounts as of the end of August. We are in sound financial condition, but money will be spent on the Congressional Luncheon next week. All Chapters have paid 100% of their 2016 dues to the Council (\$1.00 per member). Our CD [NFCU Share Certificate] is maturing very soon, and that one has been paying us 5% annually. We won’t be able to match that rate when we receive the proceeds and attempt to purchase a new one. Further, while our administrative expenses for this year’s Congressional Luncheon will decrease due to some efficiencies, we are not certain how much National MOAA will be paying us to subsidize the event (in addition to \$39 per attendee from HQ). [Note: After the meeting we learned that National HQ will match its past contribution of \$500 toward the Maryland Congressional Luncheon. Also, Council charged members only \$37 per person this year, slightly less than our expected cost per member. Some Chapters provided additional subsidies to attendees.]
6. **TOPS Report.** Jim Dittbrenner distributed copies of the TOPS Report, dated 11 September 2015, to all in attendance. He thanks all for their assistance over the past few months. Meetings will be coming to Montgomery County, an approach to helping

transitioners. He'll talk with Towson State University on recruiting more Veterans (Annie Brock will help and has a POC {Gold Star Mother} at Towson).

7. **Meeting Dates.** Webmaster Jim Shiffrin will post input from Chapters regarding their meeting dates on the Council's website (i.e., the on-line calendar of events). The Council was reminded that we still are seeking a new Council Secretary, since Jim Pedo has relocated to Texas.
8. **Organizations to Support.** The concept of the Council's donating to charitable causes was discussed, with the following possible organizations as recipients: Maryland Veterans Trust Fund and MOAA Heritage Society—a new 501(c)3 organization. Organizations can become Founding Members of the MOAA Heritage Society by contributing \$125 per year for 5 years. [The threshold is higher for individuals to become Founding Members.] A motion was made by Harvey Kaplan, seconded, and approved to conduct a formal vote at our next meeting to decide on our commitments to charity. It was noted that Founding Members of the MOAA Heritage Society need to make their initial contributions by the end of December 2015.
9. **MOAA Networking Event.** A special MOAA networking gathering is scheduled for the Air and Space Museum in DC on 24 September 2015.
10. **LinkedIn Page on Web.** Phil Campbell advised the group that he plans to retire from active duty in July of 2016, and is now thinking more about transitioning. He suggested that a LinkedIn page on the web would be helpful for transitioning personnel. It most likely would also be instrumental in enhancing Chapter recruiting. Annie Brock volunteered to assist in setting up such a page/site. It was noted, however, that this might not be worth doing unless we increase our level of support State-wide for transitioning Uniformed Services personnel.
11. **Maryland Veterans Commission Report.** Dave Peterson distributed copies of his report to all Council members. The program formerly titled "LZ Pimlico" (for Vietnam veterans) is going to be called "LZ Maryland." It will not be held at Pimlico Race Track, but has been rescheduled for 18-19 June 2016 at the Maryland Fairgrounds in Timonium. More information will be available in the months ahead.
12. **Eleventh Chapter for Maryland.** Bob Fenimore of the Upper Potomac Chapter (the Chapter's Treasurer) reported that his group now has an interested point of contact in Western Maryland; the Chapter will be following up with this individual.
13. **State Report Card.** A new edition of the State Report Card (comparing states on various measurable items of interest to Veterans and retirees) will be published in an issue of Military Officer later this season. [Note: Mike Hayden of MOAA HQ reported after the Council meeting that, based on our formal input to National in Spring 2015, the Maryland Council will very likely be pleased with the final report for this year.]
14. **Best National Guard Unit of the Year.** A motion was made, seconded, and approved to commit up to \$100 per year to this Council awards program. John Whitman drafted a

letter to the Maryland Adjutant General for our President's signature, initiating the competition for the coming season. There are costs related to this program, including engraving costs involved in preparing the plaque for the traveling trophy.

15. **New Business.** (a) We need to share with all Chapters/members on the Council's website the fact that a Maryland Comptroller State Tax Exemption is available to us, if applications are submitted. The Upper Potomac Chapter just received State approval documents. [Bob Fenimore will write this up for dissemination via the website.] (b) Delegate James Proctor of District 27A, Prince George's County, died this past Thursday. His obituary is in today's Washington Post. Del. Proctor had been a supporter of our military retired pay tax exemption and other Veterans issues. In a separate matter, Annie Brock shared with the Council that zoho.com is a most useful e-mail system—and it is free to use.
16. **Chapter Reports {Highlights of Discussion}.** (a) The Annapolis Chapter reported that its Bowie BaySox baseball event on 4 August was a success, bringing over 60 people to the game. The Chapter's next meeting will take place on 25 October, with a speaker on Pacific Ocean Issues for the United States. (b) The Star Spangled Banner Chapter is storing 50 years of its records electronically. On 26 September it will conduct a visit to the Martin Airport and Museum. On 18 November Congressman Ruppertsberger is scheduled to speak at the Chapter's Annual Banquet. The group has commenced planning for its Antietam Staff Ride, scheduled for 17 September 2016. Representatives of other Chapters are invited to participate. (c) The Upper Eastern Shore Chapter hosted Maryland Secretary of Veterans Affairs George Owings at a luncheon. On 10 December it will hold a holiday event at the St. Michael's Yacht Club. (d) Fort George G. Meade Chapter's President, BG Andrew Veronis, spoke on 10 September on the Greek Air Force. Programs are continuing in support of the BWI USO and Honor Flights. The November speaker will discuss early deployment to Iraq (2002) and his book at a dinner or luncheon. On 7 November George Owings will visit Fort Meade to discuss MD VA programs at a luncheon planned jointly with the Officers' Wives Club. It was noted that Retirement Appreciation Day at Fort Meade will be conducted this year on 23 October. The Council was reminded to update the State Website with changes in officers and other relevant material. (e) Montgomery County Chapter reported on its great success with its first "Veterans Visiting Veterans" program, held at Brook Grove Retirement Village in Sandy Spring, MD. A total of 27 Veteran-residents participated. The Chapter plans to conduct a similar program soon at another senior citizens facility in the County. Chapter President Dave Peterson visited Congressman John Delaney (6th Congressional District of Maryland) during his August Open House. Author George Wallace spoke about writing novels on submarine warfare at a recent Chapter luncheon. Other recent luncheon speakers included RADM Joyce Johnson [Travel Emergencies in Third World Countries], and Neil Greenberger [on the upcoming 24 October "Year of Vietnam Vets"]

Program hosted by Montgomery County]. Regan Campbell (or her supervisor) will be speaking soon on the Navy's Frigate Program. (f) Prince George's County Chapter will hold its installation on 26 September. Future membership meetings are planned for a new location: the Club at Joint Base Andrews. (g) Southern Maryland Chapter is attempting to increase Chapter visibility. It plans to establish as its location for future meetings the PAX River Naval Air Museum. It reported it is donating rebates from the MOAA Travel Program to the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home. Chapter members will be offering their services as guest speakers for local JROTC programs. One possibility being considered is a series of tailgate gatherings at ROTC High Schools, county fairs, etc. It was noted that there is an opportunity to link this effort with memberships in Voices for America's Troops. (h) Susquehanna Chapter has scheduled General Gilman from Johns Hopkins University (Medical Program) for its 1 October luncheon. The Chapter will staff an MOAA table at the upcoming Oktoberfest. It is very likely going to be scheduling future programs for during the day (as opposed to evenings) to increase attendance. (i) The Upper Potomac Chapter reported that its Annual Picnic was a success; 70 persons attended this catered event, paying only \$18 apiece. The Chapter furnished drinks. The 4th Annual Golf Scramble (to raise funds for "Operation Second Chance") is coming up on 18 September at Glade Valley. The Annual Chapter Business Meeting will take place on 17 October, with Phil Munley speaking on Maryland Veterans Issues. An Annual Holiday Luncheon will be held in December.

17. **Upcoming Meetings of the Council:**

- 5th Annual MOAA Maryland Congressional Luncheon, 1130-1430 hours, 17 Sep
- Maryland Council of Chapters Meeting, 5 Dec 15 [**Changed from November**]
- Maryland Council of Chapters Meeting, 5 Mar 16
- Maryland Council of Chapters Meeting, Tentative for 11 Jun 16
- Maryland Council of Chapters Meeting, just prior to start of MOAA National Meeting on date to be determined, in Arlington, VA

The meeting was adjourned by the President at 1430 hours. The following agenda items remain for further discussion at the next Council meeting on Saturday, 5 December: (a) Chapter Board Vacancies; (b) Voting on Planned Support/Involvement in Other Organizations and Activities (Old Business); (c) Additional Title for Maryland Council of Chapters President (Old Business); (d) Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training (MCVET)(Old Business); (e) Update on MOAA State Report Card in Military Officer magazine (Old Business); (f) Report from Chair of Legislative Affairs Committee (Update); (g) New Business – To Be Determined.

Respectfully submitted:

Harvey T. Kaplan; COL, USA (Ret.)

1st Vice President