



Maryland Council  
Military Officers Association of America  
Meeting Minutes  
2 December 2012 at the Fleet Reserve Club  
Annapolis, Maryland

Members Present:

Norm Henry Taylor, President  
John Whitman, First Vice President  
Greg Dalke, Council Treasurer and Southern Maryland Chapter  
Jim Shiffrin, President Ft Meade Chapter, Council Webmaster  
Mike J. DeHaemer, President Baltimore Chapter  
Tom Smith, Director and Southern Maryland Chapter  
Dave Peterson, Director and Montgomery County Chapter filling in for Harvey Kaplan  
Jim Dittbrenner, TOPS and member Montgomery and Meade Chapters  
Eleanor Layman, Auxiliary Rep and Ft Meade Chapter  
Tony Blankenship, President, Southern MD Chapter  
James Shellem, President Upper Eastern Shore  
Jeff Brock, President, Susquehanna Chapter  
Bill Benson, Upper Potomac Chapter filling in for Luke Brennecke  
Ken McCreedy, President, General Smallwood Chapter  
Dave Myers, Annapolis Chapter Treasurer filling in for Andy Fallon  
Raymond Rowland, Past President PG County Chapter  
Reggie Sealey, President PG County Chapter  
Jim Dittbrenner, TOPS, Montgomery County Chapter

Members Absent:

Gunter Finkenauer, Second Vice-President  
James Pede, Council Secretary  
Jack Fringer, Legislative Chair  
Harvey Kaplan, President, Montgomery County Chapter  
Luke Brennecke, President, Upper Potomac Chapter  
Andy Fallon, President, Annapolis Chapter

The Maryland Council of Chapters met 2 December 2012 at 1300 in the Fleet Reserve Club, Annapolis, Maryland.

Following the pledge and invocation, Captain Taylor opened the meeting with a review and approval of the minutes from 5 August 2012 meeting. There was one correction to the minutes: The minutes should be amended under the Auxiliary Report to reflect that the wreath laying ceremony at Arlington took place on Memorial Day (May 2012) rather than scheduled for Memorial Day in 2013. Minutes from 5 August were approved with

the amendment. Also from the April TOPS open item: Ft Meade Chapter has identified CDR Jason Harris, USNR-Retired as the chapter TOPS point of contact. Item closed.

Treasurer's report: CMDR Greg Dalke presented the treasurer's report stating the finances of the council are in good shape. He stated the CDs mature in July of 2014 and will remain with the bank until maturity because of the favorable interest rate. All other funds have been transferred to Navy Federal Credit Union and when the CDs mature they will also be transferred to Navy FCU.

Finance Committee John Whitman raised the following proposal: Instead of alternating \$250 awards each year to the MOAA Scholarship in Fund in 2012 and \$250 to Charlotte Hall Veterans Home in 2013 why not split the award to \$125 to each annually? CDR Dalke explained that the MOAA award check for 2012 has been issued and \$250 is the minimum amount that gets the Maryland Councils contribution published by MOAA National. While publicity is not the primary goal of the contribution after a short discussion by the membership it was decided to leave the award as is for now with \$250 going to Charlotte Hall in 2013. At a later date if the Treasurer feels the Council's finances can support an annual award of \$250 to each organization the issue will be addressed again. Item closed.

TOPS Report: Major Jim Dittbrenner will offer assistance to come down to any chapter to help out with a chapter TOPS program if required or requested. He also gave statistics confirming that while the Veterans unemployment rate has come down a little returning Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans unemployment is still over 10% as opposed to a 7.9% unemployment rate for the general public. The concern for returning veterans is in the 18-30 year old age group trying to find meaningful employment. He also mentioned it is difficult to get Aberdeen/Ft Detrick troops to MOAA career fairs in Washington, D.C.

Legislative Liaison: Captain Taylor gave the update for LTC Fringer. He brought to the attention of the MD Council three items from MOAA web site in 2012 and storming the hill in April. They are:

- Reject Disproportional Cost-Shifting to Military Beneficiaries
- Resist Premature Force Reductions
- Resist "Fast-Tracking" Military Retirement Changes

Going into 2013 the military (active, guard, reserves and retirees) continue to be an easy target by Congress for cost savings during these difficult budget times. Now is the time to stay engaged with your legislators and follow the weekly legislative alerts on the MOAA web site by signing up if you have not already done so.

Captain Taylor also thanked everyone for large turnout on attendance at the Congressional Appreciation Luncheon in September on Capitol Hill. The room was full of Maryland Constituents. The Council has decided that going forward the luncheon will be named the Congressional Legislative Luncheon. He also echoed LTC Fringer's

request that the chapter legislative liaison representatives need to work more closely with him in planning the annual legislative luncheons.

**Auxiliary Report:** Eleanor Layman suggested chapters need to look at Auxiliary members for help with chapter activities. They are a valuable resource that some chapters tend to overlook and underutilize.

**Membership Report:** Captain Taylor briefed for LTC Finkenauer. Captain Taylor stressed the importance of getting and keeping membership in the Chapters. He also reviewed the success of chapter rescue efforts by the Council during the past 1 ½ years.

The October MOAA Affiliate discussed the dissolution of the MOAA Give Me Ten Program in lieu of trying to increase chapter membership. Also discussed was putting cash in front of new chapters trying to start up. The new Chapter Recruiting Drive for 2013 was discussed at the October MOAA Annual meeting in Arlington, VA.

**Maryland Veterans Commission:** Captain Taylor congratulated Captain Dave Peterson, NOAA-Retired for his recent appointment to the Maryland Veterans Commission for a 5-year term. The first meeting was October 16<sup>th</sup> and only 15 members of the commission were present. Dave relayed the following information.

- A letter from Edward Chow, Secretary of Maryland Department of Veteran Affairs have been sent out to various Vets Groups asking for financial support for a bond fund to help with the upkeep/maintenance of Maryland's Veterans monuments and memorials. Some chapters have received the letter and others have not. One question from the floor of council asked if the money could be diverted to other non-veterans items in the state budget as the legislature often does. Captain Peterson stated the money earmarked for this fund can't be diverted for other purposes. Initial reaction to the letter from the Maryland Council members present ranged from negative to lukewarm. The big sticking point is while the state may have budget problems why have they not budgeted for upkeep/maintenance of the monuments?
- A letter has gone out to all chapters from Delegate Michael Smigiel, Jr., asking for Veteran's Groups support for legislation for issuing a MD Veterans license plate. This is not the same as the recently passed legislation that allows the notation Military Veteran on state drivers licenses. The bill ended up deadlocked 12-12 in committee last year and Delegate Smeigel feels the bill can be passed if MD veterans will contact their legislators asking for support. The reason the committee chair gave for the deadlock was that there was not enough storage space at DMV for Veterans license plates.
- Charlotte Hall Veterans Home now has 100% Emergency backup power at the facility.

- Community Colleges are striving to hire Veterans Advisors on the staff to facilitate veteran enrollment at colleges like Anne Arundel Community College and other 2- year state schools.
- Veteran's organizations in Maryland are asked to help celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam War.
- The Vets Commission is working to get the MD Veterans Trust Fund a 501c status with the IRS.
- For information on the MD Veterans Courts you can look under the web site, [www.mdva.state.md.us](http://www.mdva.state.md.us)

Presidents Notes: Congratulations to the following Chapters for the MOAA 5 Star Chapter Awards: Ft Meade, Montgomery County, Southern MD and the Upper Potomac Chapter. In addition the Maryland Council of Chapters received a 5 Star Award.

Captain Taylor reminded all chapters must update their officer's list and submit a current roster to MOAA National on an annual basis.

Annual council awards were discussed with the following nominations for this year: 175<sup>th</sup> Wing Baltimore (ANG) and 1297th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion (CSSB) in Havre De Grace, MD. A question from the floor was raised why we don't see any Reserve units nominated? Captain Taylor mentioned the MDMOAA Council awards are open for both Guard and Reserve units and encouraged all units to apply

Chapter Presidents Report:

Upper Eastern Shore plans a 26 Jan 2013 Veterans job fair in cooperation with the USO, VFW and Chamber of Commerce in Easton, MD. UES also hosted a Veterans Sail for wounded warriors during the 2012 year. Chuck Block will assume President of the UES Chapter in 2013.

The Upper Potomac Chapter sponsored the 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Chapter Golf Tournament at Glade Valley Golf Club in Walkersville, MD on September 16<sup>th</sup>. Proceeds went to the MG Boyd Cook Foundation, which supports military men and women and their families.

The Annapolis Chapter plans to host Senator John Astle in Jan 2013 (INVITED) as guest speaker at a chapter dinner. They also plan to host 1100 new midshipmen in July 2013 at a Bowie Bay Sox Double AA minor league baseball game.

The Ft Meade Chapter hosted a joint MOWW/MOAA dinner in October, co-sponsored the Veterans Appreciation luncheon with the ROWC at Club Meade in November, and continues to provide support for Operation Welcome Home, Honor Flight and magazine/food donations to the USO at BWI airport.

The General Smallwood chapter will install new President Mike Rhoden at the 26 Jan 2013 meeting.

The Prince Georges County Chapter plans to host their Holiday celebration in Clinton, MD on Dec 15, 2012. End of year donations from the chapter included the MOAA Scholarship Fund and the Wounded Warriors Fund. They have invited Lt Gov Brown to be guest speaker at their Jan 2013 meeting but Lt Gov Brown has not accepted as of today.

The Southern MD Chapter has selected Admiral O'Neill Award Winner, Major Davis, USMC who is assigned to the E-6 Test shop at PAX River NAS. He requested the \$500 bond awarded to him be donated to the Wounded Warrior Project. Discussion is underway with the General Smallwood chapter for a possible combined meeting in 2013. Warren Prince will succeed Tony Blankenship as new President.

The Susquehanna Chapter made a donation of \$1565 to the Perry Point VA facility in September.

The Baltimore Chapter will also use the name the Star Spangled Chapter and host a Lincoln's Birthday celebration at Ft McHenry in Baltimore.

The Montgomery County Chapter plans to host another Wounded Warrior Luncheon at Bethesda/Walter Reed in 2013. RADM Boris Lushniak, USPHS was guest speaker at the November luncheon and the December 19, 2012 luncheon does not have a guest speaker but will be held at the Manor Country Club. The chapter continues JROTC support at 5 high schools and support to the MOWW at St Johns College and Valley Forge.

Captain Taylor announced the results of the Councils 2013-2014 election of Officers. John Whitman will be the new President in Jan 2013, Andy Fallon was elected the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President and Harvey Kaplan will serve as 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President.

Major Dittbrenner made a plug for the Northern Virginia Business and Networking Alliance (BANG) and how networking is a win-win for the chapter and individual MOAA member looking for work. Captain Taylor also announced Col Barry Wright will replace Col Lee Lange at MOAA Chapters in early 2013. Col Mike Hayden will take over for Col Steve Strobridge at MOAA Legislative Affairs when Col Strobridge retires next year.

The meeting was adjourned at 1435. The next meeting will be Sunday 6 January 2013 at the Fleet Reserve Club in Annapolis. For installation of new officers Captain Taylor requested coat and tie as the dress code for the installation ceremony. Brunch will be at 11:45 and meeting at 1300.

JOHN T. WHITMAN for  
JAMES PEDE, Major, USAF-Retired  
MD Council Secretary