

Minutes of Maryland Council of Chapters, MOAA, Quarterly Meeting

Saturday, 11 July 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]. All ten Chapters were represented, as follows: Annapolis (COL Andy Fallon; also Council President), Montgomery County (CAPT David Peterson; also Director/MD Veterans Commission LNO), Fort Meade (Major John Whitman; also Past Council President), Southern Maryland (LTC Jack Fringer; also Past Council President and current Legislative Liaison Officer), General Smallwood (COL Dan Donohue), Prince George’s County (COL Duayne Devance), Susquehanna (COL Mike Rogers; also a member of the National MOAA Board), Upper Eastern Shore (MG James Adkins), Upper Potomac (COL Douglas Reichard), Star Spangled Banner (COL Tom Seybold). Other Council Officers present were COL Harvey T. Kaplan (1st Vice President), LTC Bryon Hartzog (2nd Vice President), Major James Shiffrin (Webmaster), Major James P. Dittbrenner (TOPS Liaison Officer). Naomi M. Kaplan also joined the group for lunch. The meeting was called to order by Council President, COL Andrew Fallon, USA (Ret.) at 1215 hours. Later, a break in the discussions was held when lunch was served—and the meeting resumed after the meal.

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 with one correction: The dates of the MOAA Annual Meeting in Orlando, FL, were corrected to reflect that the gathering will take place from 29-31 October 2015. The President expressed his hope that the Council and many of our Chapters will be receiving Levels of Excellence Awards at the meeting.
2. **President’s Highlights.** Andy Fallon presented a summary of our work at the annual “Storming the Hill” sessions in Washington, DC, on Wednesday, 15 April 2015. Our teams were successful in having meaningful discussions with some of the principals (e.g., Congressmen Andy Harris and Chris Van Hollen), as well as with many members of the Congressional staff. He furnished handouts to all present announcing the 5th Annual Maryland Congressional Luncheon—to be held on Thursday, 17 September 2015 planned for Room 2168 in the Rayburn House Office Building. Flyers with the details need to be sent to all Chapter members. The flyers will reflect a charge of \$39 per person (up from \$38 last year), but the Council approved the collection of only \$37 per registered Chapter member/guest. Chapters were encouraged to further subsidize attendance, as desired, so that we can have eight representatives per Chapter [a Council

goal] at the function—in addition to those representatives from the MOAA Staff in Alexandria. “Designated drivers” were suggested as a means to encourage participation. Prepaid parking in local garages (with guaranteed space) may prove better than parking at Union Station, and the long walk involved from there.

3. **Legislative Affairs.** Jack Fringer summarized the results of Federal and Maryland legislation this past year. The major accomplishment (although it was not what had been recommended by the Council in writing and in oral testimony in Annapolis) was the immediate increase in the Maryland Income Tax subtraction from retired pay or SPB from \$5,000 to \$10,000 for Uniformed Services retirees over the age of 65. No progress was made to apply in-State tuition rates for non-Post 9/11 students; we’ll try again next session. There is a pilot Veterans Treatment Court project in Prince George’s County emerging now; a request has been made to identify ten mentors for this program and MOAA members were encourage to volunteer; substantive training will be conducted. The Council recommends expanding the effort into other counties, through County Veterans Commissions and County Bar Associations, as appropriate. The Veterans Trust Fund check-off on State Income Tax returns was not approved, although the Trust Fund remains viable. Sample letters for member use will again be posted on the Council’s website next year, at least in connection with the ongoing effort to decrease/eliminate the taxes on retired pay and SPB. Jack Fringer suggested we seriously consider a “Storming Annapolis” event for all Chapters in January of 2016—the time that the General Assembly is scheduled to reconvene.
4. **Federal Budget.** President Fallon reminded all that “Markups” are still in progress. While we achieved some of our desired results during “Storming the Hill” on our MOAA issues {a. Military Pay and Benefits; b. Rejection of Disproportionate TRICARE Hikes; c. Elimination of Sequestration; and d. Resolving Remaining Inequities for Survivors, Retirees, and Guard/Reserve}, there is much work yet to be done. There currently are multiple proposals being staffed or in committee on key issues—and these are being tracked closely by MOAA HQ. He reminded all present that this is a “contact sport.”
5. **Financial Report.** Copies of the report prepared by Treasurer Greg Dalke (not in attendance due to an out-of-State family commitment) were distributed. The information was self-explanatory, with a 30 June 2015 balance of \$8,003.33, and there were no questions. Harvey Kaplan agreed to pay for the lunches served at the meeting on his credit card and collect \$18 from attendees for lunch. [Note: The \$251.90 bill, including taxes and \$36.57 gratuity, was paid via VISA--and a check for income from the luncheon was mailed by Harvey Kaplan to Greg Dalke in the amount of \$19.10. Some members had opted not to accept change from a \$20 bill.]
6. **TOPS Report.** Jim Dittbrenner distributed copies of the TOPS Report, dated 10 July 2015, to all in attendance. He agreed to selectively distribute items of special interest to the Council up to several times each month, as deemed relevant. All were in agreement

to receiving the material and further disseminate the information to the membership of Chapters, if appropriate for such distribution.

7. **Meeting Venue.** After some discussion of alternatives, the Council agreed that our meeting on Saturday, 12 September 2015 will be again held at O’Loughlin’s Restaurant at 1130 hours. [The General Smallwood Chapter already has a meeting scheduled that day at the Maryland Veterans Museum and offered to share the facility with the Council on that Saturday. It was decided that the facility did not offer adequate space for two separate meetings and lunch for both groups. We will consider a future Council meeting at the Veterans Museum.] Harvey Kaplan immediately confirmed space for the Council at O’Loughlin’s on 12 Sep. As suggested, we will again offer a roast beef au jus option plus two other entrees on the \$18 menu.
8. **Chapter Reports and Updates.** [Highlights of Discussion] The Star Spangled Banner will be scheduling a “Staff Ride to Antietam” from Baltimore during September 2016. An invitation to participate will be sent to all Chapters. George Owings, the Maryland Secretary of Veterans Affairs, will be speaking to the Upper Eastern Shore Chapter near the Bay Bridge in mid-September. President Veronis will be speaking to the Fort Meade Chapter on Thursday, 3 September 2015. The Chapter is looking for more volunteers for office from among its members. On 12 September 2015 (see para 7, above), the General Smallwood Chapter will be hosting the Canadian Air Force Liaison Officer to our Marine Corps Combat Developments Command at the Maryland Veterans Museum. The Montgomery County Chapter will institute its “Vets Visiting Vets Program” with a membership visit to Brook Grove Senior Citizen Center in Sandy Spring, MD. The monthly United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Open Houses in Gaithersburg, MD, have been very successful this year in signing up Officer Basic Course students for MOAA Basic Membership (i.e., no fee). The Chapter will be making a push to get more local National MOAA members involved as Chapter members. Dave Peterson recommended to all that we encourage our Senators and Delegates in Annapolis to sign on as members of the Maryland Veterans Caucus. Prince George’s County is reenergizing to activate its membership with a variety of programs. The Southern Maryland Chapter will hold its Holiday Formal in November. The Upper Potomac Chapter offered the Council copies of its new flyer on the 4th Annual Golf Tournament, which will take place on Friday, 18 September 2015, at Glade Valley Golf Course—with proceeds to support Operation Second Chance (for Veterans recovering in Military Hospitals and their families). The Chapter’s Annual Picnic will take place on Saturday, 15 August. They’re also planning a speaker program, with a MD VA speaker in October, as well as a Christmas/Holiday Party in December. The Susquehanna Chapter reported on its efforts to get the word out on new VA benefits and on the status of its effort to institute a first Junior ROTC program at a High School in Harford County.

9. **Eleventh Chapter Planning for Western Maryland.** The Upper Potomac Chapter will proceed with efforts to establish a Cumberland Satellite Chapter to support potential members in Allegheny and Garrett Counties and nearby West Virginia and Pennsylvania. [Both PA and WV MOAA have indicated they have no objection.] Upper Potomac members in the Hagerstown/Washington County area currently are participating in programs in the Frederick area. Doug Reichard agreed to conduct follow-up with already-identified points of contact in Western Maryland, including one retired officer heading a JROTC unit.
10. **MOAA Heritage Society.** Dave Peterson will circulate information of the Society, a new 501c(3) Foundation seeking contributions for worthwhile programs. Details will be contained in the material to be disseminated.
11. **Maryland Council MOAA Website.** Jim Shiffrin reminded all that he always attempts to keep the website current. He is more than willing to post information from individual Chapters. An effort will be made to include calendars containing both Council and Chapter scheduled activities/events. Council minutes always are available on-line (including back issues).
12. **Council Officer Vacancies.** The Council was pleased to welcome Bryon Hartzog as 2nd Vice President at this meeting. Vacancies remain for the Auxiliary Liaison Officer (with Surviving Spouses) and for the Council Secretary. David Peterson offered to consider taking on the position of Secretary, as Secretary Jim Pede will be moving to San Antonio, TX, by the end of Summer 2015. Harvey Kaplan agreed to prepare the minutes for the 11 July meeting. Andy Fallon agreed to update the Council/Chapter Presidents Roster (from the hard copies distributed to all present).

The meeting was adjourned by the President at 1440 hours. The following agenda items remain for further discussion at the next Council meeting on Saturday, 12 September (i.e., five days prior to the Congressional Luncheon): a. Final Planning for Congressional Luncheon; b. Chapter and Council Calendar {recommended Council record schedule through 1st Qtr, CY 2016 for posting on Website}; c. Chapter Board Vacancies; d. Planned Support/Involvement in Other Organizations and Activities; e. Participation in Annual Meeting in Orlando; f. Additional Title for Maryland Council of Chapters President (Old Business); g. Maryland Center for Veterans Education and Training (MCVET)(Old Business); h. Update on MOAA State Report Card (Old Business); h. New Business – To Be Determined

Respectfully submitted:

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

1st Vice President