



Maryland Council
Military Officers Association of America
Meeting Minutes
27 October 2014

Members Present:

John Whitman, President
Harvey Kaplan, 2nd Vice President MDCOC
James Pede, Secretary
Jack Fringer, Legislative Chair
Eleanor Layman, Auxiliary
Bill Benson, President, Upper Potomac Chapter
Reggie Sealey, Prince Georges Chapter
Warren Prince, Southern MD Chapter
Jeff Brock, President, Susquehanna Chapter
Mike DeHaemer, President, Baltimore Chapter

Members Absent:

Andrew Fallon, 1st Vice President MDCOC, President, Annapolis Chapter
Norm Taylor, Immediate Past President
Jim Shiffrin, Webmaster, President Ft Meade Chapter
Greg Dalke, Treasurer
Dave Peterson, MDCOC Director, President, Montgomery County Chapter
Jim Dittbrenner, TOPS
Mike Rhoden, President, General Smallwood Chapter

The Maryland Council of Chapters met 27 October 2014 at 1:00PM at the Washington Sheraton Hotel. The council met in conjunction with the MOAA Capital Event and Annual Meeting of the Membership. Council President Maj John Whitman welcomed everyone and asked Maj Pede to open the meeting with a prayer.

Maj Whitman introduced MOAA's Council and Chapter Affairs Department Deputy Director Col. Brian Anderson, USAF (Ret). Col Anderson discussed the importance of the chapters in representing over 383,000 members nationwide. He encouraged chapter presidents to 'tap' the policy and procedures guide book provided by MOAA. He emphasized that chapter strategic visions should parallel national objectives. By doing so he believes membership will increase when folks see the focused MOAA mission. He concluded reminding all that the most underutilized chapter level support mechanism is the use of electronic mail sent out from MOAA in support of local chapter initiatives and membership drives.

Minutes: MDCOC meeting minutes from May were presented by Maj Pede. The single open item was closed by Maj Pede who ordered the 2011 five star banner as directed by the council. As CAPT Norm Taylor was not present the decision was made to hold off on the flag ceremony until he is present. Meeting minutes were accepted as written.

Treasurer's Report: CDR Greg Dalke was not present but Maj Whitman provided a brief overview of the budget.

Legislative Affairs: LTC Fringer said he expects our top issues to be resubmitted for the 2015 legislative season. He reminded everyone that Maryland legislative districts meet in Annapolis and that we should strive to target the district meetings by getting on their agenda and requesting their support of bills we are interested in.

Maryland Retired Veterans Task Force: COL Kaplan reported that 225 letters were delivered to legislators asking for their support in exempting retirement pay from income for tax purposes. He suggested we follow up on asking for their support after Election Day. He cautioned all that the MOAA is 'a-political' and should never be associated with MRVTF.

Council Nametags: LTC Fringer completed a Herculean task of obtaining 'official' nametags for the council. He suggested each member pay the council but Maj Whitman offered to make the full payment as a donation. The council did not approve and a motion was made for full reimbursement to LTC Fringer, seconded by COL Kaplan and voted unanimously.

2015 Legislative Lunch: LTC Fringer suggested each chapter be assigned to send a letter to one of our legislators inviting them to the lunch. This way each chapter would coordinate directly with one legislator from initial invite to introducing them on the day of the luncheon. The discussion was tabled for the time being.

Maryland Veterans Commission Report (ATCH 1): CAPT Peterson provided a report via email and COL Kaplan covered the items.

Auxiliary Affairs: Maj Whitman praised the efforts of Eleanor Layman over the last several years and reminded everyone she will be recognized at the upcoming awards dinner.

Annual MDCOC National Guard Award: This year's award winner is the 290th Military Police Company from Parkville MD. The presentation of the award will be made on Sunday December 7th, 2014.

New Business (ATCH 2): COL Kaplan raised the issue of changing the name of the council president, when appropriate, to 'commander.' He provided a fact sheet and explained that the use of both names would provide benefits under different circumstances and that the use of 'commander' would be at the president's discretion. Because of the nature of the issue, he also suggested everyone review the fact sheet and come to the December meeting prepared for discussion and further action. OPEN

The meeting was adjourned at 1700. The next MD MOAA Council meeting will be held 6 December 2014 in Crownsville at 11:30AM.

JAMES PEDE, Major, USAF Ret
MD Council Secretary



Maryland Veterans Commission Report

The MVC met on July 15 and again on October 21, 2014 at the offices of the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, 100 Community Place, Crownsville, Maryland.

While many subjects were discussed, the following items are of most interest to the Council:

1. New commissioners were appointed by the Governor representing the Vietnam Veterans of America, the 4th and 6th Congressional districts, and a commissioner At-Large. There are vacancies on the Commission for the following organizations: Military Order of the Purple Heart, the Polish Legion of American Veterans, and the 2nd Congressional District.

2. The new Maryland State Veterans Benefits Guide has been published and is available on the MDVA website. Editions of the MDVA Newsletter are also on the website.

3. The Maryland Veterans Trust Fund has received its 501c3 designation from the IRS, and is now a separate legal entity, to which charitable contributions may be made by the public. Chapters are also encouraged to consider making contributions to the trust fund as their circumstances permit.

4. A report from the Commission's committee on veterans suicide is still pending. A new committee chair has been appointed.

5. The Women in Military Service Memorial, on the grounds of the I-95 Chesapeake Travel Plaza in Cecil County, will take place on Veterans Day, 11/11/2014, at 1300.

6. I believe there is an opportunity for a chapter service project that will be of great benefit to MDVA and our veteran population.. There is an effort to place the new Maryland

Veterans Benefit Guide in all local libraries, county senior centers, municipal city/town halls, and retirement homes. I believe our 10 MOAA chapters can assist in this effort. I'd like to coordinate any effort the council might undertake. If there is interest, kindly contact me by email and I'll be glad to get the ball rolling. kmpdhp@comcast.net

7. LZ Pimlico is progressing. There will be a news release during the week of November 15th, which will provide a public update on the planning for this 2016 event.

8. MDVA is exploring the possibility of establishing a second Maryland veterans home. Currently they are in the property identification mode and are looking at possibilities in the Baltimore area.

FACT SHEET

SUBJECT: Additional Title for President of Maryland Council of Chapters, MOAA

BACKGROUND: The Maryland Council of Chapters has been recognized for three successive years for excellence in performance of its missions. Nevertheless, it is commonly agreed that in Maryland we have not been particularly successful in our pursuit of our State legislative goals over a period of many years—despite substantive efforts on our part to support initiatives favoring the Veterans community. Further, it has been noted that most of the other large Veterans [Service and other] Organizations in Maryland use a slightly different organizational structure from MOAA's in pursuit of supported legislation, as well as for some other public outreach and communication initiatives.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: The President of MOAA's Council of Chapters in Maryland should be authorized by the Council to use the title of Commander, Department of Maryland, for purposes which he/she considers appropriate in pursuit of our legislative initiatives, established Council objectives, and public outreach. [The 1st Vice President of the Council, similarly, could use the title of Vice Commander for the same purposes.] This in no way changes the structure of the Council, the titles of its officers, or its By-Laws (unless the Council chooses to do so for other relevant reasons in the future). It is envisioned that this modest adjustment will give the Council President more latitude in the pursuit of Council objectives, without in any way violating our relationship with our Chapters in Maryland or with MOAA National. It is not intended to be in contravention with the guidance for State-based MOAA organizations, as contained in the MOAA Council and Chapters Handbook.

Arguments in Support of the Recommendation:

1. It gives the Council (and its senior officers) additional leverage when dealing with matters outside MOAA.
2. It enables the Council to issue press releases and other documents which will have greater impact than documents with the signature of a Council of Chapters President.
3. It will make MOAA in Maryland more similar to the other large Veterans organizations in our State in any area where such comparability is potentially beneficial.
4. It will not change the nature of our Maryland Council of Chapters in relation to our Chapters or in relation to MOAA National.
5. It will not require any other administrative adjustments unless the Council chooses to formalize this initiative beyond a simple vote on the matter.

Arguments Raised to Date Against the Proposal:

1. It's not a sound idea because it renders MOAA too similar to other Veterans organizations—and we truly are different.
2. MOAA National will object to what we are proposing, even though we truly are an independent, but affiliated organization.
3. It's a major adjustment in our way of thinking, and will take some time to get used to.
4. It will alter the relationship in some way between the Council and the Chapters.
5. It is not really required, and it possibly will confuse our membership.