



Maryland Council
Military Officers Association of America
Meeting Minutes
9 November 2013 at the American Legion
Crownsville, Maryland

Members Present:

John Whitman, President
Norm Taylor, Immediate Past President
Andrew Fallon, 1st Vice President MDCOC, President, Annapolis Chapter
Harvey Kaplan, 2nd Vice President MDCOC
Jack Fringer, Legislative Chair
Dave Peterson, MDCOC Director, President, Montgomery County Chapter
Greg Dalke, Treasurer
Jim Dittbrenner, TOPS
Eleanor Layman, Auxiliary Rep, Ft Meade Chapter
Jim Shiffrin, Webmaster, President Ft Meade Chapter
Chuck Block President, Upper Eastern Shore
Warren Prince, President, Southern Maryland Chapter
Jeff Brock, President, Susquehanna Chapter
Bill Benson, President, Upper Potomac Chapter
Mike Rhoden, President, General Smallwood Chapter
Reggie Sealey, Prince Georges Chapter
Mike DeHaemer, President, Baltimore Chapter
Tom Smith, Chaplain MDCOC
Cathee Smith, Southern MD Chapter
Annie Brock, Newsletter Editor/TOPS Susquehanna Chapter

Members Absent:

James Pede, Secretary

The Maryland Council of Chapters met 9 November 2013 at 1045 in the Guy C. Parlett Post 7 of the American Legion in Annapolis, Maryland.

Following the invocation given by Tom Smith and the pledge led by Bill Benson, John Whitman thanked all those in attendance for making the trip and starting earlier than normal to accommodate those who wanted to attend the NAVY football game at 3PM in Annapolis. He also thanked the Chapter Presidents for the good turnout at the MOAA Symposium (26-28 Sep 2013) in Hershey, PA. All Maryland Chapters had representation and both Admiral Ryan MOAA President, and Barry Wright of MOAA Councils and Chapters were impressed and pleased with the turnout from the Maryland Council. Participation at future Symposiums and other MOAA meetings are highly encouraged because of the valuable cross-feed that takes place among chapters and councils from other states.

The 3 Aug 2013 meeting minutes were submitted for approval as written and a motion to approve was passed unanimously.

LTC Jack Fringer briefed the following items for the MDCOC Congressional Luncheon:

- Date/Time: Wednesday November 20, 2013, noon to 1530.
- Location: Russell Senate Office Bldg., Room SR-485 (close to Union Station)
- Deli Buffett \$26 per person
- Senator Cardin confirmed, 5 Representatives aides have made inquiries and indicated interest in attending, we have not heard back from 3 Congressional offices
- Introductions for the legislators is still being worked

LTC Fringer and Captain Benson discussed the annual MOAA National Guard Award chosen by the MDARNG Adjutant General MG James A. Adkins. The 2013 MOAA Outstanding unit is Company C, 1st Battalion 1690th Aviation Regiment (Air Ambulance) at Edgewood/Aberdeen, MD. The presentation will be made at a later date (most likely December 2013 or Jan 2014).

CDR Greg Dalke gave the Treasurer's Report and the Council has \$11,777 on hand. Once reservations for the November 20th luncheon are finalized CDR Dalke will cut refund checks to the chapters for those personnel who paid for the original Sept 17th luncheon but are unable to attend the re-scheduled Nov 20th Congressional Luncheon. Each chapter treasurer will in turn issue a check to the individuals who have refunds coming to them.

The new Levels of Excellence rating checklist were passed out to each of the Chapter Presidents for preparation of the 2013 Levels of Excellence competition.

MOAA's annual meeting takes place in Colorado Springs this year from November 14-17th with all chapter LOE winners planning to attend with the exception of the Montgomery County Chapter. John Whitman will accept the Montgomery County Chapter's streamer along with the streamer for the Maryland Council.

Major Jim Dittbrenner gave the Transition Center briefing and passed out a synopsis of the areas covered at the Hershey symposium. The Officer Placement Service (TOPS) will remain at the chapter level but is now the Transition Center at MOAA National and has combined TOPS and Benefits (BFIE) into one department. Major Dittbrenner also raised concerns with Captain Jim Carman at MOAA national about some of the barriers returning veterans encounter in the job market and also the misconceptions of some employers that prevent them from hiring veterans. He also covered that the younger troops are having difficulty in converting their military experience into civilian equivalent job descriptions and titles. Finally he covered the effort MOAA national is making to get Veterans Service Officers identified and trained in MOAA. This will begin on a trial basis but the effort will eventually spread to the chapters. Chapter Presidents should advise their chapter memberships of this initiative now and be ready to identify willing candidates in the chapter to take on VSO duties. This will not only help those returning veterans fill out VA claims paperwork correctly but also give the chapters and MOAA increased visibility and relevance in the communities.

LTC Jack Fringer briefed Legislative issues. The Maryland Retired Veterans Task Force (MRVTF) is scheduled to meet on Monday November 18th at the American Legion in Crownsville. A fact sheet put on the tax exemption bill was passed out. LTC Fringer asked all

chapter Presidents or their legislative representatives to go to candidate forums and ask candidates where they stand on the exemption of Military Retirement Pay from state income taxes. The Maryland Legislature convenes on January 8th, 2014 and each chapter is asked to contact former chapter members now living outside Maryland to draft a letter to the legislature explaining why they moved out of state. Copies of the letters will be delivered to the MRVTF and will be presented when tax exemption bills on military retired pay are presented this year in the House and the Senate during hearings.

Captain Dave Peterson polled all chapter Presidents for their input on the question should the MD Veterans Commission and Maryland create Maryland Veterans Hall of Fame. Please provide inputs to Dave by e-mail or have your replies ready by next board meeting.

Chapter President Reports:

Annapolis: Col Fallon reports all quiet in Annapolis.

Star Spangled Banner (Baltimore): Captain DeHaemer reports they have ten new members. On 19 Nov they will be hosting Admiral Ryan at their annual banquet. He also briefed on the Battle of North Point walk held in June by the chapter.

Ft Meade Chapter: Major Shiffrin expressed his disappointment at the cancellation of the last luncheon meeting due to a lack of interest (only 17 signups out of a Club required 25 souls minimum). He felt cancellation was a better option than having the chapter pay the cost of 8 meals. Brigadier General Andrew Veronis, USAF-Retired is the new 2nd Vice President. He has stepped in for Captain Rita Shapiro, USPHS who resigned due to work/scheduling conflicts.

Montgomery County Chapter: Captain David Peterson briefed on the upcoming November 20th luncheon with MD Secretary of Veterans Affairs Ed Chow: (date conflicts with Congressional Luncheon). Due to contract commitments the chapter is unable to reschedule. He also briefed on the upcoming December Holiday party at Manor Country Club and the January 2014 luncheon meeting with the USPHS speaker briefing on "Myths of PTSD".

Prince Georges County: CDR Reggie Sealey briefed on efforts to grow chapter membership.

Smallwood Chapter: Col Mike Rhoden briefed on the October 19th luncheon, the Vets Day Sunday Nov 10th celebration in LaPlatta, MD in which the chapter will participate, and the 5 JROTC programs the chapter supports. The Smallwood Chapters Holiday Luncheon will be on December 7th. Work continues with the MD Veterans Museum and the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home.

Southern Maryland: CDR Tom Smith briefed for CDR Prince. Holiday Party is scheduled 16 December and the current officers and board of directors will stay on for one more year.

Susquehanna: Lt Col Jeff Brock briefed about USAA giveaways, chapter support, and availability of speakers from USAA on financial planning, retirement etc. The next chapter dinner is 14 Nov and Lt Col Shane Ostrom of MOAA National is the guest speaker.

Upper Eastern Shore; Captain Chuck Block announced the chapters name change to Eastern Shore Chapter is now official as they take in members from the folded Lower Eastern Shore Chapter as well as UES membership. Christmas Luncheon is scheduled for 12 December.

Upper Peninsula: Captain Bill Benson reported another successful golf tournament fundraiser with several WRAMC wounded warriors in attendance and participating. Sunday December 15th is the UPC annual Holiday Luncheon.

Auxiliary Report: Eleanor Layman had nothing specific to report but Major Whitman thanked her for work as Chapter Personal Affairs Officer with grieving widows after several recent deaths in the chapter. He also noted her efforts on Capitol Hill and in the Howard County/Anne Arundel County area of Maryland to gain support for the SBP/DIC offset repeal in Congress.

A special presentation was made by the Board to Tom and Cathee Smith as they leave for Delaware tomorrow to live in their new home. Tom has promised to write Maryland Legislators explaining exactly why they have left Maryland (children first, but high taxes in Maryland were also a big factor) and urge them to support increasing the exemption on military retirement pay from Maryland state income taxes. Hopefully they will visit the council when they do occasionally travel back to Maryland. Tom and Cathee will also be joining a MOAA chapter in Delaware. John Whitman thanked them both for all they have done for the MDCOC and Southern Maryland MOAA Chapter over the years. They will be missed. "Fair winds and following seas to our good friends Tom and Cathee."

Standing committee assignments/reports other than the MOAA National Guard award and Congressional Luncheon are deferred until the next MDCOC meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 1320. The next meeting is scheduled for Saturday February 1st, 2014 at 11:45 AM at the Crownsville American Legion Post 7. Col Anna Symthe of the MOAA Member Service Center (MSC) has been invited to this meeting as a guest of the MDCOC. She or her designated appointee will brief the MSC operation.

JIM SHIFFRIN, USAF-Retired for
JAMES PEDE, Maj, USAF Ret
MD Council Secretary