

Jan 20, 2026

Q1 Veterans Commission

Summary

The meeting commenced with an opening ceremony led by Michael Moore, followed by the approval of the minutes from the October 21st, 2025 meeting, seconded by Elaine May-Stem. Jimmy Anderson -DVMF-, the new Deputy Secretary for Operations, provided a departmental update detailing key legislative priorities, including the Military Family Inclusion Act, expanding the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund, and addressing military spouse employment challenges, while emphasizing the goal of "no wrong door" for veterans. Pansy Watson -Ethics- delivered a presentation on the state ethics law, focusing on conflicts of interest, post-employment restrictions, gift exceptions, and the proper use of title, while David Dragics of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC) briefed the participants on their legislative goals, prioritizing the strict regulation of "claim predators," raising military retirement income tax exemption, and expediting professional license certification for spouses. Mike Bowers and other participants concluded the meeting with administrative notes and various organizational announcements, encouraging commissioners to submit detailed quarterly reports to effectively advise the Department of Veteran and Military Families (DVMF).

Details

- **Initial Greetings and Holiday Recap** Michael Moore and Lindsay Livingston -DVMF- exchanged New Year's greetings, with Lindsay noting their efforts to adjust their camera. Michael Moore mentioned a busy holiday season, including five large events at the American Legion in December ([00:00:00](#)). Lindsay

Livingston -DVMF- also mentioned the anticipated snow forecast, comparing it to the weather they thought they left behind in Maine ([00:09:29](#)).

- **Personal Anecdotes and Former Senator George Mitchell** Lindsay Livingston -DVMF- shared that they previously lived in Yarmouth, Maine, while stationed at Bath Iron Works, before coming to Maryland. Michael Moore recounted a story about former Maine Senator George Mitchell, for whom Michael Moore, as director of tech transfer for the EPA, attended an event in Maine ([00:09:29](#)). Michael Moore recalled Mitchell's opening line at that event: "of all the introductions I've ever had, this is certainly the most recent" ([00:10:30](#)).
- **Camera and Technical Adjustments** During the meeting, Michael Moore had some difficulty with their camera, which at one point showed only their tablecloth ([00:10:30](#)). After making adjustments, the camera was fixed, and Jim Shiffrin and Gary Palmer joined the meeting ([00:11:27](#)). Michael Moore also noted that they were wearing an Army sweatshirt as a form of "grieving" the Army Navy game result, to which Mike Bowers, the chair, jokingly responded about not having virtual meetings if Michael Moore wore Army gear ([00:13:49](#)).
- **Discussion of the Army-Navy Game and Meeting Start** Mike Bowers acknowledged Michael Moore's congratulations on the Army-Navy game ([00:13:49](#)). Bruce Edwards Commander VFW, a Navy supporter, shared their experience being in the Army section at the game, 10 rows up from the 50-yard line ([00:18:56](#)). Mike Bowers, referring to the start of the virtual meeting, made a joke about some attendees being "really old," expressing happiness that Jerome Davis "even has a computer" ([00:19:50](#)).
- **Opening Ceremony and Minutes Approval** The meeting began with an opening ceremony led by Michael Moore, the vice chair, who offered a prayer for guidance and justice ([00:26:21](#)). Michael Moore also led a moment of remembrance for POWs and MIAs, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance ([00:27:44](#)). The minutes from the October 21st, 2025 meeting were approved after a motion was made by an unnamed attendee and seconded by Elaine May-Stem ([00:28:55](#)).
- **Rationale for Virtual Meeting and Moment of Silence** Mike Bowers explained that the January meeting was fully virtual, following Denise's recommendation due to potential bad weather, ice, or cold temperatures, to ensure safety. Mike Bowers requested a moment of silence to remember two losses: the brother of Joan, the women's veterans representative, and the little brother of former chair K.T. Tyler ([00:29:42](#)).

- **Introduction of DVMF Leadership and Staff** Mike Bowers introduced several key attendees, including the new Deputy Secretary for Operations, Jimmy Anderson, and the other Deputy Secretary, Dana Burl. They acknowledged Lindsay Livingston -DVMF- for temporarily filling Denise's role and Samantha Wolfley for their upcoming work, along with Roslyn Jones -DVMF- and Tiffany from communications ([00:30:57](#)). Mike Bowers also thanked Bruce Edwards Commander VFW for their active participation in commission meetings and events with the governor ([00:32:21](#)).
- **Website Update and Guest Introductions** Mike Bowers announced that the new DVMF website is operational and encouraged everyone to visit it to learn about the department's services ([00:32:21](#)). Jim Shiffrin introduced Gary Palmer, the former president of the Maryland Council of Chapters for MOAA, who previously offered feedback on improving meeting outreach ([00:33:36](#)). Mike Bowers then highlighted the goal of building synergy between the DVMF commissions ([00:34:50](#)).
- **Presentations by Other Commission Chairs** Mike Bowers introduced the chairs of other commissions to share brief snapshots of their work ([00:34:50](#)). Dena Allen-Few, Chair of the College Collaboration for Student Veterans Commission, stated that their commission, which has grown to 32 members, focuses on student veterans and their dependents transitioning to college life ([00:36:14](#)). Keith Streicher, Chair of the Maryland Veterans Home Commission, explained that they oversee regulations and policy for the care of veterans in their "golden years," including specialty care like dementia and Alzheimer's, at the facility with 444 beds and a large staff and volunteer base in Southern Maryland ([00:37:22](#)).
- **Commission's Dual Purpose and Outreach** Mike Bowers emphasized the commission's two main purposes: first, to inform Maryland veterans about the services provided by the Department of Veteran and Military Families (DVMF), such as the trust fund and assistance with disability claims, being careful not to overpromise ([00:39:15](#)). Second, the commission must gather feedback and input from veterans and deliver it to the Secretary and Deputy Secretaries, requiring commissioners to be actively engaged with the veteran community ([00:40:17](#)).
- **Deputy Secretary Jimmy Anderson's Update and Background** Jimmy Anderson -DVMF-, the new Deputy Secretary for Operations, delivered the departmental update, expressing the goal of integration so that "there is no wrong door" for veterans seeking help from state agencies ([00:42:48](#)). They mentioned having

served 17 years in the Air Force, currently as an intelligence officer in the Reserves, and brought up the department's top priority for the legislative session: confirming the Secretary ([00:45:58](#)). Michael Moore highlighted Jimmy Anderson -DVMF-'s experience as a Fulbright scholar and work in the White House, where they were a key voice in the administration regarding the PACT Act ([00:53:58](#)).

- **Key Departmental Legislative and Funding Initiatives** Jimmy Anderson -DVMF- detailed the department's legislative priority, the Military Family Inclusion Act, which aims to modernize and bring military family representation into councils and commissions, as well as updating the member organizations of the Veterans Commission ([00:47:00](#)). They also discussed the power of the Maryland Veterans Trust Fund, which is prioritizing the reduction of a current backlog within 60 days, and the distribution of \$150,000 in grants on Veterans Day to support furloughed military families ([00:49:16](#)).
- **Maryland Joins Forces and Military Spouse Employment** Jimmy Anderson -DVMF- updated the commission on the Maryland Joins Forces partnership, which has grown to 33 partners and is holding its first quarter meeting in February to finalize a strategic plan ([00:50:27](#)). A key priority for the initiative in 2026 is addressing military spouse employment challenges and creating a seamless gateway for families moving to Maryland ([00:51:37](#)). Dana Burl -DVMF- addressed a commissioner's concern regarding the portability of military spouse teaching licenses from other states, stating that it is their number one priority to engage with various departments to identify and resolve the sticking points ([00:52:41](#)).
- **Service and Benefit Programs, and Cemeteries** Jimmy Anderson -DVMF- highlighted the effectiveness of the service and benefit program, which has 26 staff members to help veterans with claims, and noted the relocation of a veteran service center to the MVA in Frederick as an example of meeting veterans where they are ([00:58:04](#)). They also mentioned that Governor Moore is scheduled to visit the Sheltonham Veteran Cemetery to unveil the Boys' Village burial site marker ([00:59:20](#)).
- **Communications and Administrative Notes** Lindsay Livingston -DVMF- requested that commissioners send information for the newsletter and community calendar, as well as outreach event opportunities for DVMF participation, to themselves or Tiffany ([01:00:20](#)). Mike Bowers raised an administrative point about the commissioners' business cards having the old department name, prompting discussion ([01:01:38](#)). Elaine May-Stem and Bob Reer both supported the idea of

new business cards, especially for providing contact and resource information to veterans ([01:02:56](#)). Lindsay Livingston -DVMF- noted that many commissioners' tenures would be ending in the spring, and Samantha Wolfley introduced herself as Secretary Rothstein's new executive assistant, taking over attendance ([01:04:52](#)).

- **Roll Call and Attendance** Samantha Wolfley -DVMF- conducted a roll call, confirming attendance for Cynthia Macker, Ronald El Hulcom, and others, while noting the absence of Steuart Blair, James Childs Jr., Candace Harris, and Robert Hartman Jr. She assured that anyone not called had their attendance recorded, and she also recorded names of others logged in, committing to a double-check before the meeting concludes ([01:06:59](#)).
- **Commissioner Tenure and Replacement Planning** Jerome Davis inquired about their tenure expiration, believing it is approaching, and requested verification from Lindsay Livingston -DVMF- to allow the state commander time to select a replacement ([01:08:45](#)). Mike Bowers noted that the five-year term process involves a nomination, appointment office handling, and new commissioners typically stepping in at the July meeting ([01:09:33](#)). Jerome Davis and Elaine May-Stem later confirmed with Lindsay Livingston -DVMF- that their tenures are up in June ([02:01:50](#)).
- **Expectations for Commissioners and Legislative Involvement** Mike Bowers emphasized the five-year term and encouraged commissioners whose terms are ending to evaluate their continued involvement, noting that the commission will be active in communications between quarterly meetings and will have expectations for outreach and reporting ([01:09:33](#)). Mike Bowers also stressed the importance of commissioner awareness and providing information during the legislative session, especially since some organizations, like the American Legion, lack a strong state-level legislative affairs office, a gap the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC) is helping to fill ([01:11:05](#)).
- **State Ethics Law Presentation Overview** Pansy Watson -Ethics- began their presentation on the state ethics law, assuring commissioners that they are available five days a week and encouraging them to reach out with any questions. Pansy Watson -Ethics- explained that their role is to support the board, protect its integrity, and that while there is no "ethics jail," they aim to help people avoid enforcement matters ([01:12:26](#)) ([01:14:57](#)). They noted that the presentation would cover various conflicts of interest and briefly touch on financial disclosure, not taking more than about 45 minutes ([01:14:05](#)).

- **The State Ethics Commission and Its Role** Pansy Watson -Ethics- described the State Ethics Commission as an independent, five-person body with staff, which meets about six times a year to handle special enforcement and review staff-brought matters requiring special exceptions, often concerning state employees seeking secondary employment ([01:14:05](#)). They further stated that the public ethics law establishes ethical guidelines for public and elected officials, local governments, and lobbyists, operating as an anti-corruption law focused on preventing both misconduct and the appearance of inappropriate behavior ([01:14:57](#)).
- **Ethics Law Compliance and Financial Disclosures** Pansy Watson -Ethics- clarified that the public ethics law sets the minimum standard, and commissioners must follow the stricter rules if their commission or board has them ([01:16:57](#)). They mentioned that financial disclosure forms for transparency purposes are due by April 30th, and the staff is available to help with filing ([01:15:57](#)). Pansy Watson -Ethics- later confirmed that newly appointed members file within 30 days, annual renewals are by April 30th, and an end-of-service statement is required within 60 days of leaving the position ([01:48:33](#)).
- **Conflicts of Interest: Participation and Recusal** Pansy Watson -Ethics- outlined the conflict of interest concerning participation in matters where a commissioner has a personal interest, which includes investments or issues involving a qualifying relative (parent, child, sibling, or spouse) ([01:17:51](#)). They advised that commissioners must recuse themselves from discussions to prevent the appearance of favoritism or bias, though exceptions exist if recusal would prevent the board from reaching quorum, provided the conflict is announced and noted in the minutes ([01:18:47](#)) ([01:21:33](#)). Furthermore, Pansy Watson -Ethics- explained that while family involvement might trigger recusal, issues involving best friends may be considered a prestige issue, requiring recusal to avoid the appearance of using influence for benefit ([01:19:43](#)).
- **Conflicts of Interest: Employment and Financial Interests** Pansy Watson -Ethics- addressed outside employment and financial interests, which are uniquely managed for board and commission members who are expected to disclose conflicts upfront during their appointment. This upfront disclosure provides a "pass" to continue serving, requiring only recusal from specific matters involving their disclosed interests ([01:23:21](#)). They clarified that this pertains to any outside entity regulated by or doing business with the commission, including paid work or other board service that could create a competing loyalty ([01:24:26](#)).

- **Conflicts of Interest: Post-Employment and Gifts** Pansy Watson -Ethics- discussed post-employment restrictions, which prohibit working for the "other side" on a specific matter, such as a grant or contract, that the commissioner worked on while with the commission ([01:26:34](#)). Regarding gifts, the general rule is not to solicit them, and while unsolicited gifts have exceptions, the rule of thumb is to decline any gift that looks bad or could impair impartiality, especially from "controlled donors" like vendors, lobbyists, or those seeking grants ([01:27:28](#)) ([01:29:19](#)).
- **Gift Exceptions and Reporting** Pansy Watson -Ethics- detailed several exceptions for gifts, including meals and beverages in the presence of the donor, reimbursement for travel to speaking engagements, nominal gifts (swag), ceremonial awards, and state-to-state gifts ([01:30:18](#)) ([01:32:04](#)). They cautioned against pricey gifts and tickets to special events, and emphasized that lobbyists must report all gifts they give, requiring commissioners to report accepted gifts on their financial disclosure form's gift schedule for transparency and cross-checking ([01:32:53](#)) ([01:34:54](#)).
- **Conflicts of Interest: Prestige and Use of Title** Pansy Watson -Ethics- explained that prestige violations occur when commissioners use their reputation or title for personal gain, and they must clearly distinguish whether they are acting on behalf of the commission or in a personal capacity ([01:39:30](#)). They advised against using commission resources (such as a state email or staff) for personal favors and emphasized that using the commission title or letterhead for endorsements or public commentary is only permissible if the full commission has sanctioned it ([01:40:20](#)) ([01:44:37](#)). Pansy Watson -Ethics- clarified that commissioners may use their veteran status as a personal credential but not their commission title unless sanctioned ([01:42:19](#)).
- **Conflicts of Interest: Confidential Information and Retaliation Prohibition** Pansy Watson -Ethics- addressed confidential information, noting that at the state level, the concern is economic benefit, such as disclosing upcoming grant information to a favored group before it is public ([01:45:37](#)). They advised that commissioners keep confidential information private and noted a prohibition against retaliation for reporting ethics violations ([01:46:37](#)).
- **Praise for Ethics Commission Accessibility** Penny Collins shared a positive anecdote about their experience submitting their ethics questionnaire over the phone with Pansy Watson -Ethics-, praising them for answering the phone personally and facilitating the process ([01:53:32](#)). Pansy Watson -Ethics- also

offered a solution for commissioners who struggle with their electronic filing password, suggesting they call the office to complete the form over the phone or use certain browsers that allow them to change their password easily ([01:54:44](#)).

- **Update on Scheduling and Next Presentation** Following the ethics presentation, Mike Bowers consulted Jayson Spiegel about David Dragics' availability for the next presentation, noting that they were early on the agenda. Commissioner Hulcom reported that they experienced difficulty connecting online and only logged in late, which Mike Bowers acknowledged and assured them they would be added to the roll call ([01:55:39](#)). Mike Bowers introduced David Dragics, Legislative Director of the Maryland Military Coalition (MMC), who was available to begin their briefing ([01:56:42](#)) ([02:03:45](#)).
- **Compensation Rates and Disclosure for Claim Services** Jerome Davis questioned how veterans would know the maximum compensation rate charged by claim companies, since veteran service organizations (VSOs) offer free services ([02:15:36](#)). David Dragics clarified that if the law passes, the company must provide an upfront, written, and oral disclosure covering that the company is unaccredited, that the veteran can receive services for free through a VSO, and where the nearest accredited VSO is located ([02:16:43](#)). The VA regulation allows for "reasonable compensation" of 20% of past due benefits when appealing a claim, with anything above 33% being considered unreasonable ([02:18:54](#)).
- **Combating Claim Predator Misconduct** Jerome Davis expressed concern about claim sharks collecting money from veterans for years. David Dragics acknowledged that bad actors exist and that the proposed strict regulation of conduct would prohibit such actions, including getting veterans' passwords and IDs, ensuring these limitations are stipulated in the law ([02:21:15](#)). David Dragics emphasized that the key point is strict upfront disclosure of these terms, including size of font and specific wording ([02:20:07](#)).
- **Veteran Status and Benefits Issues** The issue of veteran status for National Guard members was discussed, with David Dragics noting that a person must serve 180 days on federal duty to attain veteran status and a DD214, which entitles them to US VA and state benefits. An unnamed participant and Jerome Davis shared an anecdote about a former National Guard member who did not reach the 180-day threshold and whose family had a hard time getting benefits after their death ([02:25:21](#)) ([02:27:42](#)). Jerome Davis suggested that individuals should ask for activation extension orders to meet the 180-day requirement for federal veteran status ([02:28:22](#)).

- **Commissioners' Quarterly Report and Round Table Guidelines** Mike Bowers urged commissioners to submit their quarterly reports, emphasizing that the reports should be filled out with good detail focusing on what veterans are discussing and what may be happening ([02:29:57](#)). For the round table, they requested that reports be limited to about a minute, focusing on state-level issues and information pertaining to the organization or district the commissioner represents, not other affiliations ([02:30:56](#)).
- **Veteran Organization Announcements and Updates** Jerome Davis announced the VFW state convention in Ocean City from May 26th through May 29th, and Bruce Edwards Commander VFW added that preparations are underway for the conference, including the Washington Conference from March 1st through the 5th ([02:30:56](#)). Penny Collins, representing the Fleet Reserve Association, announced plans to offer a pilot seminar on spousal death benefits for veterans, free to the public, to address confusion on the topic ([02:33:54](#)). Lorinzo Foxworth, representing the Retired Enlisted Association (TREA), highlighted the challenge of recruiting new members who may already belong to organizations like the American Legion and VFW, and stated their focus is on partnering with these groups and mentioning TREA during state events ([02:34:46](#)).
- **Veteran Benefits and Care Issues** Frank Killebrew shared two specific cases involving spouses of deceased veterans: one who has been waiting almost a year for a spouse's benefit application to be processed, and another waiting a year for their husband's interment at Arlington National Cemetery ([02:37:36](#)). Cynthia Macri, representing Montgomery County District 8, reported that the main topic of conversation at their commission meeting was the increasing numbers of homeless veterans in the county, after having previously been at a functional zero ([02:39:04](#)).
- **Mental Health and Women Veterans' Needs** Cynthia Macri also noted that Everymind/Serving Together in Montgomery County has been cited as a resource for veterans' mental health services and has started a growing women's collaborative. Cynthia Macri observed that the state and federal entities often lack recognition that the experiences and needed resources of male and female veterans differ ([02:40:36](#)).
- **Workhouse Military and the Arts Initiative** Cynthia Macri announced that they were named the U. Workhouse Military and the Arts Initiative resident artist for 2026 to 2028. They suggested the commission should visit the workhouse for a private glass flame working session, which they stated is restorative, and

mentioned the possibility of a satellite office in Maryland if the issue of bringing propane oxygen torches could be resolved, serving many Maryland residents ([02:42:15](#)).

- **Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and Other Events** Derrick McGill, representing the DAV in their first meeting, announced that the DAV midwinter conference annual discussion with legislators on Capitol Hill is scheduled for February 22nd through the 25th in Crystal City ([02:43:28](#)). Michael Moore reported that Governor Wes Moore and First Lady Dawn Moore attended the Veterans Day event at the Green Belt War Memorial, where the Governor announced a \$250,000 veteran initiative ([02:44:17](#)). Michael Moore also described their activities including presenting a Veterans Day proclamation, holding annual police and fire awards, interviewing candidates for the Naval Academy, and attending the University of Maryland Turk Vet Scholarship Luncheon, where they briefed on new Department of Veterans and Military Families programs ([02:45:14](#)).
- **Positive Feedback and Outreach Efforts** Thomas Ottenwaelder, a member-at-large, shared positive feedback about the VSO in Salisbury and the Department of Maryland Veterans Affairs website. Thomas Ottenwaelder plans to spend the next two months identifying and gathering a list of smaller, unique nonprofits and veteran organizations not affiliated with larger events ([02:47:49](#)).
- **Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and Memorials** Jim Shiffrin reported that MOAA is preparing for their advocacy and action day on Capitol Hill, focusing on three or four national bills, and noted that the MOAA Legislative Action Center is open to the public ([02:49:02](#)). Jim Shiffrin stated that the MMC will be sending action alerts to member organizations, urging them to forward the alerts to their members because legislators count the messages they receive. Jim Shiffrin also announced that the Military Order of the World Wars plans to erect a memorial at Crownsville, aiming for a July 4th dedication to commemorate America 250 and the cemetery's 50th anniversary ([02:50:19](#)).
- **Veterans Trust Fund Tax Check-off** Jayson Spiegel, from the Reserve Organization of America, highlighted that the 2025 tax forms issued by the controller will include the first income tax check-off to benefit the Veterans Trust Fund. They plan to publicize this to their members to ensure sufficient funding for the trust fund, and urged others to publicize it as well ([02:51:53](#)).
- **Commissioner Outreach and Events** Elaine May-Stem, with the Catholic Board of Veterans, shared their activities, including presenting a proclamation to the Lions

Club in New Windsor for their veteran's dinner, speaking at the city of Westminster's Veterans Day program, and attending a high school breakfast and program for veterans ([02:53:23](#)). Elaine May-Stem announced that the Gilchrist Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans event will take place on March 26th and encouraged attendees to share the information, noting that it includes service organizations and vendors to help veterans ([02:55:42](#)).

- **Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation and Small VSOs** Debjeet Sarkar, in their first meeting, expressed interest in pursuing the Johnny Span Ally Program with the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation to become a landmark partner with them in building the National Memorial in DC ([02:56:52](#)). They also mentioned two small groups: Veterans Athletes United, which conducts events including a dog tag memorial tribute to 9/11 veterans, and Veterans Town Hall, founded by author Sebastian Younger, which seeks engagement with veterans ([02:57:58](#)).
- **Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) and ALS Legislation** An unnamed participant representing the Colonial Chapter of PVA shared an anecdote about addressing a school bus driver who was mistreating a wheelchair-using young boy, leading to their chapter adopting the young man ([02:58:58](#)). They also noted that PVA is leading legislative efforts to change the law so that veterans who get ALS and do not live long enough can ensure their families receive survivor benefits ([03:00:06](#)). The commissioner also reported on still visiting homeless encampments and the ongoing issues faced by homeless individuals, particularly those with less than honorable discharges seeking upgrades ([03:01:39](#)).
- **Congressional District Report and Commission Prioritization** Commissioner Hulcom, representing the Seventh Congressional District, submitted their quarterly report and highlighted the outstanding suicide prevention workshop they attended ([03:01:39](#)). They shared that Representative Kweisi Mfume's office is open for constituents with veteran service, social security, or Medicare benefits issues and provided the office's phone number ([03:03:10](#)). Mike Bowers concluded the session by urging the commission to prioritize and limit their ideas to be an effective advisory body, suggesting that commissioners familiarize themselves with the different commissions under the Department of Veterans and Military Families to avoid duplicating efforts ([03:04:37](#)).
- **Commission Member Responsibilities and Collaboration** Mike Bowers emphasized the expectation that each district representative should be knowledgeable about every veteran-serving nonprofit within their area to better

understand and support their work. Bowers highlighted that the meeting is intended for synchronization, using Lorenzo's membership issues as an example of a common challenge where members can share best practices and help each other gain new members ([03:06:05](#)).

- **Communication and Transparency** Mike Bowers announced that Lindsay Livingston -DVMF- quickly added a link to the commission's website, allowing the public to easily attend the meetings. Following a recommendation from Gary Palmer, Bowers confirmed the plan to explore posting the meeting minutes online for interested parties to read and stay informed about the commission's activities ([03:07:08](#)).
- **Subcommittees and Veteran Representation** Mike Bowers suggested that if the commission lacks the resources to fully staff its own subcommittees, it might be more advantageous to integrate into existing commissions or committees as the veteran representative or voice ([03:07:08](#)). Bowers noted that this is an area for discussion, considering whether collaboration is possible or if topics must strictly align with the commission's designated responsibilities ([03:08:30](#)).
- **District Report and Veteran Services** Mike Bowers provided a report on their Sixth District activities, focusing on visiting prisons of all security levels to speak with veterans. Bowers identified a critical legal need for veterans in prisons, particularly preparing them for probation hearings, and stressed the importance of legal representation and the reintegration process ([03:08:30](#)). Additionally, Bowers mentioned that the team, including Dvmf, organized the Marine Corps birthday celebration in Annapolis ([03:08:30](#)).
- **Meeting Conclusion and Women's Monument** The meeting experienced technical issues with Mike Bowers freezing up and falling off the call repeatedly ([03:08:30](#)). After Mike Bowers wrapped up their report, the meeting was adjourned. Elaine May-Stem asked Michael Moore if the commission would again form a committee to work on a women's monument. Michael Moore closed the meeting with a prayer ([03:10:18](#)).

Suggested next steps

- Lindsay Livingston -DVMF- will reach out to commissioners to alert them about their tenure with the commission coming up this spring.

- Dana Burl -DVMF- will engage with education, labor, and health departments to identify sticking points for military spouses transferring licenses to Maryland, and create a system to make it more seamless for them.
- Jimmy Anderson -DVMF- will continue to share out information regarding the secretary's confirmation hearing to the broader commission.
- Lindsay Livingston -DVMF- will double check with staff regarding the guidance on business cards for state employees after the name change.
- Lindsay Livingston -DVMF- or Tiffany will be reached out to schedule outreach events for DVMF.
- Thomas Ottenwaelder will gather a list of small and unique veteran nonprofits and service providers and provide it next month or the month after.
- Penny Collins will put together and offer a seminar or a symposium at the Fleet Reserve on spousal death benefits for veterans, free of charge to the public.
- Lorinzo Foxworth will keep everyone posted on the progress with membership issues for the Retired Enlisted Association.
- Cynthia Macri will talk to Mike Bowers about hosting a private glass flame working session for the commission at the Workhouse, and explore bringing a satellite office to Maryland.
- Michael Moore will follow up with the University of Maryland Turk Vet Scholarship Luncheon and the department regarding a briefing on the new Department of Veterans and Military Families programs.
- Jim Shiffrin will forward any action alerts from the MMC down to MOA members.
- jayson spiegel will let all members of the Reserve Organization of America know when the tax forms are released to publicize the income tax check-off to benefit the Veterans Trust Fund.
- Debeet Sarkar will pursue the Johnny Span Ally Program to make the commission a landmark partner with the Global War on Terror Memorial Foundation and provide the connection to Mike Rodriguez and Jen Balu.
- Mike Bowers will follow up with +1 410-***-**19 to include the issue of National Guard service members not reaching 180 days of active duty as a point for future consideration on changing state law.
- Mike Bowers will explore and ensure it is okay to post the meeting minutes so that interested people can read them, as recommended by Gary Palmer.