

**MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**  
**SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA CHAPTER**

**MINUTES - BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

**18 April 2024**

**Call to Order**

President Gary Powers called the meeting of the Board of Directors of The Southwest Virginia Chapter, Military Officers Association to order at 1000 hours Eastern Standard Time on 18 April 2024.

**Chapter Officers and Directors Present**

President and Public Affairs Officer Gary Powers; 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, Director and News Letter Editor Tom Dalzell; Treasurer and Membership Chair Robert Brown; Chaplain and Bereavement Committee Officer David Gilleran; VCOC Representative and Past President Matt Haag; Secretary and Personal Affaire Representative Steve Jamison; Legislative Affairs Representative and Awards Chair Robert Habermann; Sergeant-At-Arms Larry Johnson; Director John Miller; Director Don Sowder; Director Evelyn Cox.

**Chapter Officers and Directors Absent**

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, Community Services Volunteer and Transition Team Representative Dan Karnes; Facebook Editor Lee Ensley; Webmaster Klaus (Ted) Lonitz; Surviving Spouse Representative Mary Lou Summers; Director Roger Burnett.

**Opening Prayer**

Chaplain David Gilleran led the Board of Directors in prayer.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

Awards Chair Robert Habermann led The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag recited by all present.

**Approval of Board of Directors Meetings Minutes**

Minutes of the Board of Directors meeting of 15 February 2024 were approved as submitted.

**President's Report**

Reported that he received the new DOD ID card. Very simple process.

Attended the MOAA Leadership Workshop ZOOM call on 27 March - 170 participants. Facilitated by MOAA Leadership - Principally Jim Carmen (VP Member Support), and CAPT Frank Mitchell (Senior Council & Chapter Affairs). Most all VPs and Directors were there. MOAA President Kelley not present. During various discussions, surprised at diversity of orgs, no websites, no newsletters, no Facebook page, and membership issues. We are doing a lot of good.

Many topics - highlight just a few:

**Emphasis on Legislative Action Center.** Letting our legislators know where we stand on the issues affecting the military and veterans. Online LAC makes it relatively easy to show our position and support on the issues.

Yesterday, 17 April was **Advocacy in Action Day** on the hill “**Storming The Hill**” which I knew nothing about until a few days ago. **Topics:**

**The Major Richard Star Act**, a bill supporting our combat-injured veterans that would end an unjust offset for those who lose a dollar of service-earned retirement pay for every dollar of VA disability compensation.

**The BAH Restoration Act**, a bill that reverses DoD policy capping the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) at 95% of local rental and utilities costs — a policy that’s placing a financial burden on service members and families

**Protecting TRICARE For Life (TFL)**, which remains a key issue for all MOAA members — those already covered by TFL and Medicare, along with those who’ll use the benefit when they turn 65.

**NOTE:** We can emphasize these to our own Federal Legislators at our May event.

**Copyright Infringement** - already had some discussions with some of our leaders. A word of caution to us when posting on social media and publications on the use of copyright protected images. Stories of chapters being sued for unauthorized use of photos, etc. We are covered.

**Surviving Spouses** - a lot of discussion on the importance and the roles of the Surviving Spouses. Of the 330,000 members, 46K are surviving spouses - over 13%. More emphasis and recognition for the efforts, some are even Chapter officers. Ways to recognize - newsletter bios. Lot of discussion concerning spouses of living MOAA members becoming members as well since so many are active in Chapters and the question is whether to make them Associate Members or creating Auxiliary Chapters for spouses of MOAA members. It is surprising that a few have gone that route by creating Auxiliary Chapters for spouses, non-voting but are a social gathering and participate in Chapter activities. Consider the Surviving Spouse Award - Mary Lou.

**Membership Growth** - all chapters and big MOAA all faced with Membership challenges. Where and how to recruit. Always looking for ideas - something we are exploring. We this year have already added a few new members, 3 three year..

MOAA is exploring options - rebranding, name recognition, things we are looking at as well.

MOAA website in transition - not able to logon to personal dashboard

### **Secretary's Report**

Obtained name tags for new members.

- Visitor and new member today David C. MacNamee, LtCol, USAF (Ret)
- Suggested sending a flower arrangement to Mary Lou Summers. Set a \$50 limit.

### **Treasurer's Report**

- Income and Expenses Budget vs. Actual 1 January 2024 through 31 March 2024 was presented – Copy provided to each Board member. Income for the year \$1,651 and expenditures of \$4,688.99.
- Secretary deposited \$790 on 12 April 2024 with future \$1,000.00 coming from the Archer grant.
- Budget calls for a transfer of \$1,256 from the Leadership fund to Prime Checking but has not been done as yet. When completed income will exceed expenses.
- Checking Account balance through 31 March 2024 – \$8,555.79.
- Savings Account balance through 31 March 2024 - \$4,167.60.
- Audit completed.
- Discussed the issue of or the need to consider an investment vehicle.  
CORPORATE SPONSORSHIPS - start locally, David Points FOX radio, FLYROA, Lionberger Construction, USAA, Ace Hardware. President CAPT Powers to pursue possibilities.

### **1st Vice President's Report**

Develop a list of potential candidates. Are there other leadership positions in need of rotation? Aging of the membership population. Burnout!

### **Membership Chair Report**

No new leads identified on the latest MOAA New Real Time (NRT) site. The best source for new members is through personal contact. Please invite potential eligible officers you know to attend membership functions. New member David McNamee invited by CAPT Powers.

What is the status of members identified in 2023 newsletters? Nancy Harris, COL James Cowbell; in 2021 newsletters - Anita White, Brian Lindamood, Steven Kremer? No longer active - Hans Brings, MD, Ron Johnson, Richard Davis  
Plan to put a membership article in the upcoming APR/MAY/JUN 2024 newsletter.

During the summer - Membership Drive. What can we do to assist? Write personal letters from me? Postcards?

## **Program Directors Report**

Meeting programs scheduled for 2024.

**18 April 2024** - Board of Directors meeting. Program by Christine Link-Owens, Volunteer Coordination Group Manager, Virginia Tech Transportation Institute on the “**Virginia Tech Transportation Institute (The Smart Road) and its many Divisions that engage to improve all types of transportation.**”

- **16 May 2024** - Chapter Membership BBQ meeting at the American Legion Post 3 shelter facility in Salem, Virginia catered by Mission BBQ in Roanoke. State and area legislators invited. Musical program by Richard Kiser canceled. Checking on other musical possibilities. Bring your significant other and enjoy a delicious barbecue sandwich and use this opportunity to ask your elected officials about all things affecting the military, veterans and their families.

### **Confirmed attendees:**

Federal - Jonathan Hartsock from Congressman Cline’s office  
Josh Hess from Congressman Griffith’s office  
State - Senator Christopher Head  
Senator David Sutterlein  
Delegate Joe McNamara  
Delegate Christopher Obenshain ?

Delegate Sam Rasoul.

Should personal invitations be sent out to elected officials? President CAPT Powers to consider.

### • **FUTURE PROGRAMS BEING CONSIDERED - TBD:**

- Ms. Sara Stanford or Ms. Carly Harris on the "Sports Nutrition Program For Athletes At Virginia Tech"
- Mr. John Ketwig a retired automotive service and parts executive and the author of “And a Hard Rain Fell: A G.I.’s True Story of the War in Vietnam”, and a book titled “Vietnam Reconsidered: The War, the Times, and Why They Matter”.
- Mr. Ron Boyd, President and CEO of Local Office on Aging (LOA) The Local Office on Aging is a non-profit, 501(c)3 organization dedicated to helping older persons remain independent for as long as possible administering over 25 community services that provide nutrition, education, advocacy and socialization.
- Mr. Larry Johnson, CAPT USA (former), Vietnam veteran helicopter pilot on “Helicopters In The Vietnam War—A Personal

- Perspective”.
- CAPT Gary Powers, USN (Ret) on “The Role of Naval Intelligence During the Cold War”.

### **Surviving Spouse Representative Report**

Mary Lou Summers currently undergoing treatment for cancer. Plans to attend the 16 May 2024 BBQ picnic meeting.

### **Public Relations Report**

- Chapter Newsletter *The Communiqué* – 4th quarter 2023 (OCT-NOV-DEC) published on 30 December 2023
- Chapter Newsletter *The Communiqué* – 1st quarter 2024 (JAN-FEB-MARCH) in the works.
- MOAA Chapter Level of Excellence Award for 2023 submitted 22 January 2024
- MOAA Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Award for 2023 submitted 23 January 2024
- Chapter Website & Face book – Up and running. The chapter Website Manager LCDR Ted Lonitz is going added a link to prior documents, Newsletters and Board of Directors Minutes, at the bottom of the web page. That way anyone wanting to view past documents would have access. The web site will display two years of newsletters and two years of Board of Directors minutes, the current year and the previous year.
- Gary Sayre has agreed to become the Chapter Public Affairs Officer. Is currently drafting an article for local publication to highlight chapter and member’s service.
- Website in need of update to reflect new leadership, meeting minutes, legislative Priorities for 2024. Also recommend incorporating MOAA SWVA Chapter logo on Home page and a direct link to MOAA Legislative Action page on website LEGISLATION page. On the JOIN page - link to VCOC “**Why Join**’ video.

### **Past President’s Report**

- Chapter audit complete.
- CAPT Matt Haag to be a guest speaker at the Melrose Baptist Church on 16 July 2024.
- Asked about the “Affinity Care” program chapter members participated with previously.
- Roanoke Valet Veterans Council opportunities.
- Roanoke Valley Veterans Parade.

### **Directors Report’s**

- CAPT Burnett – No report.

- LTC Gilleran – New ID cards can be obtained at Fort Barefoot (Pickett) with no problem as a walk in. Sent a "Get Well" card to Mary Lou Summers.
- COL Miller – Reported on the **National Vietnam War Veterans Recognition** held on 6 April 2024 at the American Legion Post 3, and on **The Community Salutes the Area's Future Soldiers** held on 12 April 2024 at the Vinton War Memorial. Wished there were more SWVC members in attendance.
- Capt Johnson –No report

### Legislative Liaison Report - LTC Habermann

- **MOAA's Legislative Priorities** for advocacy as the 118th Congress continues its work. Their focus remains on all seven of the uniformed services and their service-earned entitlements.
  - Compensation and Service-Earned Benefits
  - Military Housing
  - Health Care for Currently Serving and Retirees
  - Health Care and Benefits for Veterans
  - Service Families
  - Survivors
  - Guard and Reserve
- As protecting health care and service-earned benefits is a challenge, MOAA will press forward to engage Congress to shape outcomes in these vital areas. There are steep hills before us. Our nation has a rising debt of more than \$30 trillion and a deficit of more than \$3 trillion. Because of this, MOAA anticipates robust attempts to control federal budgets, reduce or eliminate unprogrammed expenditures, and reduce entitlements. MOAA needs you to be ready to reach out to your legislators and keep that engagement going as necessary to make sure your voice is heard. Details can be found at: <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2023-news-articles/advocacy/moaas-legislative-priorities-118th-Congress/>

### VCOC Report – CAPT Matt Haag

- **JLC Policy Initiatives for 2024:**
  - Policy 1-1.1 -- Request Relief from Gaming regulations for VSO's
  - Policy 2 -- Standard Certification for Service Dogs
  - Policy 3 -- VANG Tuition Assistance Waiver
  - Policy 4 -- Expand Tax Relief for Surviving Spouses
  - Policy 5 -- Enhanced Emergency Response Medical Protections
  - Policy 6 -- Income Tax Subtraction of Age Requirement

- 2nd Quarter VCOC ZOOM meeting held on 10 April 2024. CAPT Haag attended. Next meeting scheduled for 11 July 2024.
- Advocacy in Action being pushed.
- VCOC Biannual report – June 2024

### **Committee Chairperson's Report** – LTC Bb Habermann

- **Awards Chair Report** – Notifications sent to the JROTC, ROTC, CAP units for the 2024 Chapter Leadership Awards, Archer Awards and MOAA ROTC and JROTC Medal Awards in February 2024 requesting nominations. Four separate requests for nominations were sent out. 13 of 15 high schools responded. Still awaiting nominations from William Byrd and George Wythe High Schools.
  - 2024 MOAA ROTC Awards – Virginia Tech
    - ✓ Junior Army Cadet Shannon Hutchens
    - ✓ Junior Navy Cadet Cade Cesmat
    - ✓ Senior Air Force Cadet Cater Kinhead
  - 2024 Southwest Virginia Chapter Leadership Awards
    - ✓ The General William B. Rosson Leadership Award to Cadet Braden M. Nauman, Navy ROTC Virginia Tech.
    - ✓ The Major General Lloyd B. Ramsey Leadership Award to Cadet Cadet Sarthak Gupta, Navy ROTC Virginia Tech.
  - JROTC/CAP Awards
- **Community Services Volunteer Representative** – No report.

### **Old Business**

- **National Vietnam War Veterans Recognition** - 6 April 2024, 1400-1530 hours, American Legion Post 3.
- **The Community Salutes the Area's Future Soldiers** - 12 April 2024, 1800 hours, Vinton War Memorial.
- **Vittles For Vets** – status

### **New Business**

- **Big Lick Ruck March** – 27 April 2024 at 0900 hours, The Green Goat in Roanoke, Virginia – fund raiser for Vittles For Vets.
- **Southwest VA Woman Veteran Recognition** – 8 June 2024, 0900 to 1300 hours, Salem VA Medical Center
- **Bike Nights** - 18 April; 16 May; 27 June; 19 September 2024, 1800 to 2000 hours, American Legion Post 3.

- Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony - Monday, May 27, 1100. CAPT Powers to MC.
- Inquiry from the Adult Care Center of Roanoke Valley on some form of working together. The Adult Care Center is a resource in the Roanoke Valley for families with dependent adults still living at home. They also work closely with the VA Medical Center across the street and as a result Veterans make up fully half of their participants there. They are looking for supporters as well as financial assistance. The point of contact is Mr. Guy Byrd director of Philanthropy.
- Publish a list of Southwest Virginia Chapter opportunities to participate to prospective members,

**Adjourn** – President

- Meeting adjourned at 1130 hours.