



**VCOC 4th QUARTER MEETING
Wednesday, 25 October 2023,
0930-1030 hours**

Zoom Meeting and In-Person, Falcons Landing, Sterling, VA

1. Administration, Meeting Called to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 0930 hours by Linc Smith, CDR, USNR (Ret), VCOC President. Linc Smith welcomed all to the meeting.
- Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation were offered. Ken Ruppard, LTC, USA (Ret), VCOC Chaplain, gave the invocation and led the pledge.

2. Secretary's Report

- VCOC Secretary, John Down, LtCol, USAF (Ret), reiterated the welcome. He reiterated previous requests to all chapter to consider a volunteer to serve as the next VCOC Secretary. His current term ends 31 December 2023.

- **Roll Call & Determine Quorum**

John Down then conducted Roll Call. Eleven of fifteen chapters (about 73%) were represented; some chapters had multiple representatives but only one voting member per chapter. A quorum was thus achieved. Please refer to Attachment 1 of these minutes for details of the roll call. Note that attendance was taken only for the business meeting portion of the meeting. Also note that I have added an additional list of attendees as I was able to discern/hear. Please let me know if you were there for the business meeting and I did not place you on the list.

- **Adoption of the Agenda**

The Agenda as drafted was adopted by unanimous vote; motion to approve from Victoria Revilla, COL, USA (Ret), and Ken App, CDR, USN (Ret).

3. Approval of Third Quarter Meeting Minutes

John Down then asked for a motion to approve the Third Quarter Meeting minutes. CPT (former) USA, Ruth McWilliams, with second by Doug Yurovich, COL, USMC (Ret). The motion was carried by unanimous vote.

4. President's Report

- Linc Smith thanked the chapters for the opportunity to serve as Council President.
- He then thanked the Falcons Landing Chapter for hosting the event.

5. **Treasurer's Report**

- Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA (Ret.), supported by outgoing VCOC Treasurer Maria Kelly, CPT/Capt, former USA and USAF (respectively), mentioned that the third quarter budget report has now been posted on the VCOC website. Income and expenses are now balanced, with a few more expenses expected in the 4th quarter, mainly from authorized travel, awards, and mementos. Expect to see budget reports posted on the VCOC website prior to quarterly meetings. Please let Sherry know if you have any questions on those reports.
- In response to a question, Monti Zimmerman, COL, USA (Ret), VCOC Third VP for Legislative Affairs, noted that he paid for his wife's lunch (\$25) at the Third Quarter VCOC meeting.
- Sherry announced that a newly formed Finance Committee has a proposal for the Council to vote on at the First Quarter VCOC meeting. First, the Finance Committee consisting of Sherry, Linc, Maria, and advisor-only Bruce LaLonde, CAPT, USN (Ret), President, PACMOAA, is recommending that the dues discussion for 2024 be postponed until the First Quarter meeting. Second, the committee asks that the 2024 budget recommendation likewise be postponed to that meeting. Main reason is that we need to have an accurate year-end membership count from the chapters before items like 2024 dues assessment can be performed. (Additional note that Bruce LaLonde is a CPA.)
- Thanks to Victoria Revilla for conducting a financial "audit" (technically, a review, not an audit) with former VCOC Treasurer Jim Stephan, LtCol, USAF (Ret), as part of turnover of Treasurer duties. Victoria recommended that the budget guidelines be updated since the last update took place in 2010.

6. **Standing Committee Reports:**

• **Communications & Public Affairs**

- As always, Linc Smith asked that chapter inputs for "The Crier," which is posted on the VCOC website, be sent in to be included in the final edition for the year. Chapters should send their inputs for the next edition to him at his email address (mvng288@aol.com). (This is the chapters' chance to share chapter highlights which may be submitted on an on-going basis.)

• **Membership & Chapter Affairs**

- John Prevar CDR, USN (Ret.) prepared the Membership report as of 30 September 2023. John Down presented the numbers as they were received from the chapters. John Prevar joined the discussion in progress and noted that the Council is up seven members since the end of the Second Quarter.

7. **Legislative Committee Report**

- Monti Zimmerman thanked Victoria for all she has done for the Council, and Diana Kupchella, Col, USAF (Ret), for agreeing to be nominated for Council President.
- Monti provided an overview of on-going legislative activities. There are three proposed Joint Leadership Council (JLC) initiatives to be presented to the General Assembly (GA) in 2024. The first is a "second reading" of a proposed Constitutional amendment for property tax exemption for surviving spouses of soldiers who died in line of duty in addition to those killed in action. Currently this is voluntary by locality but approval by the General Assembly again this coming year will place the amendment proposal on the November 2024 ballot. If approved by the voters, this will become mandatory across the state.

- Monti next said that the state budget committee approved the income tax relief for military retirees by eliminating the age 55 requirement. The first \$20,000 this year, then \$30,000 next year, and up to \$40,000 the following year and thereafter. The Governor signed this into law. Along with this, State Senators Bryce Reeves and Jeremy McPike are working in bi-partisan fashion with a study group to add Public Health Service (PHS) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) retirees to those military service retirees eligible for this tax relief. MOAA and the Reserve Officers Association (ROA) are teaming this with the two senators. Hopefully, their recommendations will go before the GA.
- Two other initiatives support the Virginia National Guard (VNG). One is to provide 90 days extension of coverage when VNG members perform special duties, such as supporting other states, to ensure that Workmen's compensation claims can be filed. The other VNG initiative support is for education benefits. In the past, Guard members could apply for schools and tuition would be paid to the schools. Because of other factors, the state found it difficult to get a uniform budget and repayment, so payment is now on a reimbursement basis. A 30 day "window," start to finish, to apply for reimbursement is often difficult to meet. We will be asking for a return to the previous tuition payment model.

8. Surviving Spouses (Sherry Ferki, Maj, USA, Ret.) Sherry noted that there are several items posted on the VCOC website pertaining to surviving spouses. She asked the chapters to check to ensure that the surviving spouse information is updated. Further, she suggested that perhaps chapters could include a "Surviving Spouses Corner" in their newsletters. Sherry emphasizes that chapters should make sure the surviving spouse **liaison** information is updated. [My Note: As we have discussed before, many surviving spouses do not have access to on-line information. A hard-copy newsletter in addition to the on-line version would help to get these spouses the information benefiting them. A spouses corner, as Sherry suggests, would be a nice touch.] Unfortunately, as Sherry further notes, the MOAA magazine may not cover this data.

9. Old Business

- Restatement of past meeting note: Once again, the boxes of past Council documents were given to volunteers a year ago to review the contents and recommend disposition of same. John Down had previously asked who besides Ken App had the boxes, and what was in them. There is and has been no answer to the question. LtCol Jim Stephan, USAF (Ret), previously had up to 5 (?) boxes containing documents and other Council artifacts. These were supposedly passed out to chapters at the Second Quarter 2022 meeting at the Virginia War Memorial. We [still] need to recover these.
- A new slate of VCOC Officers will be installed during the post-lunch portion of the meeting events.
- Victoria Revilla has been President of the Southside Chapter for fifteen years. She moved to San Antonio, TX, and plans to be back for a "last call" leadership meeting with the Chapter on November 4th. The chapter has a \$395,000 endowment fund which will need to be distributed if the chapter ceases to exist. Current earmarking for that fund includes the ROTC detachments of three state universities: Virginia, Virginia Tech, and Virginia State. The VCOC could also be a recipient of some as-yet unspecified amount from that fund should the Chapter dissolve. More to follow on this situation.

10. New Business

○ The next 2024 VCOC meeting dates need to be established. The specific dates are typically in January, April, July, and October.

11. **Discussions opened to the floor.** Hearing none, and with no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1020 hours. Please note that the list of business meeting attendees appears in Attachment 1 to these minutes. My notes from the post-business meeting events appear in Attachment 2.

Respectfully Submitted By: John F. Down, LtCol, USAF (Ret.), Secretary, VCOC

Three Attachments:

(1) Roll Call of Chapters, 25 October 2023

(2) Notes from the Biennial Luncheon, Memorial Service, Awards Presentations, Installation of Council Officers, and various other presentations and comments

(3) Details on the Awards Presentations



**ATTACHMENT 1, Roll Call of Chapters, General Business Meeting, 25 Oct 2023
0930-1030 Scheduled**

	CHAPTER	PRESENT	REPRESENTATIVE
1.	Central Virginia	Yes	Ruth McWilliams
2.	Falcons Landing	Yes	Phil Walsh
3.	George C. Marshall	Yes	Greg Frederick
4.	Heritage	Yes	Bill Gooding
5.	Heritage Hunt	No	X
6.	Mt. Vernon	Yes	Doug "Smash" Yurovich
7.	Northern Neck	No	X
8.	Northern Virginia	Yes	Monti Zimmerman
9.	Piedmont Virginia	No	X
10.	Portsmouth Area	Yes	Ken App
11.	Potomac	No	X
12.	Richmond Area	Yes	Mary Lou Wassel
13.	Southside Virginia	Yes	Victoria Revilla
14.	Southwest Virginia	Yes	Matt Haag
15.	Virginia Peninsula	Yes	Tom Shubert

Also Attending:

John Warnecke, Central Virginia Chapter President
 Bob Manning, Falcons Landing Chapter
 Sherry Ferki, Portsmouth Area Chapter Membership and Surviving Spouse Representative;
 VCOC Board Member and Treasurer Nominee for 2024-2025
 Bruce LaLonde, Portsmouth Area Chapter President
 Diana Kupchella, Northern Virginia Chapter President, nominee for VCOC President
 Ken Rupp, VCOC Chaplain
 Boyd Nix, Immediate Past President, VCOC, with daughter Melissa Nix
 Maria Kelly, VCOC Treasurer
 Mary Snyder, PACMOAA Assistant Legislative Representative
 Spouse of Monti Zimmerman

Special Guests:

CAPT Jim Carman, USN (Ret.), VP, MOAA Councils and Chapters
 LTC Mark Belinsky, USA (Ret), Director, Currently Serving and Retired Affairs
 Jay Garbus, North Carolina Council of Chapters (NCCOC) President
 Billy Williams, Rep. Gerry Connolly's staff.



Attachment 2: Secretary's Notes from the Post-Lunch Agenda and Events

1. COL Phil Walsh, USMC (Ret) served as meeting host, supported by Falcons Landing Chapter member Bob Manning, the various Chapter members, and the staff of Falcons Landing. An outstanding job of preparation and execution by those mentioned above.
 - a. The Chantilly High School AFJROTC presented the colors. Performed flawlessly.
 - b. Ken Ruppap provided the Invocation. Thanks to Ken for all the years he has served VCOC as Chaplain.
 - c. Phil Walsh presented a slideshow about Falcons Landing, titled "Who Are We?" He noted that many Chapter members live there. Phil noted that the Chapter's auxiliary is self-governing and is affiliated with the Chapter. Members of the auxiliary are not charged dues. Kudos to the Chapter for its support of three ROTC scholarships!
2. VCOC President Linc Smith greeted all and introduced honored guests.
3. Ken Ruppap, LTC, USA (Ret) conducted the Biennial Memorial Ceremony. He read selected passages from the Bible. Chapters then read the list of those who had passed away in the past two years (1 Oct 2022-30 Sep 2023). Mary Lou Wassel, CAPT, USN (Ret) assisted by moving the white rose from one vase to a second vase for each chapter as has been the custom for VCOC. Finally, we remembered Congressman Donald McEachin who passed away November 28, 2022. [FYI: Congressman McEachin was born in Nuremberg, Germany, and had served Virginia's 4th Congressional District from 2017 until his death.] Upon conclusion of the Ceremony, we observed a break for lunch graciously provided by the Falcons Landing Chapter.
4. MOAA and VCOC Awards Presentations (See Attachment 3 for further details).
 - a. Lt. Gen. Brian "BK" Kelly, USAF (Ret), MOAA President and CEO, presented the Levels of Excellence Awards. Congratulations to the chapters so recognized for 2022! Gen Kelly commented about the awarded chapters: "You are the wind beneath our wings."
 - b. General Kelly then presented the following awards: Presidents, Leadership, Outstanding Service, and Strobridge. Congratulations to all individual recipients of these well-deserved awards!
 - c. Jay Garbus, NCCOC President, was recognized as an Honorary Member of the VCOC. Jay and Linc have worked well together to recognize issues impacting our neighboring councils and to advance how we can best meet the challenges we face.

- d. Linc Smith gave VCOC awards to several MOAA officers present, including USN CAPT(Ret) Jim Carman, VP, Councils and Chapters, and LTC Mark Belinsky, USA (Ret), Director, Government Relations. Mark encouraged the chapter members to go to www.moaa.quorum.us to join and amplify our messages to Congress on the many key issues needing legislative action. Other MOAA Officers recognized *in absentia* included Director, Council and Chapter Affairs Frank Michael, CAPT, USN (Ret), and VP, Government Relations Dan Merry, Col, USAF (Ret).
5. Installation of VCOC Officers for 2024-2025.
- a. Col Diana Kupchella, USAF (Ret) succeeds Linc Smith as President of the Council. Comments from both Linc and Diana appear a bit later in these notes.
 - b. Returning for another two-year term are Second VP, Membership, John Prevar, CDR, USN (Ret); Third VP, Legislative Affairs, Monti Zimmerman, COL, USAR (Ret), and Treasurer and Surviving Spouses Chair, Sherry Ferki, MAJ, USA Ret).
 - c. Gen. Kelly then gave his remarks. Among his comments are the following:
 - i. MOAA was founded in 1929 by 13 USMC veterans.
 - ii. We have 362,000 members in all.
 - iii. We are not an association for officers but of officers seeking to provide help for our enlisted members and their families.
 - iv. We have an endowment of \$110 million which helps provide scholarships to children of military families.
 - v. The MOAA Foundation supports transition from military service. He noted that spouses of military families unemployment rates are four to five times the national unemployment rate. There are about 12 million veterans who are not retired and who do not have a VA disability rating but also need help.
 - vi. The State of MOAA: Financially, MOAA has about \$148 million invested with Goldman Sachs. MOAA insurance business is in decline and has led to lost revenue. Sponsoring the MOAA conference in the Washington DC area; looking to bring in sponsorships and sources of revenue.
 - vii. Looking into how to make councils and chapters continue and viable.
 - viii. This is “not just your father’s MOAA.” Coaching and leadership development are important. We are experiencing a decline in paid MOAA membership. How do we get more paying members?
 - ix. Legislative Advocacy to address four big concerns about our earned benefits:
 - 1. COLA could be less some number, which MOAA will fight. We earned a full COLA and all our benefits.
 - 2. Healthcare – is it too costly? MOAA to fight healthcare increases.
 - 3. Means testing of retired and disability pay? MOAA does not believe that this testing should apply as these benefits have been earned.
 - 4. The all-volunteer force is not meeting its recruiting goals except for the Marine Corps and the Space Force. A drafted/conscripted force would be a mistake.

6. Congressional Salutations (recorded).
 - a. Per the meeting brochure. Representative Beyer of the Virginia 8th District verbalized his support of all veterans. Representative Spanberger mentioned military pay raises and toxic exposure concerns; bi-partisan support for the Major Richard Star Act. State Senator Reeves recognized Linc Smith and Monti Zimmerman at a 2023 General Assembly session for their advocacy for key issues. Virginia Lt. Governor Winsome Sears recognized Virginia veterans and supported thereof.
 - b. Delegate Kathy Tran was present and read Sen. Tim Kaine’s congratulatory letter to outgoing VCOC President Linc Smith and incoming President Diane Kupchella. Rep. Gerry Connolly referenced the Honor the Pact Act. Billy Williams, representing him, mentioned the Pact Act and surviving spouses support.
7. Linc Smith gave his closing remarks and Diana Kupchella gave her incoming remarks. The latter provided a thumbnail sketch of her background: 26 years, Air Force nurse. She worked in Sen. Inoue’s office for a year and learned how the legislative process works. She then went to law school. She commented that the Council needs a Secretary and a First VP for Communications.
8. Meeting adjourned at 1352 hours.

Attachment 3, Details on the Awards Presentations

Levels of Excellence 2022:

Virginia Council of Chapters
Central Virginia Chapter
Falcons Landing Chapter
George C. Marshall Chapter
Heritage Chapter
Mount Vernon Chapter
Northern Virginia Chapter
Portsmouth Area Chapter
Richmond Area Chapter
Southwest Virginia Chapter
Virginia Peninsula Chapter

Strobridge Legislative Award:

COL Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret)

President's Award:

VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret)
Portsmouth Chapter Member MAJ Sherry Ferki, USA (Ret)

Leadership Award:

Portsmouth Chapter Newsletter Editor CDR Ken App, USN (Ret)

Falcons Landing Chapter President Col Phil Walsh, USMC (Ret)
VCOC Secretary LtCol John Down, USAF (Ret)
VCOC Legal Council COL Vince Cammarata, USA (Ret)

Outstanding Service:

VCOC Treasurer Capt Maria Kelly, USAF (Ret) (Former)
VCOC Chaplain LTCOL Ken Ruppard, USA (Ret)

VCOC President CDR Linc Smith, USNR (Ret) presented following VCOC awards:

Impact Awards:

MOAA Vice President Council/Chapter and Member Support CAPT Jim Carman, USN (Ret)
MOAA Program Director Council and Chapter Support CAPT Frank Michael, USN (Ret)
MOAA Vice President Government Relations Col Dan Merry, USAF (Ret)
MOAA Director Currently Serving and Retired Affairs LtCol Mark Belinsky, USA (Ret)
George C. Marshall Foundation's Dodona Manor

Honorary VCOC Membership:

North Carolina Council of Chapters President CW4 Jay Garbus, USA (Ret)

*VCOC Third Vice President Col Monti Zimmerman, USA (Ret) presented following Legislative Affairs Awards:

Legislator of the Year:

Senator Jeremy McPike (D 29th)

Executive Branch Member of the Year:

Virginia Secretary of Defense and Veterans Affairs Jason Pak
Virginia Assistant Secretary of Defense and Veterans Affairs Jordan Stewart

Congressional Salutations: heard from Representatives Don Beyer (VA 08) and Abigail Spanberger (VA 07), Senator Bryce Reeves (R 17th) and Virginia Governor Winsome Sears. Delegate Kathy Tran (VA 42nd) read a letter of Congratulations to VCOC from Senator Tim Kaine (D VA): Page 10, these minutes

Rep. Beyer: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1eJ7In5VV9R5JNoAaeMGIHcFoTlkqKgJA/view>

Rep.

Spanberger: <https://d12t4t5x3vyizu.cloudfront.net/spanberger.house.gov/uploads/2023/09/MOA-A-remarks.mp4>

Senator Reeves, Lieutenant Governor Sears:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQ9q-bozNtU>

Tim Kaine
Virginia



October 25, 2023

Commander Lincoln Stephen Smith, USNR, Ret.

Dear Commander Smith:

Congratulations to the Military Officers Association of America, Virginia Council of Chapters, as you gather for your 2023 Biennial Luncheon.

I believe that Congress has a duty to support military families who sacrifice so much for the nation. By expanding military families' access to career opportunities, continuing education programs, and affordable child care, Congress can better ensure our military is ready to accomplish its mission and that veterans are welcomed back into our communities to continue to better our country.

Your lobbying efforts have not gone unnoticed. A special thanks to outgoing President, Commander Lincoln Stephen Smith, USNR, Ret., for your leadership and vision in establishing important legislative goals for the organization. And, I welcome Colonel Diana Kupchella, USAF, Ret., as you take on your new role.

I look forward to working together with the Military Officers Association of America and the Virginia Council of Chapters in the coming months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'TK', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Tim Kaine

Respectfully Submitted By: John F. Down, LtCol, USAF (Ret.), Secretary, VCOC