



VCOC 2nd QUARTER MEETING
Wednesday, 6 April 2022
Virginia War Memorial, Richmond, and Zoom Meeting

1. Administration, Meeting Called to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 1050 hours by Linc Smith, CDR, USN (Ret). Linc welcomed all to the meeting. Meeting start delayed by technical issues with Zoom at the War Memorial.
- Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation were offered. Ken Ruppap, LTC, USA (Ret), VCOC Chaplain, provided the invocation.

2. Secretary's Report

- VCOC Secretary, John Down, LtCol, USAF (ret), reiterated the welcome. He set the tone by briefly covering the "ground rules" for how the meeting would be conducted. He mentioned that one representative would vote for each chapter attending (for a total of nine votes on any item requiring a vote, including phone/Zoom votes. He also asked that attendees mute any electronic devices that could disrupt the meeting.

3. Roll Call & Determine Quorum

- John Down conducted the Roll Call. Nine chapters were represented of the total of seventeen active and inactive chapters, and some chapters had multiple representatives. A quorum was thus achieved. Please refer to Attachment 1 of these minutes for details. Note that "Representative" refers to chapter voting member for this meeting, not necessarily a chapter installed position. Since the Shenandoah Valley Chapter is no longer in existence, it will be removed from future roll call lists. Noted that two chapters tried to join by Zoom but were unable to log in: G.C. Marshall Chapter and Hampton Roads Chapter which would have given us eleven voting chapters. Nonetheless, a quorum was barely achieved.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

- John Down then asked that the Meeting Agenda be adopted. Mary Lou Wassel, CAPT, USN (Ret) moved that the agenda be adopted, and it was seconded by John Prevar, CDR, USN (Ret). The motion carried by unanimous vote.

5. Approval of 4th Quarter Meeting Minutes

- John Down requested approval of the 1st Quarter 2022 meeting minutes. Mary Lou Wassel moved they be approved, seconded by Ken Ruppap, LTC, USA (Ret). The motion carried by unanimous vote.

6. President's Report

- Linc Smith thanked Monti Zimmerman, COL, USAR (Ret.) for his outstanding work in advancing the JLC initiatives this year through the General Assembly, especially noting HB 957 which was signed into law by the Governor on April 5th.
- Linc thanked the Portsmouth Area Chapter (PACMOAA) for the opportunity to swear in that chapter's board of directors on January 12th as noted in the 1st Quarter VCOC meeting minutes.
- Led by Linc, we discussed the key role that Steve Hornsby, previously with Patriot's Colony, has played in supporting the VCOC. Examples include the biannual luncheons that Patriot's Colony has sponsored along with hefty contributions and support to the Congressional Appreciation Luncheons in DC, underwriting food costs by up to 50 percent. For his superlative assistance and support to the VCOC, Linc moved that we make Mr. Steve Hornsby an honorary member of the VCOC Board. The move was seconded and unanimously approved.
- Introduced by Linc Smith, and in move ahead of Surviving Spouse Report per Agenda, Maria Kelly provided an impassioned presentation on what it means to provide support to Surviving Spouses, in particular, the passed bill noted above, HB957. Some particulars relating to her presentation appear in Attachment 2 to these meeting minutes.
- Final item in the President's Report was Linc's introduction of Mr. Daniel Gade, Commissioner, Virginia Department of Veterans Services. Mr. Gade's comments to the VCOC appear in Attachment 3 to these meeting minutes.

7. Treasurer's Report

- Jim Stephan, LtCol, USAF (Ret) presented the budget as of the first quarter 2022 and revisions to the 2022 proposed budget. The 1st quarter budget versus actual showed a total which was corrected to read \$7,830 versus actual quarterly income of \$2,815.20, which was largely based on receipt of chapters' dues (\$1,485.20). On expenses, one of the main concerns was the allowance for mileage that is not supported by MOAA HQs mileage supplement. We also need to account for room rentals for in-person VCOC meetings, insurance, and the SCC fee of \$350. The MOAA Ambassador Program can be removed from the budget as no longer in being/supported. These key budget issues will be addressed by the VCOC Board and reported on at the Third Quarter VCOC meeting.

8. Standing Committee Reports:

• Communications & Public Affairs

- Linc Smith mentioned that "The Crier" was posted on the VCOC website. He requested that chapters should send their inputs to him at his email address (mvng288@aol.com).
- *The Crier* was to be issued in April.

• Membership & Chapter Affairs

- John Prevar, CDR, USN (Ret.) presented the membership report that reflected chapter members as of end of the first quarter. The report shows that the Mt. Vernon Chapter had a significant decline in membership, dropping 77 members through roles/database cleanup. That information thanks to USMC Colonel (Ret.) Doug "Smash" Yurovich, Chapter President. We were missing membership data from George C. Marshall Chapter, and reminder was sent to the chapter. Given overall gains and losses, there was a decline of 56 members VCOC-wide.

9. Legislative Committee Report

- Monti Zimmerman provided an overview of on-going legislative efforts at the state level. He updated the status of all the 2022 initiatives besides HB957. He noted that a state constitutional amendment would be required for the surviving spouse bill, and that the National Guard income tax benefit/break initiative would be from \$3,000 to \$5,000 per member through maximum grade of O-5.
- Linc Smith provided an update on national legislative advocacy status:
 - MOAA has established the period of 1-30 April to conduct the virtual “Advocacy in Action” campaign for 2022. The three key campaign issues are the following:
 - Passing the “Major Richard Star Act”
 - The “Stop the Copay Overpay Act”
 - Supporting a military pay raise of 4.6% per the Employment Cost Index (ECI)
 - Chapters are encouraged to contact their elected representatives to conduct the advocacy and document the meeting notes. Get screen shots where possible. Make sure information on the three topics is sent ahead of the meeting. Linc arranging for advocacy with both senators from Virginia.
 - Linc entertained nominations from the floor, followed by voting of the chapters as conducted by the VCOC Secretary, for state and federal legislators of the year. After considerable discussion, the period of performance for these awards runs from February 2021 to March 2022. This represents an award policy update as motioned by COL Victoria Revilla, USA (Ret.). The motion passed without dissenting votes. Also, after much discussion, nominees are as follows:
 - State Legislator of the Year – Delegate Kathy Tran, predominantly for her outstanding efforts to sponsor HB957 through to passage.
 - Federal Legislator of the Year – 2nd District Representative Elaine Luria for her support for federal bills helping military, families, veterans, and retirees.

10. Old Business

- By-Laws Review provided by Victoria Revilla. She made available a copy of the By-Laws dated 15 October 2015 and a separate set of revisions sheets per inputs from various Council chapters over the past several years. The revised By-Laws are to be sent out by 30 April for vote of the chapters.
- Budget guidelines need review and revision. VCOC Legal Advisor COL (Ret.) Vince Cammarata, USA, to assist/advise in that. (See 7. above, Treasurer’s Report.)

11. New Business

- Linc noted that the Strategic Plan and Next Meeting Calendar are posted on the VCOC website home page. Our plan is to conduct the 3rd Quarter VCOC Meeting via Zoom. That will save us from making a payment for room rental.
- Among Legislative items, John Down had prepared a JLC initiatives timeline for 2022 for the 2023 initiatives, and our activities start this month. This timeline was presented at the quarterly LegCom meeting held by Monti Zimmerman just prior to the 2nd Quarter VCOC meeting. We seek MOAA support for the state constitutional amendment as noted above in 9. Monti mentioned that he and John Down need MOAA-emblem polo shirts for our representation at JLC events, consistent with what all the VSO reps are wearing.
- Linc discussed the next meeting calendar, and with a view toward giving chapters more time to prepare end-of-quarter reports, VCOC meetings should be held closer to mid-month of that quarter.

12. Discussions opened to the floor. Hearing none, and with no further business, the meeting adjourned at 13:57 hours.

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

ATTACHMENT 1, Roll Call of Chapters, 6 April 2022

	CHAPTER	PRESENT	REPRESENTATIVE
1.	Central Virginia	Yes	John Down
2.	Falcon's Landing	No	
3.	George C. Marshall	No	
4.	Hampton Roads	Yes	Linc Smith
5.	Heritage	No	
6.	Heritage Hunt	No	
7.	Mt. Vernon	Yes	John Prevar
8.	Northern Neck	Yes	Bill Johnson
9.	Northern Virginia	Yes	Monti Zimmerman
10.	Piedmont Virginia	No	
11.	Portsmouth Area	Yes	Ken App
12.	Potomac	No	
13.	Richmond Area	Yes	Mary Lou Wassel
14.	Shenandoah Valley	No	(Inactive-to be deleted)
15.	Southside Virginia	Yes	Victoria Revilla
16.	Southwest Virginia	No	
17.	Virginia Peninsula	Yes	Tom Shubert

ATTACHMENT 2, Summary of Maria Kelly's Remarks

1. She is a "Gold Star" wife of Husband Paul who was killed in Iraq.
2. Her son is a member of the Virginia National Guard who has been deployed to Kosovo, Bosnia. Both of her sons are following their father's legacy.
3. She herself served twelve years as an Air Force nurse.
4. She noted that HB957 was signed into law on the same day as "Gold Star Day" which has special meaning for her.
5. Following her remarks, Linc Smith moved that Maria Kelly be made an honorary member of the VCOC Board, Surviving Spouses category. Mary Lou Wassel seconded the motion, and it was approved by the voting members unanimously. Linc added that her speech and photo be added to the VCOC website.
6. At this point, Monti Zimmerman provided comments to update HB957. This bill states that "beginning with taxable year 2022, any locality may declare real property owned by a surviving spouse of a member of the Armed Forces of the United States who died in the line of duty with a line of duty determination from the U.S. Department of Defense, where

such death was not the result of criminal conduct, and where the spouse occupies the real property as his principal place of residence and does not remarry, a separate class of property for local taxation of real property that may be taxed at a different rate than that imposed on the general class of real property, provided that the rate of tax is greater than zero and does not exceed the rate of tax on the general class of real property.”

ATTACHMENT 3, Summary of DVS Commissioner Daniel Gade’s Remarks

1. Commissioner Gade briefly presented his background: He has both a Master’s and a PhD in public policy. He taught at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, NY. He also taught at American University. He served at the U.S. Department of Labor for one year. He ran for Senate in Virginia, and he has led the Veteran’s Coalition for Virginia. Governor Youngkin him as DVS Commissioner this year. He mentioned some other facts about the Virginia DVS;
 - a. It supports three state cemeteries and two nursing homes with two new such homes to open.
 - b. Veterans claim service support helps with first-time acceptance of such claims with the V.A.
 - c. Has a military spouse representative and supports programs for about 109,000 Virginia womens veterans.
2. Commissioner Gade made three key points:
 - a. Among the challenges facing DVS are those involving data and federal data integration – data privacy issues. We have about 730,000 veterans, and the Veterans Administration won’t tell Virginia where those veterans are! He mentioned the VMSDEP, which is the Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program that, among other functions, helps affected survivors and their dependents with obtaining their benefits, and the V.A won’t help. Another challenge are the suicides among Virginia veterans: 70 percent are men over 50. (This area needs more study and attention.)
 - b. The “Not Invented Here” Syndrome. Involves community partnerships – MOAA, VFW, Wounded Warriors, etc. Issues in handling external affairs such as with these with a limited DVS staff.
 - c. Are we “moving the needle” on veterans affairs? Where do we (DVS) need to improve? They could really use an external evaluation to help determine this, such as from a university. He said that DVS is looking to have about 1,600 in total staffing. He wants to coach and mentor staff members. He said they are recognizing “innovation champions” from within the staff to get good ideas up the chain of command. Awarding up to \$1,500 per quarter in top awards for those innovative ideas.
3. He concluded by providing his direct line phone number (571) 992-5495, and he asked, “How can VCOC help?” Here are some ways:
 - a. Through policy-making leadership.
 - b. Through being mission partners with DVS.

- c. He wants to see BIG goals from the JLC and its initiatives. In his opinion, goals are too small – “hitting bunts when we should be hitting home runs,” to provide a baseball analogy.
- d. Tax cuts for younger veterans to keep them in Virginia. Nice to help out the older folks, but we need to do more to encourage younger folks to want to stay here and work.

DRAFT