



VCOC 2nd QUARTER MEETING

Wednesday, 12 April 2023,

1000-1200 hours

Zoom Meeting and In-Person, Dodona House, Leesburg, VA

1. Administration, Meeting Called to Order

- The meeting was called to order at 1005 hours by Linc Smith, CDR, USN (Ret). Linc Smith welcomed all to the meeting.
- Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation were offered. Ken Ruppard, LTC, USA (Ret), VCOC Chaplain, RACMOAA, gave the invocation and led the pledge.

2. Secretary's Report

- VCOC Secretary, John Down, LtCol, USAF (Ret), reiterated the welcome. In his report, John stressed the importance of chapters submitting their quarterly reports in a timely manner. This is especially important for the membership data that John Prevar, CDR, USN (Ret.) needs to update our Council status.

• Roll Call & Determine Quorum

John Down then conducted Roll Call. Eleven of fifteen chapters 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 I have added an additional list of attendees as I was able to discern/hear. Please let me know if you were there and I did not place you on the list.)

• Adoption of the Agenda

The Agenda as drafted was adopted with modifications: the VCOC Secretary will amend the date of the Second Quarter Meeting and the reference to the Approval of the First Quarter Meeting minutes. He will send it along with the draft Second Quarter Meeting minutes.

3. Approval of First Quarter Meeting Minutes

- John Down then asked for a motion to approve the First Quarter Meeting minutes. Gregg Frederick, LTC (Ret), USAR so moved, with second by Ruth McWilliams, Central Virginia Chapter VCOC Liaison. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

4. President's Report

- Linc Smith thanked John Down, LtCol, USAF (Ret) and the rest of the board for all efforts of the past several years.

- Col Dan Merry, USAF (Ret) was introduced to discuss MOAA's key goals for this year. Details of Col Merry's presentation with questions and answers appear in Attachment 2 to these minutes.
- Linc Smith proudly announced the winners of the Col Marvin J. Harris Communications Awards for 2022 for the newsletters (print or electronic) and websites. The list of nine chapter winners is presented on the MOAA and VCOC websites. Congratulations to the nine chapters and the VCOC for their accomplishments.
- Linc Smith was invited to attend the Charlotte NC Metrolina Chapter's 50th anniversary celebration. About 150 people were in attendance. LTG "BK" Kelly was keynote speaker.
- The VCOC's *Crier* publication was well received throughout the Council and by HQ's MOAA.
- Please see the VCOC website Home Page for details on upcoming Council events and dates to know.

5. Treasurer's Report

- Maria Kelly, former Capt USA/USAF, Treasurer, presented the basic financials. We had a balance of \$7,816.20 at the end of the first quarter. We are still awaiting some dues checks from chapters. Bankcard and post office changes have been made in the transfer of responsibilities from the former Treasurer. The budget was reported to be about 75% complete at the First Quarter VCOC Meeting. That budget needs a thorough review which will be scheduled during the Second Quarter, then reported on at the Third Quarter VCOC Meeting. John Down reminded that we must get this done very soon to meet financial responsibility/due diligence requirements for an operating budget.
- Maria attended the Sea, Air, and Space show along with Linc Smith and Monti Zimmerman. They joined the MOAA HQs table there in hopes of capitalizing on recruiting efforts for Council leadership positions (See "Old Business" for an update on our Council leadership recruitment efforts to date). Thanks, Maria, for your outstanding efforts to help the Council!

6. Standing Committee Reports:

• Communications & Public Affairs

- As always, Linc Smith rightfully touted "The Crier" which is posted on the VCOC website. Chapters should send their inputs for the next edition to him at his email address (mvng288@aol.com) in early-mid July.
- Thanks to Monti Zimmerman's wife who made canvas bags for our Council flags!

• Membership & Chapter Affairs

- John Prevar CDR, USN (Ret.) briefly presented the Membership report. This report presents the membership data as of the end of the first quarter. The report shows a loss of 38 members from end-of-year 2022. The Council total membership is now 2,010 members. Those numbers were not questioned. However, we noted that not yet having a workable replacement for the current and cumbersome MOAA Committee Module continues to hamper chapters in their efforts to keep their membership data aligned with MOAA's numbers.

7. Legislative Committee Report

- Third Vice President Monti Zimmerman provided an overview of on-going legislative efforts.

- He presented the status of the six Joint Leadership Council (JLC) initiatives for 2023, focusing on the two initiatives (JLC 2023-01 and 2023-06) that we either sponsored or co-sponsored, respectively, with another veterans service organization (the Virginia National Guard in this case).
- Briefly, JLC 2023-01 requires a state constitutional amendment to change the state code for spouse tax relief conditions for Armed Forces member from “killed in action” to “died in action” for purposes of real property tax exemption. HJ 533/SJ 1231 attempted to change this state code as a state constitutional amendment, in furtherance of last session’s HB 957. Delegate Tran and Senator McPike are the authors with Delegate McGuire and Senator as bi-partisan co-patrons. This is a three-step/three-year process: vote to approve, 2023; vote again to approve, 2024. If the second vote approves, the amendment goes on the ballot for the following year. Estimates are that about 211 spouses are impacted. State Senator Jeremy McPike (D) was key in getting this initiative into a bill which passed the General Assembly this year.
- JLC 2023 sought to provide some income tax relief to the Virginia National Guard. SB 1210/HB 2373 proposed that the state adjust the exemption of the first \$3K of National Guard pay to \$6K from state income taxes and increase the pay grade eligibility to O-5 from O-3. What passed was that the grade was increased to O-6 but the amount was lowered to \$5,000. Monti worked with the National Guard to get this initiative into a bill that was passed by the General Assembly and signed by the Governor.
- Sen. McPike’s efforts to get JLC 2023-01 passed despite partisan bickering were truly outstanding. Monti nominated Sen. McPike for “State Legislator of the Year,” and he was voted by unanimous acclaim by the Council. (He will receive his award later this year.)
- Monti also reports that while not a JLC initiative, a bill passed that allows military police in Virginia to go off the military facilities in conjunction with civilian law enforcement authorities, such as the State Police, to execute search warrants.
- An initiative to get women’s veterans license plates was approved as a bill and signed. The numbers of women applying for these plates was obtained, so the new plates should follow.
- Finally, Monti plans to form two “teams” on April 26th for Advocacy in Action. Chapters should let Monti know if they wish to participate in this event in DC.

8. Surviving Spouses (Sherry Ferki, Maj, USA, Ret.) No report this quarter.

9. Old Business

- 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 asked who besides Ken App had the boxes, and what was in them. There is and has been no answer to the question.
- Boyd Nix addressed the VCOC officer slate for next year. He reports that he has contacted every chapter to solicit nominations for Council President. He has several “maybe” replies but nothing firm. He did say that he has a possible nominee for Secretary, and he will pass on details relating to that possibility to John Down. Note that earlier we mentioned that Linc, Monti, and Maria had attended a DC event with MOAA HQs in hopes of helping recruit members for Virginia Council and Chapters.

10. New Business

○ Next Meeting calendar: VCOC Meeting Schedule for Second, Third, and Fourth Quarters, 2023. Proposed meeting dates: July 12th and October 25th/26th (Biennial Meeting). Later update confirms October 25th will be the Biennial Meeting at Patriot's Colony, Williamsburg, Virginia. This event will include lunch. As Victoria Revilla noted, we will have our Business Meeting, followed by lunch, then the Biennial activities to include the remembrance of those passing away over the previous two years plus the swearing in of the new VCOC officers.

11. Discussions opened to the floor. Hearing none, and with no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1155 hours.

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

Two Attachments:

- 1. Roll Call of Chapters, 12 April 2023**
- 2. Notes from Col (USAF, Ret.) Dan Merry's Presentation**

ATTACHMENT 1, Roll Call of Chapters, 12 April 2023

	CHAPTER	PRESENT	REPRESENTATIVE
1.	Central Virginia	Yes	Ruth McWilliams
2.	Falcon's 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	John Prevar
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	Gary Powers
15.	Virginia Peninsula	Yes	Tom Shubert

Also Attending:

John Warnecke, Central Virginia Chapter President

Jim Mullen, Falcons Landing Chapter Legislative Representative

**Sherry Ferki, Portsmouth Area Chapter Membership and Surviving Spouse Representative;
VCOC Board Member (FYI, last name pronounced "Ferk-eye," not "Ferky")**

Mark Rich, Richmond Area Chapter President

Bruce LaLonde, Portsmouth Area Chapter Newly Elected President

Matt Haag, Southwest Virginia Chapter President

Boyd Nix, Immediate Past President of the VCOC; Member, Virginia Peninsula Chapter

Wayne Sine, Richmond Area Chapter Legislative Representative

ATTACHMENT 2, Notes from Col (USAF, Ret.) Dan Merry's Presentation

The Virginia Council of Chapters welcomed Dan Merry, Vice President, Government Relations, to present the legislative program that MOAA has embarked upon for 2023.

The following briefly summarize his presentation and responses to questions and answers as I heard them:

1. From the presentation, MOAA has two primary legislative objectives (goals) for this year. The first is to restore Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) status. Discussion: From 2005 until 2014 we had 100% BAH. The Department of Defense (DoD) wanted to reduce BAH from 100% to 95% in 1% annual decrements, beginning in 2015 until reached in 2019. Expectation was \$5B in savings. This particularly hurts our enlisted members and their families. While MOAA represents officers, it supports all ranks and desires that the reduction of BAH be redressed. Dan noted that to restore BAH will probably exceed \$5B.
2. The second major objective is to halt the erosion of Tricare benefits. Specifically, DoD cut 25% of the available pharmacy networks which especially hurts those smaller pharmacies in less populated areas. Independent analysis says that the cuts impacted rural areas, long term care, and specialty pharmacies. DoD did not look at impacts when they made the cuts. The MOAA goal here is to get DoD to look at the impacts.
3. This led to a series of health care related questions and answers.
 - a. Ruth McWilliams, representing the Central Virginia Chapter, asked if the Congressional Resource System (CRS) could be used to provide an impact report; that CRS is built to handle such analysis and reporting. No specific date has been assigned as yet, but Dan replied that he will add a timeline as Ruth suggests.
 - b. Monti Zimmerman, VCOC Legislative Affairs Chair, expressed concern about electronic health records. He noted that the "Genesis" system implementation is going very slow. His concern is that it could be cancelled. Dan answered that MOAA is not hearing that the system will be terminated.
 - c. John Down, VCOC Secretary, commented that he received correspondence from another veterans service organization concerning the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) looking into Tricare for Life costs and ways to reduce those costs. For example, members receiving Tricare for Life would be forced to pay an annual fee with deductibles for services. Could cost retired members and their families thousands of dollars each year that they do not pay now. Such costs and fees "violate" what service members who retire are promised when they attain age 65. Dan had not heard the details of what the CBO could be investigating but that MOAA will keep on the lookout for any such developments.

- d. Ken App, representing the Portsmouth Area Chapter, said that Tricare for Life had been means tested already. He then commented that smaller pharmacies that do much of the compounding of prescriptions have been reduced by DoD and that impacts getting prescriptions filled. Dan Merry replied that any member having such issues should contact MOAA and request assistance.
4. Finally, Dan Merry announced that “Advocacy in Action” kicks off April 26th in D.C. (Further details on this can be obtained from Linc Smith and Monti Zimmerman.) Dan noted that MOAA seeks to amplify the volunteer force through our advocacy efforts. He noted that most new recruits come from military families. Once 75%, those new recruits are now about 66% from such families. We need to keep our promises to those who serve, thus the two major goals for this year.
5. Linc Smith thanked Dan Merry for joining us for his presentation.

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