

North Carolina Council of Chapters  
2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Executive Committee Meeting

1 April 2016

The meeting was called to order by the President, CAPT Doug Ehrhardt at 1500. Attendance was taken by the Secretary CDR Carol Aljets and it was determined that a quorum was present.

MOAA National has a new president who replaced VADM Norb Ryan, USN – (Ret.). VADM Ryan served as President of MOAA for several years and has left a great legacy to follow. The new president is LT GEN David Atkins, USAF- (Ret.). The transition has gone flawlessly at this point and GEN Atkins had good things to say about ADM Ryan. General Atkins also has a great reputation and should be quite able to carry on the important work of MOAA.

Nine chapters and the NC Council of Chapters all won Level of Excellence (LOE) Awards which were presented at the Annual Meeting in Orlando, FL. Kudos to the Cape Fear, Coastal Carolina, Charlotte-Metrolina, Sandhills, Triangle, Catawba Valley, Western, High Country and New River chapters. It is stressed that all 17 chapters should compete favorably in 2017. The LOE nominations had to be in by 1 March 2016 and MOAA National has not told when the announcement of the winners will be given.

Doug Ehrhardt started discussion on the award process for the communications award. Jack Overman suggested that all newsletter editors be placed on a distribution list concerning what is necessary to win an award. According to Doug, the award process for the communication award is generally a participation award. The guidelines are both subjective and objective. Both the subjective which is self-reported and the objective, will be scored. The major objective items to be met on publication items are logo, legislative chairs and information on the next meeting. There are only two categories and they are the printed newsletter or e-newsletter and website. Submit the one you think your chapter can win with. As Vern Pike mentioned, North Carolina is in competition with California and Florida for awards in these areas. Doug sends his newsletters to COL Barry Wright and others agreed that this was a good idea. FYI Kris Hegle who was the editor of the Affiliate and the Military Officer magazine has left MOAA.

Doug will be attending his first Fourth Branch meeting and he asked Joe Cansler to give us some information on the group. Joe has been on the board since it started. Joe said that it was dynamic working along with the Retiree Task Force, since both groups having members that receive money from the Bailey Settlement. Over time the activity has slowed and there have been problems with SEANC. Last meeting there was criticism that nothing is moving at this point on revisiting the agreement. Jeri Graham has become very involved and will be the Legislative Chair of the 4<sup>th</sup> Branch.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Branch is working with a lobbyist who is involved with the Engage project. The Engage project is similar to MOAA National's legislative alert. Also Engage only produces the fact that a bill is being acted on but there is no position paper to send to legislators which calls for more reliance on the individual receiving the message to write a letter. Even though when Bailey Settlement was adjudicated over 56 agencies were involved, but now there are only MOAA, SEANC and NARFF. They are not getting representation from 75%-80% of agencies and the largest groups are local governments and teachers. The lobbyist, Melton and Associates, need to provide better communications or they will lose funding.

Help for the 4<sup>th</sup> Branch may be forthcoming from Gene Boyce, who COL Vern Pike said was the power behind getting the funding into the Federal Retired Task Force (FRTF) and 4<sup>th</sup> Branch. Boyce is upset with the current situation but is willing to meet and discuss problems needing to be resolved. The FRTF has the bulk of the funding, \$300-\$400,000, but they only meet once a year. They have already bailed out the 4<sup>th</sup> Branch a number of times. Most people in the FRTF are covered by Bailey-Patton decision.

Joe Cansler described the 4<sup>th</sup> Branch as individuals who drove the original Bailey Patton settlement and had thought that the individuals affected by the restructured dates would pick up the ball and try to extend the dates to cover more current retirees in August 2014. Though there have been some attempts they have not been very effective beyond the attempts of MOAA.

The only way to begin to get people involved in working for extending the tax break given by the Bailey-Patton decision is to inform them of the issue. Either those affected do not realize what has happened or may feel it is useless to try and work to gain this tax break which earlier government retirees have. When Jeri Graham worked on getting individuals to sign up for Engage, only 92 signed up and most of them were from MOAA. We need to get more support from those who would be affected and several suggestions were given for getting the word out. We also need to inundate our legislators with e-mail in order to get action. Harley Ellinger added that many have the perception that this is more about military retirees and that they are usually better off than other government employees. In November 2015 the House majority leadership had no interest in helping federal employees.

North Carolina Legislative Day will be held on May 11<sup>th</sup> in Raleigh which is at time when the General Assembly gives recognition to veterans and listens to their input on issues affecting them. Harley will speak on this issue more tomorrow and details concerning the possibility of a Rapid Response Team. This team may only have an hour to prepare, to get to Raleigh and present their case once a bill is presented. The 4<sup>th</sup> Branch needs an effective sponsor for any bill they are interested in at the time. The only chance a bill has of passing is to get it out of committee and this can be difficult. Rapid Response Team members would have two minutes to speak on the bill. The biggest challenge is finding individuals who live close enough to Raleigh and are flexible in their schedules. It would be useful if we could get five to six people. Also Jeri Graham can represent the 4<sup>th</sup> Branch as the Chair of North Carolina Veteran's Council (NCVC).

George Brudzinski took over as Treasurer of the NC COC after the first quarterly meeting in Charlotte. The transfer was smooth and an audit was done by the Sandhills Chapter showing no discrepancies. The IRS 990 has been submitted and accepted. The Council purchased Quick Books for Non-Profits which will make the accounting process easier. There was \$10,484.16 in the bank when the account was transferred and the current total is \$12,478.41. All sixteen chapters have paid dues but short \$1.50 of the projected. We also received a USAA Grant of \$800. The chapter dues are \$1.50 per person for all individuals on the roster as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous year. Joe Cansler brought up the fact that he discovered an audit form on the MOAA Connect Blog which he got a copy of even though it could not be downloaded. He said it is a good form and makes auditing for a chapter very easy. Joe is sending a copy to the current treasurer, George Brudzinski, and any chapter can request this form from him. There is currently no requirement for an audit but doing an annual one might be a good idea for some chapters.

When the JROTC IOTY program was started last year the State Council collected a \$1,000 pledge to give the two winners as an award. Only one winner took the award so there was a \$560 balance left in the fund which was added to the general fund. Doug asked the chapters if they wanted to maintain the state program. Joe Cansler stated that his chapter has 19 JROTC schools that they are responsible for. Charlotte Metrolina chapter has 34 schools that they maintain relations with and they are in different counties with Mecklenburg having twenty of the schools. Only one officer and one NCO submitted forms. The program needs to be tweaked and will be discussed tomorrow.

Currently Eastern Carolina is struggling and may be closing as a chapter. MOAA National has a check list and Rescue/Remediate Plan which is being looked at by Council members. National also has a team that will visit the struggling chapter if their further efforts and /or they State Council actions are not working. The Chapter has work to do and it may take up to another 3-6 months to find a solution. CAPT David Lee brought that this is one reason why maintaining and increasing a chapter's membership is so important. Jack Overman will be helping with the Eastern Carolina rescue team and hopes to use contact with the Daedalian Program at Seymour Johnson Air Force Base.

President Doug Ehrhardt will be 'Storming the Hill' in Washington, DC. He currently has appointments with Senator Burr and seven of thirteen representatives. Two people from North Carolina are attending the Storming. Doug has Mike Rogers and Erica Parr who will be participating with him on April 13, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Doug Ehrhardt

President

Carol Aljets

Secretary