

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION of AMERICA
NEW HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES
13 July 2023

Note: Prior to the actual monthly BOD meeting below, twelve members of the Board and Chapter met at the NH Veteran's Home in Tilton at 1400 hours and were given a tour of the extensive facilities by Missy Robichaud, the Assistant to the Commandant, and Pastor Paul DeHart. The tour included the various residential areas in the facility, including the temporarily closed dementia unit, kitchen, and various recreation services, chapel, retail store, bank, outdoor recreational and gardening areas. We also attended a 30-minute briefing by the Recreation Staff on all of the upcoming outside activities scheduled for July and August. The home currently is occupied by 130 veterans, including 12 women veterans, but has the capacity for up to 230 residents. Additional admissions are currently restricted due to a shortage of appropriate nursing and other support personnel. The home has been approved as a training site for Licensed Nursing Assistants (LNA) who earn a salary during training and commit to staying at the Veteran's Home as staff for two years once they complete their training. The home has already graduated four classes and will be starting their fifth new class shortly. This tour lasted about 80 minutes and concluded just prior to the start of the formal BOD meeting held in their conference room off the main entrance.

Call to Order: The BOD meeting at the NH Veteran's Home in Tilton, NH was called to order by President Jim Lefebvre at 1530 hours. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the President and recited by those assembled followed by the invocation from VP Miller.

Attending: Balcom, Boyle, Breuder, Burdett, Day (Roby & Sharon), DuVall, Hulseby, LeFebvre, Luti, McLean, Miller, Wright. A quorum of members was present.

Opening Remarks: President LeFebvre thanked everyone who attended the tour and came to the NH Veteran's Home today and suggested that we do this again in the future. He had some information from Gary Terhune regarding the upcoming annual Clambake. The deadline for reservations is 28 July, and as of today, we only have 47 people signed up, well below our usual attendance. He requested that Geoff Corson send out another email blast as we need to order meals and provide the PNSY security staff with a list of all attendees, including the VIP's from MOAA National. Gary also needs to find an electrical connector for the trailer hitch/lights in order to legally pull the trailer on the highways. Peter said that the appropriate connector can easily be found at Harbor Freight. Frank Michael has confirmed that two members from MOAA National will be attending the clambake. Jim stated that the \$1,430 we previously received from National towards meeting (\$180) and travel expenses (\$1250) should come automatically at the beginning of each calendar year.

Immediate Past President Remarks: Bob Jaffin was not present.

Vice President Remarks: The VP mentioned that he sent an email to Michael regarding changes to the VA burial allowance for cremation urns (\$138) and/or casket (\$1,200/metal). Some

people have questioned why the VA doesn't pay for the entire cost. The cremation urns must meet certain size restrictions in order to fit in the appropriate funeral spaces at national cemeteries like Arlington. Most funeral homes seem to be aware of the size limitations. Peter suggested that everyone pick up a copy of the pamphlet & application form for burial in the NH State Veterans Cemetery.

Secretary's Report: For the June minutes, Michael received two minor corrections from Bob Jaffin and Peter Burdett. A motion to approve the June minutes was made, seconded, and approved by all present.

Bookkeeper's Report: Roby is still having issues with his computer's Windows 10 upgrade. The report he sent out needs some updating to reflect the June luncheon/Tin Mountain expenses. Our "retained earnings" declined to \$349.39. The Tin Mountain room rent was \$380 which was paid in advance in April. Their final invoice came in at \$1,921 which put us \$249 in the red. Michael asked if Roby would be sending amended copies of his previous report to reflect these changes? Roby will do this. There were various comments about Roby's problems with his Windows 10 upgrade issue. Roby's most current information regarding clambake reservations was only 47 people scheduled to attend, but there seemed to be some discrepancy with the actual final tally as Gary told Jim that there were 56 reservations. As previously mentioned, Jim will have Geoff Corson send out a blast email to try and stir up additional reservations. We don't support "walk-ins" due to security issues and need to order sufficient meals. Roby mentioned that the 50/50 raffle had been intended as a way to fund veteran contributions in the recent past. Our current balance for that activity is \$161.20 of which \$100 was donated to the NH Veteran's Home today along with another \$100 from the President from his personal account. This \$200 donation is unrestricted. Roby said that an alternative would be to put those funds back into the budget as a specific line item, as was done in the past. Going back to the earlier discussion (President's remarks) regarding the funds received from MOAA National, the remaining balance is \$541.90 for the rest of this calendar year. Most of this was spent to support travel to Norwich, VT for ROTC awards and the recent Northeast seminar attendance. A motion to accept this report was made, seconded, and approved by all members present.

Trustee of the Trust Fund: Drew said that the recent market changes were all favorable to our investments.

OLD BUSINESS:

Clambake Discussion: Most of the points have already been discussed in the President's opening comments. Jim again stressed the base security issues and the need for all attendees to have appropriate identification to enter the shipyard gate. Jim plans to arrive around 1000 hours, but anyone helping out with the meal preparations should arrive between 0900-0930. Larry suggested that we have an "After Action" report after the clambake to discuss the feasibility of continuing this event in the future. Weather and veteran age are becoming significant issues for attendance. Michael has already shown us the downward trend in attendance over the past several years. Michael stated that the median age of our regular

membership is now 77 years old, and of surviving spouses is 92. The overall median age of members is currently 78, which is down slightly from 80 in the recent past due to the addition of a few younger members. (Editor's note: Drew was recognized as being **UNDER** the median age for at least the next 10 days!!!). There was some further discussion on the reasons why this event might need to cease in the future.

NEW BUSINESS:

MOAA NH Annual Meeting Discussion: We do have a guest speaker for this event approved from MOAA National. Gail Joyce, a surviving spouse from National, will be our guest speaker. National still needs to know what our planned menu will be. Michael needs to check with the Nashua Country Club, but it will probably be a choice of chicken, fish, or vegetarian meals. The Chapter will pick up the cost of two meals for the National attendees. Because of travel from DC, the speaker will probably come up the evening before, attend the annual meeting, RON again that day, then depart the following day. Jim will recommend that they fly into Manchester-Boston Regional Airport due to its proximity to Nashua. The speaker will receive a certificate of appreciation and a Chapter Challenge coin of which we have about 83 left from an original 500 coin purchase many years ago at a cost of \$3.93/coin. Future orders will probably be more expensive. We would also need to update some of the engraving on the back of the coins. We don't know if the old die for these coins is still around from the old supplier. If we redo the design, we will also need to add a logo for the new US Space Force.

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS

Government Relations (National/State/SVAC/MLT/Vets Count): Peter Burdett passed out business cards from the NH Veteran's Home to see if members could encourage anyone, they know to apply for vacant positions there so the occupancy rate can again be increased. There was a sheet that he passed out that listed various employment opportunities. Nurses are the hardest to recruit. He also passed out a flyer regarding the Franklin Easter Seals campus for veterans that described what the campus would include and it's only a few miles south of the Veteran's Home. The State on NH appropriated \$23.7M towards the final construction costs. The SVAC is on summer recess. There may be a summer session at the Sweeney Post #2 in Manchester, details to follow. The civilian aides to the Secretary of the US Army have activated Peter's "Emeritus" status. He is no longer an Army federal employee subject to the Hatch Act. He recently saw a report that New England is under scribed to JROTC programs compared to the rest of the nation. He encouraged members to check with their local high schools to see if there is any interest in starting a program. Enlistment numbers from those who participated in JROTC programs is higher than virtually all other sources. The military services typically like to be approached from the different high schools first but are now encouraging the Army civilian aides to encourage greater participation. The schools incur some costs to establish these programs, but most of the educator costs are borne by the US Government. The Small Business Administration has sent out messages to small business wanting to encourage veterans to become small business owners. The SBA in NH would love to help these veterans. The Red

Cross has online virtual workshops on effective communications or managing stress. If you attend one of these programs, you can receive a free gift of an emergency radio.

Personal Affairs: Jim had no report.

Membership: There were six new members, two deceased, and two dropped members, for a total of 544. Some of the new members are young, in their 40's and 50's. New members were Jeffrey Carty, Norman Fry, Stephen Kohler, Andrew Riley, Patricia Ryan, Joseph Tessier. Bill Luti suggested reaching out to them to see if they were interested in being on the BOD and whether they're coming to the Clambake. We know that Frei is attending the Clambake. Michael will send Sharon the list of the new members names for possible consideration for vacant BOD positions.

Recruiting: No report. Michael did send out three letters this month based on the updated list from National.

Programs: Gerry Boyle stated that we aren't going to have a September luncheon, normally held in the southwestern part of the state, due to a lack of facilities able to support us. He also looked in the Concord area, but no one could accommodate 75-100 guests. He only found one that could hold 50 people. Therefore, after the Clambake, the next event is the annual meeting at the Nashua Country Club for the Annual Meeting. The next BOD is 14 September at the Concord T-Bones. The October BOD meeting will be on the 12th, location TBD or be Zoom. There will be no BOD meeting after the Clambake in August.

Website: Michael said that there were 333 hits in June, up from 248 in May. Popular pages in June were Program notes (45), Chapter News (19), Membership (16), Newsletter (15), Group travel (10), Odds and Ends (10), Hot items (10), GSWA (3), TRICARE (1), Unknown (1), and General (200).

Travel Program: No report.

Scholarship Loan Program: Wayne said there were eight applications so far, and he brought them for review today with Peter. He has contacted the recipients and informed them that the checks to their schools will go out next week. He stated that he only has five checks left in the Citizens Bank account. Once they are used up, we could either continue with Citizens or transfer the remaining funds to two different accounts at TD bank. TD Bank seems to be more interested after he and Roby spoke to a vice president there last week in Nashua, and if the BOD approves the transfer of accounts, she is ready to open new accounts there. We had to supply BOD minutes and a copy of the Chapter Bylaws to prove that we are a charitable organization which will allow us to avoid any account maintenance fees. The new TD accounts will be one for scholarship and the other for operating expenses. There is approximately \$21,000 in the Scholarship account with a projected expenditure of about \$13,000 next week for current recipients. With repayments coming in, we shouldn't have to touch any of the investments this next year. There is also a \$12,000 balance in a TD bank "scholarship

encumbered" account. When the new TD bank accounts are created, the existing \$12K account can be moved into one of the new accounts. We are currently receiving about \$1,500/month in repayments.

Granite State Warrior's Award: No updates.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Nominations – Directors/Officers: Sharon said that we started with six vacancies, but four have now been tentatively identified with nominees. The remaining two slots include one for two years and one for one year (Lovgren moving to Florida in August). Sharon has one inquiry out to Rhonda Hodsdon who lives in Madbury. Sharon has approached five other members who have declined offers for the BOD. She is also looking to send out a blast email. Jim mentioned that there is a potential solution for filling the VP position.

Granite Slate Update: Drew has nothing in particular going on at this time. Activity will pick up after the Clambake. Any inputs should probably be submitted to him by early to mid-September or earlier if possible. Looking to publish around the mid-September timeframe. Other than one comment that Jim had previously informed me about, I have received no comments on the newsletter myself.

Web Communications: Jennifer Wright said we're having quite a bit of activity on Facebook, but a little slower on Instagram.

Blast Email: No report. Jim will ask Geoff to put out another blast email regarding the Clambake.

LIAISONS

ESGR: ESGR is getting ready for a leadership change on 23 August. Bruce Thompson is stepping down. There is a possibility of another "Boss Lift" ride on a Blackhawk, and "Space Available" is now open on the KC-46A's. Routes and schedules need to be found through Air Mobility Command.

Transition Assistance: Jim said that there was a Knight of Columbus meeting last night. One of the older members mentioned that his son, an Army O-6 is getting ready to retire and wants to come to NH. Jim handed the gentleman an application for national and chapter membership to give to his son and asked him to have his son call Jim. No response so far. This Colonel is looking to work for a major defense contractor somewhere on the east coast.

Manchester VAMC: Bernie was not present and didn't send a report.

Martin's Point Liaison: No report.

Surviving Spouse Liaison: Pat Miller sent the following report: As the surviving spouse liaison, I wanted to provide an update on my activities and progress since taking on this role. I have sent out two condolence cards to bereaved spouses. Each card was personalized and expressed our deepest sympathies for their loss. I also included their new MOAA #. To ensure efficient management of my interactions, I have implemented a tracking system to document all communication with the surviving spouses. This will enable me to monitor progress. I have also purchased 10 Surviving Spouse MOAA pins (donated) from the MOAA on-line store. I intend to include this when I mail a letter of support in two months from the original communication. I am looking forward to working on this mission.

Next Board Meeting: This will be a face-to-face meeting for Thursday, 14 September 2023 at the Concord T-Bones **at 1200 hours (?)**.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 1627 hours which was seconded and accepted by all members present.

Respectfully submitted

Michael A. McLean
CDR, USN (Ret.)
Secretary
New Hampshire Chapter