

**MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION of AMERICA**  
**NEW HAMPSHIRE CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**  
**14 March 2024**

**Call to Order:** The BOD meeting at T-Bones in Concord was called to order by President Larry Miller at 1202 hours. The invocation was led by Gary Terhune and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Larry Miller and recited by those assembled.

**Attending:** Boyle, Breuder, Day (Roby & Sharon), Dunn, DuVall, Frost, Jaffin, LeFebvre, Luti, McLean, Miller (Larry & Pat), Rowan, Siemens, Terhune. A quorum of members was officially present.

**President's Opening Remarks:** Larry said he would leave his remarks until later.

**Immediate Past President Remarks:** Jim took a moment to thank Jennifer for putting the luncheon together. Regarding recruitment, Jim wanted each Director to recruit one new member during the next six months. We continue to need new members if the chapter is to remain viable. It took six separate meetings with a former CW3 to get him to join the chapter and hopefully he'll attend the June luncheon in Conway. Gary mentioned that Bancroft, after moving to Florida, has doubled the number of members in his new chapter and forwarded the email to BOD members recently.

**Vice President Remarks:** Peter was unable to attend this meeting.

**Secretary's Report:** Michael said received one comment for the February minutes from Bob Jaffin about whether he had contacted anybody about setting up any other trips or social outings. A motion to approve the February meeting minutes was made, seconded, and approved by all present.

**Bookkeeper's Report:** Roby had already sent out the February report. He had nothing additional to report. Regarding the next luncheon, Roby reported that he has received 28 reservations so far. One is from Patty Ryan who has expressed some interest in assuming the Treasurer's position but has not reconnected with Roby yet. No motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made.

**Trustee of the Trust Fund:** Drew said that all the investments seem to be doing fine. Our total investments increased about \$20K overall, but a few small accounts lost a minor amount of value since the last report, the Dow Jones Industrials continues to climb.

**Surviving Spouse Liaison report:** Pat attended a virtual Surviving Spouse meeting with National speaking about TRICARE. She sent a condolence card and planter to Pete Burdett on behalf of the chapter. She sent a get-well card to Craig Worcester after learning of his bypass surgery. She sent sympathy cards to Gerry Wall and Nancy Graf. She spoke to Gerry Wall several times, the latest time trying to help her get to the proper individual so she can claim her funds from a trip planned by her husband last September. HB 1354, relative to special number plates for surviving spouses of veterans passed the Transportation Committee in favor of the bill 19-0. It is going to the House of Representatives next. She is preparing for the trip to DC for AiA in April. She is preparing for the SSL MOAA National and looking forward to speaker Admiral Duff, VA.

## **DISCUSSION**

**Clambake Discussion:** Bob Jaffin is volunteering to assume the Clambake Coordinator position.

## **OLD BUSINESS:**

**Granite State Warrior's Award:** Larry has obtained the award which is undergoing engraving.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**By-Laws:** Michael sent Larry and update which he will review again. Larry asked Michael about the process of approving changes. He said that at the next annual meeting. He recommended including in the September Granite Slate and/or the meeting announcement include information to the members what the changes to the Bylaws are so that they will be aware of these changes prior to voting on them. This would just be a summary of the changes. There would be copies of the entire revised Bylaws available for review at the annual meeting. Michael can send out a draft copy of the revised Bylaws to the BOD for review and discussion.

**Chapter Operations Handbook 2015:** Michael has received everyone's input at this point. He will also send this out again to the BOD for a final review/comment.

**Event/Activity Guide:** The next event is our April luncheon at the Common Man in Plymouth on Saturday, 27 April. We will have the same menu and price as last year (\$28). The flyer has already gone out. The next luncheon will be in the early summer in the Conway area. Jim gave an update on his search for an appropriate venue for the luncheon. The White Mountain Hotel & Resort is currently undergoing a renovation project and may not be able to support us in early to middle of June. He is looking at the Attitash Mountain Hotel. We want to keep this event up in the North Country area. After that, we have the August Clambake. We have not had a fall luncheon in September or October since Covid. In the past, we used to use a location in the Sunapee area, but that facility is no longer available. If anyone knows of a viable location, we would love to hear about it. An alternative to that would be to have an event at the Common Man in Concord which has a large function room. Jim asked about the potential conflict of having an event in October and its impact on the annual meeting in November. Gerry agreed that is an issue. Michael mentioned that we did one event in October in the past and the turnout was not good. Gerry said that if we did an event in September, it should be in southwest NH or in Concord. Larry mentioned the Mountainview Grand in Whitefield, but Drew mentioned that it is very expensive. Someone asks about venues in the Lincoln area. Gerry thought that would be fine if there were a facility large enough. There is a Common Man in Lincoln, but Gerry hasn't been in that facility in many years. He is not sure if they have a function room. Again, the goal is to spread the events around the state so that more members can participate. Jim mentioned that the annual meeting of the American Legion holds their event up in the Lincoln area. He couldn't remember the name of the facility but would try to find that out. The American Legion uses this facility ever year. The Wood Stock Inn/Station also has a function room. Bob Jaffin was asked about the possibility of another train trip or lake cruise. He felt that the previous events we did during Covid turned out very well in spite of Covid. However, in both events, they ran out of food before all of our attendees had a chance to eat as we were served last. If we revisited either of venues, we would have to insist on not being served last. In some cases, it was that selected items ran out, but this was still not satisfactory. For water cruises, the Mount Washington company has a smaller vessel, but we would have to charter the entire vessel. He has started doing any definitive searching so far, but if we wanted to do a cruise, he would have to start the research now. He is not anxious to go back to the Mount Washington but would prefer something for something else first and have the Mount Washington as a backup/alternative. His goal is to have at least one or more activities outside the

luncheons for the membership each year. Train rides are a little more challenging. Our last train ride, the Common Man ran out of a number of items for us. He suggested going on a dinner train, which is more expensive, but we could get a group rate. There is the Hobo Railroad. The Cog Railway has been mentioned, but there is no dinner service. The Conway Scenic Railway runs a two-hour train and has a fixed number of specific menu items. His first choice would be a dinner train for value and interest, but the cost would be in the range of \$75/person. The biggest drawback to the dinner train is that it is an evening event and many of our members don't like to drive at night. He still thinks that getting 30 people to participate would still be possible. For any of these events, if they don't work, then we don't do them again. Gary asked Michael about the dinner train he went on which he said were the Hobo Railroad and the train from Meredith. However, the Meredith train was a luncheon event catered by Harts Turkey Farm. Jim suggested that the BOD look at the prices and have the BOD set a maximum cost for a specific event. He suggested that this might be \$75/person but wanted to know what the BOD would support. He mentioned that there were objections to raising the cost for the annual clambake in the past. Virtually all of our luncheons cost less than \$55/person. Bob and Jim disagreed about the price resistance of the organization, and we need to go out and see what the membership will support. Bob knows of a place somewhere in the Manchester Millyard or possibly at Gaucho's. He wasn't in favor of going to Fratello's. Bob would like to have 4-5 events over the next two years and see what works. Jim suggested sending out a blast email to members regarding interest in a potential event. The problem is that only about 40% of the membership have email accounts. Bob wanted to know if we should increase our budget to send out mail regarding these events. Roby said that the typical cost of a mailing is around \$120-130. This doesn't include printing costs. Bob suggested sending out either blast emails or trifold mailings. He also stated that train events are easier to nail down. Jennifer suggested that if we wanted to do a survey, she could set up a Google form put out information for proposed events and get feedback. She could develop the survey and then have Geoff Corson send out the blast email with a link to the survey. Michael mentioned that when he has done surveys, he's lucky to get a 5% response rate. Jennifer concurred but this would still be better than nothing. It will still give us an idea of the chapter interest and price ranges they would consider. Sharon suggested that we include a question as to whether members would come to an evening event. Bob also asked whether we wanted to consider doing one non-weekend event this year? He has had people express interest in this option. He wants to try and service all of our membership with a variety of events. Jennifer assured us that a survey would be short and sweet in insure participation. Finally, Bod asked if there were any interest in the museum in Exeter? Larry also mentioned a museum in southwest NH, Fort #4. Both of these would probably be non-weekend events. Bob again said that we still need to re-look at our model of what we have done in the past and target those events that are of interest to the membership. Jennifer stated that this is a quality versus quantity issue. The greater variety of events we can offer, the more likely we'll increase interest in the organization.

The meeting recessed for lunch at 1255 and resumed at 1310.

**Veteran Cemetery Project:** Larry sent out some information along with the meeting agenda regarding this project. Swenson Granite Works had a bench while Medlyn Monument Company had a nice-looking monument. Larry wants to go back up to the Veteran's Cemetery to make sure that there is space available for either option. If we get sponsorship for the cost of either, we will probably have to have additional engraving to reflect those sponsors. Sharon has a brother-in-law buried there and noted that the cemetery is beautifully arranged and there is always a bench somewhere for visitors to sit. Larry stated that the cost of the bench ranges from about \$2500-\$3500 while the monument, depending upon the size, could run up to \$7,000. The bench would have the inscriptions on the seat

or legs. Bill Luti suggested that we do some fund raising among the BOD/members, we should be able to reach \$2500 very quickly. The estimate for the bench was for a 60-inch width. The memorial would specifically promote MOAA, not veterans in general. The general BOD consensus was to proceed with the project once more details are firmed up. The engraving can vary up to \$2,000 depending on what we put on the memorial.

**NH HB 1283, End of Life Options:** Bill Luti provided an update on this topic. As previously stated, the SVAC overwhelmingly opposed this bill. Approval would be a terrible signal to veterans in crisis and this is a major crisis for veterans already. The state should not be sanctioning suicide while at the same time running a variety of suicide prevention programs. The House Judicial Committee, however, did vote to pass this legislation, 13-7. Some members that were lobbied on this actually changed their vote to support the bill while telling us they were opposed. One of the House Representatives introduced an amendment to the bill which would defund the state's suicide prevention programs if this bill passed. She mentioned that we shouldn't spend money on suicide prevention if we pass this bill as it would be a waste of money. It goes to a House floor vote on Thursday, 21 March. Bill asked that if anyone is available, the NH Coalition for the Prevention of Suicide is organizing a rally on the Capital grounds. All members of the Legislature assemble on the Capital grounds every Thursday and Bill asked that if anyone wanted to participate in this effort, show up in a veteran's ballcap at 0900 hours on the state Capital Plaza. Rick Siemens mentioned that of all the places that have approved this with all the assurances that this would be strictly limited in scope, those limits tend to quickly disappear. Bill stated that this was extensively discussed during the hearings. The intent of supporters is just to get something passed now, then each year they will expand the program to other conditions. The NH supporters have already stated that they intend to do this next year to include ALS, Alzheimer's, and other conditions. In states that have passed this form of legislation, veteran suicides have increased, while in other states without this law, the rates are slowly going down. Bill again mentioned the issue with VA Canada recommending suicide to their disabled veterans and resulted in a huge parliamentary scandal. The Prime Minister was also in favor of that bill. Last year in Oregon, they passed an amendment to their original bill, from 1994, and added diabetes and arthritis. The current NH bill, if passed by the House, would then proceed to the Senate Judiciary Committee. Sharon Carson and Bill Gannon are opposed to this. We expect that all 14 Republicans are opposed as well as two Democrats. Over this past weekend, Governor Sununu said that he would support the bill if it passed. The Governor was totally unaware that the SVAC didn't support this bill. His staff apparently didn't even check on what the SVAC recommended before making this statement. Dr. Edinger at CMC recently had an opinion piece in the Manchester Union Leader opposing this bill. Dr. Edinger said that allowing patients to suffer in pain is not the solution as there are sufficient drugs to alleviate the pain and not kill the patient. Unfortunately, too many physicians support this bill. Jim asked if Jeb Bradley supported the bill or not, and Bill stated that he is opposed. Larry again mentioned that all federally supported health programs, as a result of a law passed in Congress in the late 1990's, and insurance companies specifically exclude assisted suicide from any program benefits. Bill also mentioned that there is a provision in the bill that would automatically exclude suicide from being listed on the death certificate as a cause of death if this bill passed. Representative Marjorie Smith from Durham stated that this isn't being dishonest. The fact that this is prohibited by Congressional law is overlooked by this committee. Jim has a representative in Conway who is support of the bill and calls it "Medial Aid in Dying", not assisted suicide. Hospice and palliative care should be the first choice in these situations. In every state that has done a survey about the primary reason for assisted suicide has found that "being a burden on my family" ranks number 1 as opposed to pain relief which ends up in sixth place. Rick Siemens mentioned that in the Netherlands, this situation very quickly developed into euthanasia.

**Outings: 1) MT Washington 2) Train Ride:** See previous discussion above.

**Memorial Charity Fund:** Pat Miller stated that since we're all getting older, we have a lot more surviving spouses than we've ever had before. Recently, Colonel David Wall just died and, in his obituary, suggested donating to a charity, "Building Dreams for Marines". She asked whether the BOD whether they would consider establishing a fund to make contributions to certain charities in the names of deceased members? This might be an opportunity for the chapter to get our name out into the public. She mentioned as an aside, that we spent \$139 for a planter after Pete Burdett's wife died unexpectedly. Since Pete was a board member, we spent a bit more than was being suggested for this fund. Sharon asked for clarification stating that we used to give money to the NH Veterans Home at the end of the year. Would this be a separate fund? Bob Jaffin asked whether we wanted to increase the funds typically used for items like the Veterans Home rather than set up a new budget line item? Sharon thought it was a good idea but was confused about whether to do this. Pat said the charity would be identified in the obituary notice and would vary from person to person. Sharon thought that waiting for the obituary was reactive in nature. Not everyone makes these types of requests. Michael asked where the money would come from, and the general consensus was the chapter budget. When new members join or pay their dues, they can donate additional money to various items like the scholarship fund, the operating fund, or to the veteran's fund, which we have used to fund the Veteran's Home. Roby said that this would require another budget line item and establish an amount for that item. Larry wanted to continue keeping the Veteran's Home fund separate and not use funds from that line item to support this donation. Sharon suggested establishing a budget line item first then figure out how much to fund it for at another meeting. A motion was made by Gerry Boyle to send \$25 to "Building Dreams for Marines" in the chapter's name on behalf of David Wall. The motion was seconded and approved by all present. Michael noted that last year we had 29 member deaths, which if we sent \$25/person, would require a budget of \$725. Bob Jaffin suggested using any surplus from this year's clambake event to fund this line item. A motion to do this was proposed but was not seconded or voted on. Michael also mentioned that if we did this, our clambake flyer would need to reflect this change in the use of clambake surplus funds going to this memorial instead of the scholarship fund.

**MOAA AiA, 15-18 April, DC:** No discussion.

## **STANDING COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Government Relations (National/State/SVAC/MLT/Vets Count):** Bill Luti gave an update, as Pete Burdett was absent, said the last SVAC meeting recently was uneventful. They discussed the PACT act expansion that was recently announced by the President. There is an article in this month's Granite Slate that provides additional information with links to the actual announcement. There is still some confusion as to who is covered in this expansion and whether you must be both exposed to a toxin as well as being present in a war zone or either of the above. There is both a geographic expansion as well as expansion of the exposure criteria. Bill mentioned that his brother had flown A-6's and they were exposed to AFFF (aqueous film forming foam) containing PFAS's during aircraft carrier operations. The new plan allows you to sign up for VA healthcare without having to first apply for benefits. The Camp Lejeune issue is a different situation and covered by a separate law. (Too many members speaking at the same time.) The original PACT act was supposed to be phased in over an eight-year period, but the President deleted the phase in program. Bill was advised by someone to get on the registry for toxic exposure, but when he tried this, he was told it wasn't necessary. On the

DMAVS (Department of Military and Veteran Services) brief, the state-run agency, will get about \$300,000 from Northeast Delta Dental for veteran dental care for homeless or semi-homeless veterans. Regarding the NH Veteran's Home, the Commandant briefed the SVAC on the state of their nursing shortages which limit the number of beds that they can operate. They have an LPN program that trains students in-house, pays them as they learn, and requires them to stay at the Veteran's Home on staff for two years after they complete training and receive their certification. Jim asked about pay disparity between the Veteran's Home and the local community. Pay is controlled by the state from appropriations plus some additional funding from the VA. Every hospital in NH struggles with nursing pay, so it is not unique to the Veteran's Home. The following bills in the Legislature are veteran related. HB1019 is a request for the NH Department of Education to provide educational opportunities for military dependents. Another bill regarding veteran overseas voting would allow veterans and military overseas to send their absentee ballots back electronically. HB1154 clarifies the eligibility for specific disabled veterans, mostly 100% disabled, to be exempt from property taxation. There is another bill to allow retirees and members of the armed forces to get into state parks free. All of these were supported by the SVAC. Another bill called, "Relative to requiring the display of certain information for Selective Service registration at driver's licensing (DMV), schools, and Military Recruiting stations". This bill requires transparency in military recruiting and requires the display of certain information at all DMV's, military recruiting stations, and high schools visited by military recruiters including the number of US casualties in Iraq, Afghanistan, the number of civilian casualties occurred, statements about the US Government lying about these wars, that these wars have increased our suicide rates, etc. This representative appeared before the SVAC trying to sell this bill, and the SVAC sent him on his way without their support. In committee, the bill was killed 19-0. Another bill this representative submitted, HB1338, concerning the enforcement of the military Selective Service Act, would prohibit state or local enforcement of this act, except in times of military invasion or declared war. The bill would also have penalty provisions for lack of compliance and allow for the marking of "conscientious objector" when registering for selective service. This totally ignores the federal supremacy clause. This bill failed in committee 14-6, and on the floor was voted down 266 to 101. Another bill would also have prevented the National Guard from deploying unless Congress declared war. In the absence of a specific law passed by Congress, states are free to act. This bill passed in the House with 187 members voting for it. This is a sad commentary on some of the members of the House. The representative testified before the committee stating that he was a former Marine and is an anti-war legislator. HB1355 would increase the re-enlistment bonus for the National Guard to \$6,000. Another creates a special education support program for military families children. Another bill establishes an acceleration of veteran licensing program so that family members licensed in another state can get accelerated licensing here in NH. HB1589 would create a veterans **support (?)** program. SB482 allows the Staff Judge Advocates gives access to criminal record histories, investigations, and court records in NH. We've already supported the veteran license plate bill previously discussed by Pat Miller. The last bill, which the SVAC opposed, was including the active-duty status of military personnel on their driver licenses. This could present a personal security risk to those members who must travel overseas. Larry felt that creating this position was a good idea and allows us to track bill that are working their way through the legislature. It also allows us to send suggestions through Bill up to the legislators to develop new legislation. We have been too reactive in the past instead of being more proactive.

**Personal Affairs:** Jim had nothing for this meeting.

**Membership:** Before the meeting formally got started, Michael mentioned that he has redesigned the membership application. The form that we had been using is now out of date. Premium

membership is now \$5/month instead of \$4/month. However, MOAA National membership is \$62.00, so this doesn't add up and Michael has a call into National about this. He has added some chapter photographs on one section, and he has made an application on stock paper and the other on glossy paper and wanted to know which the BOD preferred. Michael planned to print these himself. The BOD preferred the glossy format. Jennifer asked if we still paid for someone's meal at a meeting if they were interested in joining the chapter. There is still money in an account from Ray D'Amante who donated \$2,400 for membership recruitment in the past. Roby mentioned that a prospective member would eat "free" by virtue of whoever invited them. Jennifer has a woman in Moultonborough who spent fifteen years in the USN and six years in the US Secret Service. The consensus was that Jennifer should proceed to invite her to a future meeting or luncheon such as our April Granite State Warrior award luncheon in Plymouth. Michael has also made up some NH Chapter of MOAA business cards to be used for recruiting and distributed what he had available. Since February, there were three new members, one deceased member, one deceased with spouse, and no dropped members for a total of 549. Out of the 209 annual dues letters we received 128 responses. This is a 61% return rate. Of that number, 17 became life members. There are still 16 members who have not paid their 2023 dues, and Michael sent out a spreadsheet of those still outstanding to the BOD's to see if anyone knew them and could contact them to renew their memberships. If not paid, these members will be dropped at the end of this month.

**Recruiting:** Jim stated that we recruited two new members (see previous comments about the number of times Jim met with one member to finally recruit him). He stressed that recruiting is a one-on-one sales pitch. He asked that each member of the BOD recruit one new member between now and the August Clambake. Larry asked if Jim has ever found out about a MOAA 10, 20, etc. year lapel pin. Jim will look into this further. He hadn't found anything like this at the National MOAA store. He will check again with Frank Michaels about this as well as the Vermont Chapter issue.

**Programs:** Gerry Boyle had nothing else to report.

**Web page:** In February we had 643 hits down from 923 in January. Michael again asked for relief from the webmaster duty.

**Travel Program:** Drew said he got an email from Tony Burdo while he was preparing the latest issue of the Granite Slate. The two new trips for 2025 are listed in the current issue of the newsletter. He is working on the details for two other trips for 2025 which will appear in the June newsletter.

**Scholarship Loan Program:** Wayne mentioned that one additional student was awarded a \$1,000 grant for the spring semester. The current scholarship balance is \$15,491.22.

**2024 Granite State Warrior Award:** Larry said that he is looking for nominations for the two awards for this year in the "Military Capabilities" and "Services" area.

**Nominations – Directors:** Sharon stated that Bill Luti is interested in returning to be a Director. Gary said that he is done. There are still a couple of people who are interested to become directors.

## **LIAISONS**

**ESGR:** No changes since the last report.

**Transition Assistance:** Jim had nothing to report.

**Martin's Point Liaison:** Bob Jaffin suggested that we remove this from the agenda. They used to meet three times a year, but there have been a number of management changes. If there are meetings in the future, either he or Peter will report back.

**Manchester VAMC:** Bernie Satterfield was not present and did not send a report. He did forward a VA Newsletter.

**Surviving Spouse Liaison:** Pat Miller sent condolence cards to surviving spouses Laura Birkmaier and Terry Ward. She sent a welcome note to surviving spouse Deborah Davitt who joined as a new member as a result of a recruiting letter. She also made a phone call to Deborah and spoke about how she was acclimating to living in NH after having moved from Baton Rouge, LA. She attended a Virtual Surviving Spouse meeting which discussed two issues: a. Advocacy in Action scheduled for 17 April in Congressional offices, and b. TRICARE, Love Lives on Act, Respect for Grieving Military Families Act, and Caring for Survivors Act. She attended SVAC meetings and attended the HB1354 hearing. Honorable Tim McGough, representative from Merrimack spoke in support of the bill for surviving spouses to retain the veteran license plate until she remarries. The bill remains in the Transportation Committee.

**Next Board Meeting:** The next BOD meeting will be a Zoom meeting on 11 April 24. On 9 May, we will be returning to Rodgers for a BOD luncheon.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting at 2040 hours which was seconded and accepted by all present.

Respectfully submitted,

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