

WNC-MOAA BOD Meeting
Tuesday – July 15 2025
Meeting: 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Conference Room, Guidon Brewing
415 Eighth Ave E, Hendersonville, NC 28792

Elected:

Steve Watkins	President
Stacie Litsenberger - <i>Absent</i>	1 st VP/Programs Chair
Kevin Ritter - <i>Absent</i>	2 nd VP/Membership Chair
Doug Abbotts	Treasurer
Steve Sauter *	Treasurer Nominee (Non-Voting)
Joe Neubert -	Secretary

Directors:

Rod Honeycutt - <i>Absent</i>	US Army Rep
Herb Mensch - <i>Absent</i>	US Navy Rep
<i>Vacant</i>	USMC Rep
Jeff Snyder	USAF Rep
Jim Steinbaugh -	At Large Rep
Kevin Ritter - <i>Absent</i>	Black Mountain Satellite Chair
Rod Honeycutt - <i>Absent</i>	Woodfin Satellite Chair
John O'Donnell	Smokey Mountain Satellite Chair
Donna Culp - <i>Absent</i>	Immediate Past President

Appointed Positions:

<i>Vacant</i>	Chaplain
Rick Deveraux - <i>Absent</i>	Senior Advisor
Steve Watkins	Newsletter Editor
Dr. Vivian Wersel - <i>Absent</i>	Legislative Affairs, Federal
Tricia Vinson	Legislative Affairs, State
Jeff Snyder	JROTC Liaison
Dr. Vivian Wersel - <i>Absent</i>	VA Liaison
<i>Vacant</i>	Spouses Activity Group
Sharon Woodcock - <i>Absent</i>	Surviving Spouse Liaison

Meeting was called to order at 2:00pm followed by the Invocation and Introductions of all present. Quorum was declared. A motion was made to approve the July 2025 meeting minutes. The motion was approved.

Steve Watkins opening remarks:

- Steve thanked everyone for attending and previewed the agenda for the meeting.

WNC-MOAA BOD Meeting
Tuesday – July 15 2025
Meeting: 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Conference Room, Guidon Brewing
415 Eighth Ave E, Hendersonville, NC 28792

Officer Reports:

A. **Secretary:** No new updates

B. **1st VP:** - Not Present

2nd VP: - Not Present

C. **Treasurer:**

- Doug reviewed the close of Qtr 3. Balance YTD is on track with our budget.
- Grant from National MOAA for \$3,250 to the Healing Farm was presented along with a \$330 donation to the VA hospital for patient snacks. Additionally, the chapter did help sponsor the Women Warriors conference with a \$250 donation.
- Helene recovery grant to be awarded in Q4 for a most deserving WNC veteran. This grant was given to the Chapter by a SC individual to be disbursed by the Board.

Service Representatives & Satellite Reports:

Army & Woodfin Rep: Rod Honeycutt Not Present

Navy Rep: Herb Mensch Not Present

Marine Corps Rep: Vacant *Jim Gough has agreed to fill this roll starting Jan 26*

Air Force Rep: Jeff Snyder No new updates

At Large Rep: Jim Steinbaugh No new updates

Smoky Mountain Satellite: John O'Donnell reviewed that the Waynesville VFW is now open and has agreed to be the location for the satellite's meetings.

Black Mountain Satellite: Continuing to work on reaching the 10 member goal

Woodfin Satellite: Rod Honeycutt Not Present but submitted the following update

On 21 Nov the satellite chapter will meet at the Man Cave to meet and support the monthly free lunch to all veterans. This free lunch at the Man Cave occurs on the 3rd Friday of each month.

WNC-MOAA BOD Meeting
Tuesday – July 15 2025
Meeting: 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Conference Room, Guidon Brewing
415 Eighth Ave E, Hendersonville, NC 28792

Appointed Positions Reports:

Chaplain: Vacant

Federal Legislative Affairs: Dr. Vivianne Wersel Not Present
Submitted the following Legislative Update:

State Legislative Affairs: Tricia Vinson

Discussed current efforts to research legislative changes to the process for approving scholarships for children of wartime veterans.

State update attached to appendix

VA Liaison: Stacie / Vivianne No new updates

JROTC:

- Jeff summarized updates for the local high school programs. TC Roberson has agreed to provide the honor guard for the Nov Chapter meeting.

Surviving Spouse Liaison: Not Present but submitted she continues to stay in touch with her contacts and looks to hopefully expand to satellite groups in the future.

Senior Advisor: Not Present

- Interviews for Service Academy candidates are scheduled for 10 Nov

Past President: Not Present (In Ukraine)

VRQ – Jeff Snyder:

- The chapter continues to support our veterans at the temporary quarters. 3-4 servers needed for 1-3 lunches each month
- Timeline for reconstruction is now delayed 1-2 years due to various financial, permit and construction issues. On a positive note. The Quality Inn in addition to a plot of land across the street have been purchased and the combined facilities will become the “Veterans Village”.
- The Home Depot foundation has been on site updating the Quality Inn rooms and the “This Old House” TV show has also been on site to document some of the updates. Also Chick-fil-A donated over 200 meals in support the Home Depot Foundation work.

WNC-MOAA BOD Meeting
Tuesday – July 15 2025
Meeting: 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm
Conference Room, Guidon Brewing
415 Eighth Ave E, Hendersonville, NC 28792

Old Business:

- The Champion Hills Country Club has been confirmed for the Nov Chapter/Annual Business Meeting.
- The purchase of a new Flag Topper was ratified by the board.
- The purchase of a credit card reader (links to Cheddar App) was ratified by the board.
- Consideration of Deerfield for a future Board meeting.
- Update on potential new Service projects
 1. VETERAN HEADSTONE CLEANING
 - Have made contact with several individuals who coordinate across several WNC counties. Goal to coordinate opportunities starting in the spring.
 2. CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR VETERANS IN NEED
 - Reaching out to the VA hospital and VRQ for feedback on needs. Potentially items such as socks, personal hygiene items, books, etc. will be included.

New Business:

- 2026 Open Board Positions nominations are:
 1. 1st VP Jeff Snyder
 2. 2nd VP
 3. Treasurer Steve Sauter
 4. US Navy Rep John O'Dell
 5. USMC Rep Jim Gough
 6. AF Rep Vic Marshall

- The next Blue Ridge Honor Flight is April 2026

- The 2025 Wreaths Across America event has been announced for December 13th.

- The 2026 Chapter dues were discussed and approved by board vote:
 1. Annual member \$35 (includes spouse)
 2. Surviving Spouse \$10
 3. Over 90 years of age Free

- Workshop – Preparation for Death of Veteran Spouse. Tentatively in the Feb/Mar 2026 timeframe.

- Next Chapter / Annual Business Meeting is Nov 15: Location – Champion Hills.

Next Board Meeting set for 15 Jan, 2026 from 2-4PM. Location TBD

Meeting was closed at 4:00 pm

Attachments:

1. Agenda
2. State Legislation Update

Vision: *To be a source of information, support, and social engagements for our membership; to provide programs and services for the common good of our communities; and to be a powerful voice supporting MOAA & veterans at the local, state, and national levels.*

Purpose: To brief/update the Board on the status of the organization; to obtain 'approval' for continuing operations; to gain oversight and guidance from Board members and approve budget.

2:00pm **Welcome**

- a) Roll Call – *Quorum (6)*
- b) Pledge of Allegiance
- c) Invocation
- d) Introductions

2:10pm **Approval of July Minutes**

2:12pm **President's remarks** – Steve Watkins

2:17pm **Officer Reports** (5 minutes each)

- a) Secretary – Joe Neubert
- b) 1st VP –
- c) 2nd VP – Kevin Ritter
- d) Treasurer – Doug Abbotts
 - 1) 3rd Quarter Close-out

2:37pm **Service Representatives & Satellite Reports** (3 minutes each)

- a) Army Rep – Rod Honeycutt
- b) Navy Rep – Herb Mensch
- c) Marine Corps Rep – vacant (Jim Gough – in bound)
- d) Air Force Rep – Jeff Snyder
- e) At Large Rep – Jim Steinbaugh
- f) Smoky Mtn Chair – John O'Donnell
- g) Woodfin Chair – Rod Honeycutt
- h) Black Mtn – vacant

3:00pm **Appointed Positions Reports** (2 minutes each)

- a) Chaplain – vacant – Deaths: none reported
- b) Federal Legislation – Dr. Vivianne Wersel
- c) State Legislation – Tricia Vinson
- d) VA Liaisons – Watkins is filling in Vivianne
- e) JROTC – Jeff Snyder
- f) Surviving Spouse Liaison – Sharon Woodcock
- g) Senior Advisor – Rick Deveraux
- h) Past President – Donna Culp
- i) Newsletter/Website – Newsletter suspense to Steve: **16 October**

3:20pm **Old Business**

- a) Upcoming Annual Membership Meetings
 - 1) Date: November 15, 2025
 - 2) Location – Champion Hills Club House, Hendersonville
 - 3) Annual Business Meeting: Financial Review, 2026 Dues
 - 4) Installation of 2026 Board
 - 5) Possibly Holiday theme – work with Champion Hills
- b) Chapter's flags and flagpoles which are in poor condition. Proposal to utilize a \$333 grant from the North Carolina of Conference of Chapters to purchase new flag poles, eagle topper and flags not to exceed \$400.

Motion made, voted on and approved, will be ratified at the next board meeting.

c) Discussion regarding conversion to a credit card reader for use at Chapter Meetings, Picnic, etc. Motion was made to make the purchase not to exceed \$100, voted on and approved will be ratified at the next board meeting.

d) Women Warriors' Keynote Luncheon will be Sept 26. Thanks to Tricia, John O'Donnell and Jim Steinbaugh for staffing the table. Event was sold-out & attended by over 200 veterans.

e) Open discussion regarding opportunities for increased service to veterans related volunteer activities to complement our lunch service at the VRQ. Suggestions included Veteran Headstone cleaning, adopting a deployed unit, visits/volunteering at the VA hospital. More discussion to be included in next meeting with research to be done in advance.

3:25pm **New Business**

a) 2026 Board Position Nominees

1) Nomination Committee: Jeff / Joe

b) Bylaws Proposed Update Discussion

c) Scheduled/scheduling activities/events

1) Satellite events

i. Smoky Mtn – ?

ii. Woodfin – ?

2) Future General Membership meeting:

i. February 21, 2026 – VFW, H'ville

ii. 11:00am – 2:00pm

iii. Speaker: TBA

iv. Teaser: Life Planning – in prep for workshop

3) Wreaths Across America – 13 December 2025

4) Workshop – Preparation for Death of Veteran Spouse – Mar 2026

i. Speakers: Veteran Service Officer, Estate planner; Financial planner; Retirement community; Geriatric Care; and Hospice care

ii. Location – Blue Ridge Community College

5) Blue Ridge Honor Flight – 18 April 2026

d) January 2026 Board meeting

1) Date: 15 January 2026 Time: 2:00pm – 4:00pm

2) Locations: TBD

e) Open Issues

4:00 pm **Adjourn**

State Legislation Update

The State Legislature is out of session, meeting only to deal with vetoes, budget specifics, election needs, position vacancies, litigation or similar matters until it reconvenes on or around 21 April 2026. Work does continue behind the scenes, but mostly by the staffs or leadership. Most news is dominated by a redistricting vote, ongoing budget impasse, and new laws that went into effect on October 1st and legal decisions. None of the current discussions are specific to veteran issues.

The NC MOAA Council of Chapters (NC COC) is a voting member of the NC Veteran's Council (NCVC), made up of all the various veteran associations with chapters in the state. They held a meeting on 8 Oct to go over their recommended list of 2026 short term priorities. We will be similar, but staying with our primary goals, modified to meet the guidelines set for the short session maximizing our efforts.

Our top priority remains property tax relief and update. The only bill that made the crossover list (a criteria of the short session) is H432 which is a study on the topic. This is how the legislature dealt with multiple options. Note: The Counties Commissioners have come online and want no changes worried about a loss in revenue. Our recommendation is to support H341, already written, with the caveat that the state reimburse counties for any shortfalls or a percentage of shortfalls for any heavily impacted counties which is how other states deal with the issue. This bill uses the percentage of VA disability as the percentage of tax break on property taxes.

The second priority deals with a change made in the continuing budget signed on 30 September 2025. It specifically calls to reduce the NC Scholarship for Children of Wartime Veterans and takes the management of that program from veteran oversight (DMVA) and moves it to the State Education Assistance Authority (SEAA). This scholarship will be managed without any military understanding and funding reductions may be as much as 25%. We don't understand all the issues at play, but support the NC Veteran's Commission, new chairman Grier Martin (previous Secretary DMVA) as he determines the best path forward. He is a lifetime member of national MOAA and current member of our MOAA Triangle Chapter (9). Although this wasn't originally on our priority list, it has risen due to the changes made in the continuing budget resolution. Our goal is to return it to veteran oversight and hopefully to restore as much funding as possible to the scholarship fund when the budget is passed. It was the only scholarship directly called out for a funding reduction, although all scholarships will be impacted.

Our third short term priority continues to be all things related to In-State Veterans Housing/Care. This includes working on getting an update on the currently closed Fayetteville State Veteran's Home (the largest & a 175 bed capability), as well as seeing what the DMVA/State budget is doing to support the rebuild of the WNC Veteran's Restoration Quarters (VRQ) that was wiped out in Hurricane Helene. There has been a tremendous effort by corporations, and non-profits to rebuild and replace, but no known state funding or support from the DMVA towards this 200-bed facility or capability. There is a lot of disaster funding being spent and we would like to see some directed towards this effort as well.

The State Veterans Home program is under the DMVA, although the funding approvals does go through the legislature. The funding has been consolidated into a single state trust fund for this program, with funds coming from Medicare, VA, private medical insurance (current residents), etc. Additional federal funds were provided to build a facility in Raleigh, and a law was passed requiring the DMVA to provide an annual report on the program. The Raleigh home has never been built. That report has been missing or wanting (incomplete or not turned in) to the legislature for years. There has

also been a law passed that takes 10% of the gross trust fund proceeds and has it moved into a perpetual care veteran cemetery trust fund. The legality for this is questionable based on the sourcing of the State Home Trust fund. It is rumored that state budget funds haven't been used for veteran issues since around 2016. They have been using the state home trust fund for that need (like a slush fund). A research study is an exception to the crossover list that is acceptable for the short session rules and could be requested by the House Homeland Security and Military and Veterans Affairs Committee to determine the funds' sources and legality of using that trust fund for anything other than its original intended use. It used to require the Veteran's Commission's approval for any funds to be used but that requirement has been written out of the Trust. We will be requesting that study be done and included in their research/study efforts.

As part of the 250th Birthday celebration in 2026, it is time for our state government to recognize the sacrifices made by the members of the armed services by passing H288. At this time the only POW/MIA flags flown are on federal buildings or installations. It is time for the state to decide if it is a veteran friendly state or not and support this bill and have the POW/MIA proudly flying on state buildings and public schools. 12.8% of the state GDP comes from the Department of War estimated to be over \$79.7 Billion. We are estimated to have the 4th largest number of uniformed military personnel in the US and with 6 major military installations, but the state doesn't even recognize the importance of this flag. Between no known support for rebuilding veteran capabilities from Hurricane Helene, no state budget support beyond using the State Home Trust fund as a slush fund and no POW/MIA flags flying on state buildings or schools, state legislators should not expect their veteran constituents to consider them veteran friendly. Hopefully they will improve their record.

Final priority is S693 is a crossover listed bill that is supposed to help prevent veterans from being taken advantage of by 'ambulance-chasing' lawyers. It provides stipulations that allows civilian lawyers to support veterans within certain restrictions. The one stipulation that I have been told should be mandatory, is not currently in the bill. which is that any civilian lawyer authorized to enter into an agreement should be VA certified and accredited to represent veterans. This enables them access to information necessary to provide benefit to a veteran and regulates fees, as well as continuing education. We will be pushing that any civilian lawyer authorized to enter into an agreement associated with VA benefits should be VA accredited.

We will continue to keep up with veteran issues within the state and will keep you posted as we work through various bills and efforts.