

EAST TENNESSEE MILITARY AFFAIRS COUNCIL

February 4, 2016 MEETING SUMMARY

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

- MARCH 5 Rolling Thunder's 5th Annual Chili Cook-Off
- MARCH 26 "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans" Ceremony at World's Fair Park
- APRIL 13 Honor Air Flight #20
- APRIL 16-17 Smoky Mountain Air Show with the Blue Angels
- APRIL 22-23 Mountain Man Memorial March in Gatlinburg
- APRIL 29-30 5th Annual Women Veteran Summit in Chattanooga
- APRIL 29-30 RetroRunning Weekend Event in Pigeon Forge
- May 2 ETVMA's 6th Annual Medal of Honor Evening
- May 30 Memorial Day "Reading of the Names" at the East TN Veterans Memorial

STAY CURRENT: WWW.ETMAC.ORG

ETMAC BUSINESS SESSION

- **Welcome and Call to Order:** The meeting of the East Tennessee Military Affairs Council was held on Thursday, February 4, 2016, at the Knoxville Chamber. Vice President Capt. Stephanie McKeen presided over the meeting. A total of 86 members and guests were present.
- **Pledge of Allegiance:** Led by Capt. Stephanie McKeen
- **Special Welcome & Introduction (CPT Michael Trost, Ret.):** CPT Trost introduced Corporal Alexander Peci, an Albanian serviceman who served in Albanian Special Forces with NATO allies alongside U.S. troops in Afghanistan in 2012. Corporal Peci was injured in the same convoy as CPT Trost. When both were injured in the battlefield, they tried to keep each other company until they were taken to the hospital. A heartfelt thanks was given to Peci by CPT Trost, who also praised Peci as a motivator in his service, his duty to the military, and in his own injury recovery. Corporal Peci was greeted on Jan. 24th with a "Welcome to America" ceremony held at McGhee Tyson Airport, where the community showed support as he and Michael were both reunited for the first time. CPT Trost also thanked the Patriot Guard Riders for their support in the ceremony. Corporal Peci expressed his thanks to everyone for the big welcome and his joy in reuniting with his fellow comrade. Corporal Peci is also an Albanian Golden Medal of the Eagle recipient, which is equivalent to the United States' Medal of Honor. As a token of appreciation, Capt. Stephanie McKeen presented Corporal Peci and Captain Trost with an ETMAC coin.
- **Introduction of New Attendees:**
 - Chief Master Sgt. Mark Holling, AF chief superintendent of 332nd RCS, Nashville

- Steve Hall, Executive Director of RetroRunning Weekend Event
- **Minutes of Previous Meeting:** The January 2016 meeting minutes were approved as written. ETMAC monthly meeting minutes and flyers for upcoming events are posted to the website at <http://etmac.org/>
- **Treasurer's Report (Steve Dillenburg):** Last month's ending balance was \$13,101. ETMAC wrote checks for \$312 and made deposits of \$727. Thanks to recent dues paid we're well ahead of pace compared to last year's. ETMAC's ending month balance is \$13,516. The 2015 Veterans Day Luncheon of 460 attendees resulted in a net profit of \$3,003, which is \$800 more than the previous year's luncheon. Most of the profit came from the corporate tables. Annual membership is \$25 per individual, and \$100 for corporations/units/organizations. Annual dues can be given to Steve or Patrice at the monthly meetings, or can be paid online at the ETMAC website for a \$2 convenience fee.
- **Webmaster's Report:** 648 total number of users this past month. 1,186 page views with 713 sessions. New visitors: 89.8%, and returning visitors: 10.2%. Average session duration: 1 min. 18 sec. Most used Chrome browsers, followed by Internet Explorer. Most new visitors viewed the Veterans Services page, and then left the site. The ETMAC calendar was viewed 57 times. Most new users arrived on Tuesdays, followed by Sundays and Wednesdays. Please send anything to be added to the ETMAC calendar to webmaster Barry Allen at barry.allen@yourvaadvocate.com
- **RetroRunning Weekend in Pigeon Forge (Steve Hall):** April 29th-30th will be the RetroRunning event at the Pigeon Forge LeConte Event Center and this year's theme focus is to honor all veterans. The weekend event is a race for runners to dress throwback '60s, '70s, and '80s. There will be live bands, workshops, and activities for all ages. U.S. Air Force Colonel Lee Ellis, Ret., who is a former Vietnam POW, will speak Friday at 5 p.m. to pay tribute to veterans and their families. Friday will be "Veterans Appreciation Day." Veterans enter free of charge that day and will have the opportunity to partake in free dance lessons and a 3 hr. running school, listen to live bands cover retro music, and attend free seminars such as on identity theft, elder law, or learning to make your own brew. Proceeds benefit local charities. For ticket information, check out <https://goretrorunning.com/>
- **SNAP Information for Veterans (Theresa-Vay Smith, Legal Aid):** Jan. 1st was the return of a time limit for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The time limit, which only applies to ages 18-50, was reinstated as the economy has improved. Adults, without dependents, will only be able to receive 3 countable months of SNAP benefits within a 3 year period unless they qualify for an exception, such as being currently employed, filing for unemployment, if the applicant is pregnant or is volunteering, etc. What they found from other states whose time limits expired earlier than Tennessee's is that the veteran population was severely affected by the time limit. Therefore, they are educating the veteran population now on the exceptions to the time limit before their benefits may be affected starting April 1st. For more information or questions, contact the East TN Legal Aid office at (865) 637-0484.
- **Mane Support "Horses for Heroes" Fundraiser (MeKenzie Russell):** Expressed their appreciation to ETMAC and Patrice for all their support with their "Horses Helping Heroes" Fundraiser Dinner last month. They will be having more events like it in the future. If anyone is interested in sponsoring a military family or volunteering, you can contact the Mane Support Office at (865) 233-3090 or visit the Mane Support site at <http://www.manesupport.org/> for more information.
- **Announcements (Patrice Collins):** The Veterans' Day Luncheon this year will be held at the Holiday Inn Downtown at World Fair Park location, since the downtown Marriott

was already booked for Veterans Day next year. The Holiday Inn venue only holds 400 people, so reserve early as soon as registration starts later this year. This year's luncheon will honor the Marines. Guest speaker TBA.

- Mon., April 11th, through Friday, April 15 has been designated as "Navy Week." Last week a few Navy lieutenants helping organize Navy Week came to Knoxville and spoke with the Patrice and Chamber Executives about bringing to Knoxville a 38-40 piece band where they'll perform one big show, and then later divide up into smaller shows in and around Knoxville venues, as well as visiting some local schools. They're currently looking for a free venue to play for the public. Patrice will send out more details as soon as they're available.

- **Vice President's Report (Capt. Stephanie McKeen):** 2016 annual membership fees are now due. Capt. McKeen also gave a big thanks to Patrice for all she does for ETMAC.

MILITARY UNITS UPDATES

- **3rd Regiment of the Tennessee State Guard (MAJ Allen Bray):** CPT Karen Oland and SGT Joshua Frye will be representing the regiment at the ETMAC monthly meetings. The Tennessee State Guard is an all-volunteer component of the TN Military Department. They are unpaid volunteers whose focus is on communications with the TN National Guard, TEMA, and support for emergency management agencies. 3rd Regiment covers 24 counties in East TN. Recruiting is their main focus this year. Veteran volunteers are welcomed as well as professionals (JDs, MDs, MBAs, engineers, security-licensed personnel, etc.). One of their new basic requirements is you must have a handgun carry permit. If interested in becoming part of the TNSG, go to <http://www.jointnsg.org/> for more information.
- **1-100th Engineer Battalion (Brad Redmond, FRG leader):** CSM Ron Coots is their new commander.
- **119th Command and Control Squadron (CAPT Matthew McKeen):** Have been in a mission transition. Next week they're conducting an exercise with the 261st Combat Communications Squadron's cyber protection team in California. In April, they'll be helping protect the AF information network. Are also working on their unit manning document from the Guard Bureau. This is a slow process. Have cyber enlisted 1Bs in school now, and their 7S officers. Getting people trained still and in the last minute school slots.
- **1-230 Assault Helicopter Battalion (LTC Pat Wade):** LTC Wade took command in December when they changed from an air cavalry squadron to an assault helicopter battalion. Currently have 7 MEDEVAC Black Hawks on site, which removed that unit from Nashville to Alcoa in January. Have 3 regular Black Hawks, and should be getting 2 more plus 1 more MEDEVAC Black Hawk over the next month or two. Are instructing and continuing to train pilots, crew chiefs, and the mechanics in their new jobs. On Christmas Eve, they transported TN Governor Bill Haslam and the TEMA director by Black Hawk to Linden, TN to assess the community in the aftermath of severe tornado damage.
- **134th Air Refueling Wing (Capt. Stephanie McKeen):** Still getting ready for the Smoky Mountain Air Show on April 16th-17th. The Blue Angels are secured to perform as well as other civilian acts. Will have several static aircraft displays. If you experience any issues with parking passes purchases, let them know. Parking passes are not being sold by the military side; they are being sold by the McGhee Tyson Airport authority side. The Thursday and Friday night before, April 14th and 15th, retired military can

come watch the air show acts practice. Capt. McKeen says Friday is the best day for retirees to come out. It will mimic the exact show that will be presented to the public that following Saturday and Sunday. Gates open at 10 a.m., so get there early for parking. First act starts at 11:30 a.m. They have recruited lots of volunteers, but more are still welcomed. To view the list of available volunteer opportunities still available, go to <http://www.volunteerknoxville.org/> and type in keyword "air show." For more information on the upcoming show, visit <http://smokymountainairshow.com/>.

- **278th Armored Cavalry Regiment (LTC John Bowlin):** Have members going to a volunteer training site in Tunnel Hill, GA to participate in a network integration exercise this weekend. Will get their mission command center going this weekend, and validate their systems prior to conducting a brigade warfighter exercise at Camp Atterbury in Indiana this summer with the whole brigade. Sunday is their yearly training briefing in Knoxville, where Joint Force Headquarters personnel will join them to speak about future 2017 plans. A press release recently came out this month on Tennessee Maneuvers, which is a huge statewide joint exercise expected this year, which both the TN Army and Air National Guard will be participating in and will also include local governments and emergency management systems. This is reminiscent of the old TN-Louisiana maneuvers that occurred in the early '40s in Middle TN for preparation of WWII. Their Annual National Guard Association of Tennessee Conference is March 10th-13th in Murfreesboro. LTC Bowlin also thanked both CPT Trost and Corporal Peci for their presence at today's meeting and said they're a reminder to everyone that the war in Afghanistan and Iraq still remain very real, and that the work we're doing is important in support of the soldiers returning home.
- **844th Engineering Battalion (MAJ Andrew Wyman):** March 20th they'll be having a Change of Command ceremony. LTC Ken Adam will be the new battalion commander. Will send further details on the ceremony soon. Are also preparing for some annual exercises.
- **Air Force Recruiting Command (MSgt Chris Robson):** This month they will have their annual awards banquet which will pay tribute to those who exceeded in their 2015 performance and will be held at the McGhee Tyson ANG base. They are on track to make their yearly recruiting goal for prior service applicants. Thanked ETMAC for spreading the word to interested applicants. As a result, two prior service applicants with the specific skill areas they were looking for contacted them. Contact MSgt Robson if interested in seeing the full classifications list for skills and specialties they're looking for in applicants. Air craft mechanics are a huge push right now. The Air Force has opened up their recruiting to women in combat now and are entertaining all applicants in those combat control and rescue fields.
- **Co D, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion (CPT Kevin Druffel-Rodriguez):** 1stSgt Michael Lambert will be promoted to Sergeant Major next Friday. He is currently in Quantico, VA but wanted to pass on his gratitude to everyone for all they've done during his 3 years here. He'll be going to Beaufort, SC. 1stSgt Gabriel Burns will be his replacement and will be introduced at the next meeting.
- **I.G. Brown Training and Education Center (Col Jessica Meyeraan):** Graduation is next week. 250 students are currently on campus, airmen and NCOs. The command chief of the ARNG will be their guest speaker. Will have a mega NCO academy of 265 students on campus, which will be their last legacy of their NCO academy. The end of April will be when they start their new NCO academy curriculum. The new military construction building is past 50% complete and may have occupancy by September or October timeframe, which will bring in 13 more classrooms and 97 new dorm rooms.

When they bring an airman in, it's typically \$10,000 per student bill. However, when they deliver the education through the online distance learning the cost goes down to \$2,000 per airman. They'll offer a beta course in May.

- **Military Entrance Processing Station (LCDR Brandi McGehee):** Have standard operations at their command. Are looking forward to supporting Honor Air Knoxville on their next flight in April, as well as assisting with the Smoky Mountain Air Show. Gave thanks to Patrice for assisting them in obtaining some training opportunities for their command.
- **Navy Operational Support Center (YN1 Noah Jaques):** Will have a Navy operation exercise next week. Their Admiral from their Navy Reserve Forces Command will be in town in a couple of weeks to visit. Feb. 20th and 21st is their drill weekend. NOSC will be supporting the Great Smoky Mountain Air Show. Their command inspection is in 4 weeks.
- **US Army Knoxville Recruiting Command (Captain Jeffrey Neal):** Have seen an influx of female applicants in traditionally male area fields. Special Forces and Infantry areas are not yet open to females.
- **USCG Auxiliary Division 12 (CDR Dave Roberts):** Last month they brought out "Coastie" the sailor boat for children's entertainment at the East TN Fishing Show at the Knoxville Expo Center. Coastie will be back for the Knoxville Boat Show starting March 10th at the Convention Center. Had a Change of Watch ceremony last Saturday. Their operational commander visited. Admiral Callahan will be visiting them at their regional training event at McGhee Tyson on Sat., April 9th. Waters are still cold. The auxiliary is available to give Safety Stand Down presentations to any group.

VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS UPDATES

- **Air Force Association (Steve Dillenburg):** Last call for outstanding high school STEM teacher nominations. Will be having their state convention in Memphis in April and at that time will announce their Teacher of the Year. If you know of any STEM teachers from a local high school you'd like to nominate, please contact Steve to refer any teacher nominations. For more information on the AFA, visit <http://www.afa.org/home>.
- **American Legion (Marty Everett):** On Sun., Feb. 7th at 2 p.m., Fellowship Church on Middlebrook Pike will be holding a services and sacrifices ceremony for 4 chapters. This is the 2nd year they are holding a service to commemorate this. For information on the Knoxville American Legion, go to <http://legionknox.com/>.
- **American Red Cross (Jackie Bridgeman):** April is the month of the military child. Red Cross is already planning ahead for events. In Knoxville, they will celebrate in an event on May 1st. An email has been sent out to all units asking if any will be holding drill that weekend. In Knoxville, last year's event was at the zoo and military families from all over the area attended for free and enjoyed free food and entertainment. Estimating to have 100 slots for military families this year, and those interested can pre-register. It will be an event open to local military families to honor their military children.
- **Ben Atchley State Veteran's Home (Doug Ottinger):** Present, nothing to report at this time.
- **East Tennessee Veterans Memorial Association (Joleen Dewald):** The East TN Veterans Memorial is available as a venue for change of command ceremonies, retirements, veteran events, etc. Please let Joleen know if interested.

They already have the venue scheduled for a few events this spring.

[EVENTS]:

- April 22-23rd: **Mountain Man Memorial March** in Gatlinburg, TN. Registration is open. For more details on being a runner, to sponsor a Gold Star family, or to volunteer, visit <http://www.mountainmanmemorialmarch.com/> for more information. WWII MOH recipient Woody Williams, USMC, will also be in attendance. Due to the Woody Williams project, where a Gold Star Families Monument would be placed in all 50 states, a memorial honoring Gold Star Families in Knoxville will be placed at the East TN State Veterans Cemetery on John Sevier Hwy. Joleen said it's scheduled for dedication in April 2016. To support the project with the Hershel Woody Williams Medal of Honor Foundation or to donate, visit <http://hwwmohfoundation.org/>
- May 2nd: Will be **ETVMA's 6th Annual Medal of Honor Evening** at The Foundry at World's Fair Park. Social hour 5:30 p.m. Dinner & presentation at 6:30 p.m. They will be honoring Korean War MOH recipient SFC Ray Eugene Duke, U.S. Army, who is from Whitwell, TN. He was the only MOH recipient from TN who was a POW. He has family in TN who will be attending. Last year the event was nearly a sold out crowd and they expect it to be again this year. They will have another MOH recipient attending as a special guest. Guest speaker is Professor Douglas Lovelace, Jr., from the U.S. Army War College. Registration is online and ticket sales began Feb. 1st. Individual ticket prices are \$75/person, or for a table of 8 purchased before March 1st, it's \$600. Contact Joleen for any questions or visit the ETVMA website at <https://etvma.org/> to purchase your tickets.
- May 30th: **Memorial Day "Reading of the Names"**: They won't be assigning slots this year. You are welcome to show up and get in line to read names starting at sunrise at the East TN Veterans Memorial at World's Fair Park. Will need between 70-85 readers.
- **Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council (Freddie Owens)**: Thanked Patrice for all she has done. Freddie's mother passed away a few weeks ago, and she sent out a mass email. Freddie thanked the ETMAC community, saying it's one big family. The Council just finished their PTSD Awareness, Intervention, Resolution Training (PAIR) and Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) training programs in Hixson, TN. Also Loudon and Monroe counties graduated their first Veterans Court veteran graduates last month. The Council was asked by the VA Mid South Healthcare Network (VISN 9) to set up a telehealth system in rural counties. They have since set up telehealth in both Loudon and Monroe counties. Also, Helen Ross McNabb has a grant-funded Military Services program open to all military service members, veterans, and their family members who suffer from any mental illness. Individuals will not need insurance to be part of the program. No fees will apply. If you'd like more information on these programs or the Council, contact Freddie or Ed with the Knoxville Regional Veterans Mental Health Council, or visit <http://tnvhc.org/>.
- **Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (Jack D'Araujo)**: Still have 21,000 reservists on involuntary active duty, and 4,500 on voluntary active duty. This past week, the National Commission on the Future of the Army reported out to the President and Congress their 61 recommendation. There was a recommendation to move all the Apache helicopters out of the National Guard. They also recommended maintaining a

minimum Army strength at the FY2016 level of 980,000 active Guard and Reserve. The Commission recommended that the Army recruiting be done under one central recruiting command and to increase the number of combat training center rotations for the Army and National Guard. Also, on Apr. 15th, ESGR will be assisting at the Smoky Mountain Air Show.

- **Honor Air (Joe Sutter):** Flight #20 will take place Wed., April 13th. The veteran applicants will be notified with more information within the next 10 days. Will have 35 WWII veterans, 60 Korean War veterans, and 35 Vietnam War veterans onboard the flight. Visit Honor Air's website at <http://www.honorairknoxville.com/> for more information.
- **Knox County Veterans Services Office (Tom Humphries):** Present, nothing to report at this time. For veterans' services assistance, contact Tom at the Knox County Veterans Service Office at (865) 215-5645.
- **Marine Corps League (Eddie Knoebel):** MCL recently held their elections and re-elected both Jim Williams as their commandant and Eddie as their senior vice commandant. The MCL delivered 4 wall clocks to the Ben Atchley State Veteran's Home recently. The veteran's home is in need of a few supplies to be donated such as small flashlights and writing tablets. On Easter weekend, MCL will host another coffee break on Interstate 40. Their Midwest National Conference will be held this month. They are also still recruiting participants from all military branches for their upcoming Rifle Pistol Matches. For more information, visit the MCL Knoxville website at mclknox.org
- **Military Order of the World Wars (Owen Haddock):** MOWW meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Rothchild Catering and Conference Center. 11 a.m. for lunch and social hour. 12-1 p.m. for regular meeting. Membership is open to all uniformed services to include the Coast Guard, the National Health Service, and the National Meteorological departments. On Wed., Feb. 10th, Joe Eddlemon's daughter-in-law will be guest speaker. Lt Col David Meece was guest speaker at their last meeting and gave a fabulous presentation on communication skills regarding George Washington.
- **Project Healing Waters (Steve Thompson):** Will wait to fish until waters are safe. Are still conducting fly tying classes right now and preparing for their rod building classes. Nationally, for the year, Healing Waters had 3,516 volunteers and more than 7,000 participants. The Knoxville group has had 68 volunteers and 43 veterans participate in their program. The monthly meetings are the first Tuesday of every month at the Red Cross Building at 6 p.m. For more information on their program, visit <http://www.projecthealingwaters.org/>
- **Vietnam Veterans of America (Don Smith):** Sat., March 26th is the "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans" ceremony at World's Fair Park at 1 p.m. VVA monthly meetings are at the Red Cross bldg. the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 6 p.m.
- **Volunteers of America (Dan Helton):** Are having their yearly review right now by Dept. of Labor. If you know of any veterans that need to find work, contact VOA. They have seen a decline in less veterans going to work. Contact VOA if any veteran needs to find work, get assistance in finding a better job, even working part-time, or need help with their utilities. Sept. 24th will be this year's Knoxville Area Veterans Stand Down event.
- **Women Veterans of America - Chapter 44 (Pearl Rich):** Their meetings are now held at the Red Cross Bldg. since their group has grown and needed more space. April 29th-30th is the 5th Annual Women Veteran Summit, which will be held in Chattanooga at the Hampton Inn. Special room rates are blocked at \$119 per night until Apr. 8th. 150 is the seating limitation for the Summit. Early registration is \$50/person through March 1st

and \$60 thereafter. For registration, vendor application, and more information, go to https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1CrdyNpLBpCguAXSKcRk8z_b5eXHkJ0Rd6tQonkhTzas/viewform?c=0&w=1 WVA will soon be starting on the next phase of the Sharp's Ridge Memorial Park Project and are taking volunteers. You can visit Chapter 44's site at <http://wvachapter44.org/> for more details.

- **Angie Beaty:** The Family Readiness office at McGhee Tyson ARNG Base is offering a reading program, where a service member can have his/her own book reading taped for his/her child, and then the book and video tape will be sent to the child while that member is deployed. While deployed, the service member can continue to complete a book taping through the USO office. Let Angie or Steve Latham know if you're interested.
- **Vice President's Closing Statement (Capt. Stephanie McKeen):** Capt. McKeen said tonight at 5 p.m. she'll be speaking with WBIR's John Becker on what ETMAC is. She also thanked again special guests CPT Michael Trost and Corporal Alexander Peci.

- ❖ To become an ETMAC member, go to <https://www.etmac.org/>. Annual membership dues can be paid online or at the monthly meetings. You do not have to be military/veteran to join, need only a desire to support ETMAC's mission.
- ❖ Parking validations are available for those who park in Market Square Garage during the monthly meetings. See Patrice for a parking validation.

Next Meeting: Thursday, March 3, 2016 Location TBD – 8:30 a.m.