

# EAST TENNESSEE MILITARY AFFAIRS COUNCIL

## FEBRUARY 5, 2015 MEETING SUMMARY

### UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

FEB 21	MOWW Knoxville Chapter Special Lunch Event
FEB 21	Women Marine Reservists Anniversary Dinner Event
FEB 27	American Legion Post 2 Building Fundraiser – Ice Bears Hockey Game
MARCH 1	Marine Mud Run Registration Begins
MARCH 7	Operation Military Kids' Healthy Living Event
MARCH 26-29	Vietnam Veterans of America Region III Conference
MARCH 28	Maryville College's "Creating College Success for Veterans" Conference
APRIL 4	Operations Military Kids' Easter Egg Hunt
APRIL 10-11	8 <sup>th</sup> Annual Mountain Man Memorial March
APRIL 15	Honor Air Flight (Flight #18)
MAY 4	East TN Veterans Memorial Association 5th Annual Medal of Honor Evening
MAY 12-13	Project Healing Waters' Fly Fishing with Wounded Warrior Project

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### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

The meeting of the East Tennessee Military Affairs Council was held on Thursday, February 5, 2015 at the Knoxville Chamber Office. Vice President Stephanie McKeen presided over the meeting. A total of 64 members and guests were present. The January 2015 meeting minutes were approved as written. The treasurer's report shows a current balance of \$11, 578.09.

Two new guests were introduced in attendance: Caleb Palmer with the 119th Command and Control Squadron, and Buzz Buffington with Project Healing Waters.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **ETMAC Webpage (Stephanie McKeen):** Webmaster reported that 6-7% of webpage views were from Brazil; others from Russia, and new viewers originated from India and Italy. Please send anything to be added to the calendar to Barry Allen, ETMAC Webmaster, at [barry.allen@yourvaadvocate.com](mailto:barry.allen@yourvaadvocate.com)
- **Vietnam Veterans of America Region III Conference (Barry Rice):** March 26-29th at the Knoxville Hilton Hotel. Rooms blocked for the event have been sold out. More rooms are reserved at the Holiday Inn World's Fair Park for the event. The TN State Council, who supports 21 VVA Chapters from within the state is hosting. The city of Knoxville expects 300 Vietnam veteran attendees from 7 different states.

The meeting will cover issues ranging from Agent Orange training, associated diseases affecting veterans' children, and PTSD and the increasing veteran suicide rates. Advertisers, sponsorships, and donations are welcomed. Barry hopes to see in the future the National Convention to come to Knoxville, which could result in 12,000-15,000 Vietnam veterans visiting the city. Registration ends on February 20th. \*They are also still seeking someone to sing the National Anthem at the opening ceremony on March 27th. For suggestions or questions, call TN State Council President Barry Rice at (615) 479-8619 or email at [BarryRice.tsc@gmail.com](mailto:BarryRice.tsc@gmail.com) Barry also thanked everyone for their support.

- **"Creating College Success for Veterans" Conference with Maryville College (Darren Dunlap):** Hosting a conference on March 28th designed to help student veterans; invitations are extended to counselors, students, and anyone who works with veterans. Anyone that is interested and has experience in training veterans and educating veterans and would like to attend are welcomed. Their mission is to find better ways to serve veterans.

### **MILITARY UNIT ACTIVITY**

- **UT Air Force ROTC (CAPT Mike Wilson):** On Feb. 17th the cadets will be having their air power exercise. On Feb. 7th, they will have their field training exercise in the Smokies to prepare them further for Camp Shelby. During their Spring Break, Feb. 16-20th, the cadets will be visiting Charleston Air Force Base.
- **US Army Knoxville Recruiting Command (CPT Jeff Neal):** Dress uniform is new uniform of the day. They will be opening their doors on Saturdays. They are doing well and thanks to all the community support. Recently had Center leadership training with other battalions that were here from Kentucky at the Weisgarber facility in Knoxville.
- **Air Force Recruiting Command (MSGT Chris Robinson):** Secondary recruiting changed their session plans this year. They also dramatically expanded their list of Air Force specialties during the fiscal crunch. Wanted to bring quality airmen to the Air Force and expand the list. It's not limited to those listed in the Air Force Reserve, as its open to Navy, Army, Marines, and a lot of others. Most have been converting directly. AFRC is currently looking for at least 15 people over the next few months. All must have been enlisted no more than four years if not currently in service.
- **Military Entrance Processing Station (LCDR Jason McNear):** Just finished their joint Inspector General inspection. Said they're at 96% at all functions. Their student testing program is going well at 93.3%. The season ends June 30th. Also, their First Sergeant will be departing this summer.
- **119<sup>th</sup> Command and Control (CAPT Matthew McKeen):** They're doing everything cyber right now. For 30 to 90 days they will be training in Texas to work with Air Force. Capt. McKeen also praised the airmen, saying we have very intelligent airmen and they're all doing a great job.
- **134<sup>th</sup> Air Refueling Wing (CAPT Stephanie McKeen):** Having super drill weekend of Feb. 7th; they will be practicing the ability to operate in a chemically-induced environment.
- **1-230 Air Cavalry Squadron (LTC Mel Clawson):** In the middle of ARI. They will be converting to UH-60s, which means 55 of the airmen must be re-qualified in Black Hawk helicopters. They have 22 special occupation courses they will be doing this year. Also still have one air craft conducting a Southeast border mission, and they're continuing their operations with MEDVAC.
- **278<sup>th</sup> Armored Cavalry Regiment (LTC Keith Scott & MAJ John Bowlin):** Unit is participating in a war exercise they have been preparing for over the last 6 months. LTC Scott was offered an opportunity in Smyrna to head the TN National Guard's Counter drug program. Major Bowlin will be taking his position as the new commander.
- **489<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion (MAJ Bryce Wunder):** Wrapping up their National Training Center at Ft. Irwin, Calif. Ten people will be participating in a war fight exercise in Texas. Thanked ETMAC for their support in their Dining-Out Event which will take place in March. Their Brigade Commander will be attending the event as well. Their guest speaker will be Major General (Ret.) Jack D'Araujo.
- **844<sup>th</sup> Engineering Battalion (SSG Cristi Szabowichert):** During the next 2 weeks, SSG Szabowichert reported they will be having their training brief. Courtyard Marriott will be their stay. Another brigade and other battalions will be attending. They will also be the facilitators of the Best Warrior competition in Ft. McCoy, Wisconsin from April through May.
- **Co D, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion (MAJ Charlie Hunt):** Taking part in joint multi-national amphibious landing. Will be going to Korea this summer. They also have a new company commander,

Captain Tony Rowley.

- **I. G. Brown Training and Education Center (SMSGT Marcy Broadway, 1st SGT):** 270 students will be graduating Thursday, Feb. 12th. They have a new Public Relations Management course on campus and an instructor certification course. 80% of their construction project has been completed.
- **Navy Operational Support Center (HM1 Bryan Griffin):** They have 9 sailors deployed. The City of Knoxville Greenway Project being constructed through the NOSC property is approximately 80% completed.
- **USCG Auxiliary Division 12 (CDR Dave Roberts):** The Coast Guard started their boat show season. The fishing show was in January. The Knoxville Boat Show will take place March 5-8th at the Knoxville Convention Center, where they will be participating. They are bringing a happy boat named "Coastie" for children's entertainment to implant the idea of boating for recreational use. Feb. 21st they will have a big training exercise. Coast Guard headquarters will be coming to the Training and Education Center at the end of March for the Coast Guard Leadership School.
- **415<sup>th</sup> Engineer Detachment (MSG Josh Richardson):** Works with 415<sup>th</sup> Engineer Detachment. 35 days ago they were tasked with building and training a team to deploy in less than 120 days to the Middle East and operating in 5-6 locations. Deploying on short notice. Looking to multiple entities within ETMAC to support them before they leave for deployment. There are only 12 units like them in the Army Reserve.

### **MILITARY AND VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS**

- **Mountain Man Memorial March (Joleen Dewald):** April 10th & 11<sup>th</sup> in Gatlinburg, TN. Looking for participants, volunteers, and sponsors. 59 gold star families are already registered. For JROTC or Boy Scouts, they offer reduced rates for t-shirts and hotel reservations. Accommodations are at Greystone Lodge in Gatlinburg for a reduced rate of \$82/night. Currently they are seeking teams of 5 or individuals to do the 10Km, the 13.1 half marathon, or the full 26.2 mile marathon. There are two divisions: heavy and light. Light division is shorts and t-shirt attire. Heavy division carries a 40 lb. pack and wears military uniform and boots, etc. For more details or to register, visit <http://www.mountainmanmemorialmarch.com/>
- **East Tennessee Veterans Memorial Association (Joleen Dewald):** May 4th is ETVMA's Annual Medal of Honor evening event. Social hour begins at 5:30 p.m. Dinner and presentation starts at 6:30 p.m., at the Foundry Building at 747 World's Fair Park Drive, Knoxville, TN. \$75 for individuals, and a table of 8 is \$500 for the April "Early Bird" special. Ticket prices will increase after April 1st. They will be honoring WWII Medal of Honor recipient T/Sgt. Charles H. Coolidge, one of the only seven MOH recipients still living who served during WWII. He is also from Chattanooga. For tickets, sponsorship, and more information, visit <http://etvma.org/moheve/>
  - **Memorial Day** is Monday, May 25th; ETVMA will start their 2015 "Reading of the Names" at sunrise that day. They currently need 85 volunteers. Call ETVMA at (865) 633-8337 if interested.
- **American Legion (Mike Testerman):** Monday's meeting was cancelled due to building's heating issues. Participating in event with JROTC at UT in Harriman on the 21st. American Legion will be assisting with food and beverages. They are also still looking at other building options. Any funding suggestions or knowledge of any empty buildings for lease at a decent price, please let them know.
- **Air Force Association (Steven Dillenburg):** Looking for nominations for Teacher of the Year award in elementary and high school levels, and specifically in science and/or mathematics areas. If any attendees have children with outstanding teachers, contact Steven or anyone with the AF Association. Winner is awarded a \$250 check and recognition from the AF Association. February is the deadline for nominations. Steve commended Brigadier General (Ret.) John Grueser for his assistance in getting two football players from our local WEBB Championship Football Team to sign with the Air Force Academy to play football.
- **Air Force Sergeant's Association (Mike Gates):** Closed out the year with no new memberships. However, the local chapter gained members. Headquarters' level is going through a change in their database system. The AF Association will be hosting a division in Cocoa Beach, FL. Also, the local chapter is preparing to host in Pigeon Forge/Gatlinburg area in 2016.

- **Honor Air (Joe Sutter):** Flight #18, the next Honor Air flight will take place on April 15, 2015 with 125 veterans. This date also exhausts the lists of eligible veterans they know. If you know of any other WWII or Korean veterans, please have them complete an application. Honor Air accepts veteran applicants from Nashville to Chattanooga to Knoxville to the Tri-Cities; they cover the East Tennessee region. Veterans of the Korean War are eligible and are not required to have served in theater to be eligible. To support Honor Air Knoxville or for more information in how to apply, please visit <http://www.honorairknoxville.com/>
  - Stephanie McKeen reported that the **Air Show** made a public announcement that Honor Air was chosen as the charity for their air show.
- **Ben Atchley State Veteran's Home (Doug Ottinger):** Medicare notified the veteran's home that they received 5 stars in all measures such as resident perception and positive outcomes.
- **Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (Jack D' Araujo):** 25,000 of the guardsman and reservists are still mobilized. ESGR will be supporting a refueling event at the 134th the weekend of Feb. 7th. If interested in having ESGR support one of your local events, please contact them.
- **American Red Cross (Jess Hernandez):** April is the month of the military child. Red Cross will be having a one-day event in April in the cities of Memphis, Nashville, Chattanooga, and Knoxville, which entails a ceremony and refreshments for military children. Red Cross needs ETMAC's help to get the word out and to get people registered. More details coming soon.
- **Knox County Veterans Services Office (Tom Humphries):** The Federal Register has a pending proposal for changes in the VA's improved pension benefit, in regards to excessive assets with a look back program. Currently, VA has no look back program. Also, in March, the Veterans Administration will be changing some of its forms in filing claims and in order to speed up the process.
- **TN Department of Veterans Affairs - East Region (Jacquelyne Weiner):** Announced that Lorenza Wills is the new TDVA Assistant Commissioner. Longtime TDVA Assistant Commissioner Donald Smith announced his retirement in January.
- **Marine Corps League (Laimon Godel):** The TN Veterans Business Association Expo was a success. Marine Corps League was present, and spoke with a number of veterans who needed help starting their own businesses. This month they will be having their dine-in event and Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett will be guest speaker. The League supports two Young Marines units in the area. They were able to donate \$18,000 of the Marine Mud Run proceeds to the Young Marines to buy a new bus with safety features. They will also be rewarding them \$10,000 in scholarships. Membership has grown over the past year - currently have 776 active members. The Marine Mud Run is set for Sept. 26th. Registration opens March 1st. Inform your units and in-service rivalry of the Mud Run event. For more information, visit <http://www.knoxmud.org/>
- **Military Order of the World Wars (Joe Eddlemon):** 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. Knox Co. Chief Deputy Eddie Biggs was their last speaker. Retired Navy Captain Valentine will be guest speaker at the next meeting.
  - Saturday, Feb. 21<sup>st</sup> is **MOWW Knoxville Chapter's Special Lunch Event**, from 12 noon to 3 p.m. at Rothchild Catering and Conference Center, 8807 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN. Contact Owen Haddock at (865) 693-8170 or [o.haddock@comcast.net](mailto:o.haddock@comcast.net) for more information.
- **Project Healing Waters (Steve Thompson):** Introduced Buzz Buffington with Project Healing Waters. They have 7 participants currently building fly fishing rods, and will submit to a National Contest where the winner will go to compete in a Michigan trip. The program also participated in the TN Veterans Business Association Expo and Wilderness Wildlife Week.

**[EVENTS]:**

- **April 7th:** River Sports Outfitters Pint Night (10% of proceeds go to Project Healing Waters)
  - **May 12-13th:** They will be hosting the Wounded Warrior Project along the Clinch River
- Project Healing Waters is an organization registered with the **Kroger Community Rewards Program**; 3 cents per dollar spent go to the local Knoxville Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing program. Log on to <https://www.kroger.com/communityrewards> to participate. Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing is dedicated to the emotional and physical rehabilitation of wounded and disabled active duty military personnel and veterans through fly fishing education and outings. For more information, visit: <http://www.projecthealingwaters.org/>

- **Volunteers of America/Supportive Services for Veteran Families (Tonetta Dibrell):** Their program assists veterans in obtaining and maintaining housing, case management, fiduciary services, and other benefits assistance. They relocated to 511 North Broadway, Knoxville, inside the Volunteer Ministry Center. If you know of any veterans in need of rental or utilities assistance, please contact Tonetta or visit <http://www.voaky.org/Services/Tennessee/Veterans>
- **University of Tennessee Veterans Upward Bound Program (Tom Hoop):** They are seeking an applicant to fill a tutorial position in math/pre-calculus areas for veterans. Part-time work at 15-20 hrs. per week. Pays \$15/hr. Minimum qualifications are a bachelor's degree and 2 years experience. Applicant must understand word processing. If interested, call (865) 974-2132.
- **Operations Military Kids (Angie Beaty):** Saturday, March 7th, is their healthy living event, an interactional and educational event for military children at the Air Base. April 4th is their Easter Egg hunt. April 11th is their free ticket event to the baseball game. For more information, visit <https://www.operationmilitarykids.org/public/getInvolvedBy.aspx?state=Tennessee>
- **Sons of the Revolution (David Rutherford):** Their organization sets aside funds every year in delivering checks to nursing homes across the state. David had a chance to be in Murfreesboro, and was very impressed by the nursing home. It was a very clean environment. They care about the patients, and he said they do a wonderful job.
- **Marine Corps Reserve Association (Lindsay Long):** The Marine Corps Women's Reserve will have their anniversary event on Feb. 21st at 6 p.m. at Puleo's Grille in Strawberry Plains. They will be having a regional conference in May in Florida if you know of any women Marines interested in attending.
- **Knox County Veterans Treatment Court (Freddie Owens):** Last month they had their public service announcement on the VTC. Now they cover 6 judicial districts in 17 counties in Tennessee. They will be hosting a mentor training program in April, which is presently filled to capacity. 125 seats were available. 75 interested participants are currently on the waiting list.

Patrice reminded everyone that membership dues go toward ETMAC activities such as family days, Yellow Ribbon events, and other military support. Annual membership is \$25 per individual, and \$100 for corporations/units/organizations. You can pay online at the ETMAC website (\$2 service fee) or give dues directly to Patrice Collins.

- ✓ Parking validations are available for those who park in Market Square Garage during the monthly meetings. See Patrice to have your parking validated.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at the Knoxville Chamber – 8:30 a.m.**