

EAST TENNESSEE MILITARY AFFAIRS COUNCIL

JANUARY 8, 2015 MEETING SUMMARY

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

JAN. 22	TN Veterans Business Association 2015 Pre Expo Workshop
JAN. 26	TN Veterans Business Association Dinner w/Guest Speaker Army SSgt. Shilo Harris (Ret.)
JAN. 27	TN Veterans Business Association 5th Annual Business & Education Expo
MARCH 26-29	Vietnam Veterans of America Region III Conference - Knoxville
APRIL 10-11	8 th Annual Mountain Man Memorial March - Gatlinburg
APRIL 15	Next Honor Air Flight (Flight #18)
May 4	East TN Veterans Memorial Association 4th Annual Medal of Honor Evening

STAY CURRENT: WWW.ETMAC.ORG

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:

The meeting of the East Tennessee Military Affairs Council was held on Thursday, January 8, 2015 at the Knoxville Chamber Office. President Owen Ragland presided over the meeting. A total of 48 members and guests were present. The December 2015 meeting minutes was approved as written. The treasurer's report shows a current balance of \$11,180.61. The Treasurer reported that \$350 of ETMAC membership dues helped pay toward the Wreaths Across America effort.

- ✓ **REMINDER:** Renew your membership dues for 2015. For those who joined ETMAC during 4th quarter (between Oct.-Dec.'14) you do not need to renew at this time. If not sure, contact Patrice. You can pay online at the ETMAC website or give dues directly to Patrice Collins. Annual membership is \$25 per individual, \$100 for corporations/units/organizations.

Two new guests were introduced in attendance: SSG Cristi Szabo-Wichert with the 844th Engineering Battalion and Ms. Charmin Foth.

President Ragland reminded any newcomers that parking validations are available for those who park in Market Square Garage during the monthly meetings. See Patrice to have your parking validated.

President Ragland introduced the new two ETMAC Board Members:

- Joleen Dewald, ETMAC Historian
- Heather Downs, ETMAC Secretary

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **ETMAC Webpage:** Webmaster reported the webpage had 45 visitors from Dec. 7, 2014 to Jan. 6, 2015. All 45 visitors were from Moscow and used Firefox browsers and web servers, and only visited the home page and nothing else. Please send anything to be added to the calendar to webmaster@godel.com
- **ETMAC Snow Plan (Patrice Collins):** In case of inclement weather, call Patrice the night before on her direct office line at 865-246-2646 or her cell phone. Voice message will indicate if ETMAC will be rescheduled.

- TN Veterans Business Association Annual Expo (Patrice Collins):** The TNVBA 5th Annual Business and Education Expo will be held at the Holiday Inn World's Fair Park, Jan. 27th, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Event is free, no registration required. Free parking in the Holiday Inn Garage. A total of 145 exhibitors will be attending. Attendees can explore career hiring options, attend resume workshops, learn about education opportunities, business startup advice, and network with other veterans and business leaders. Visit <http://www.jointvba.us/> for information or call (865) 660-4231. TNVBA will also be hosting two events with Keynote Speaker Retired Army Staff Sgt. Shilo Harris. SSgt. Harris served on his second deployment with the 10th Mountain Division near Southern Baghdad. In 2007, Harris' armored vehicle was struck by an IED and he was severely injured. Harris survived but with third degree burns on 35% of his body. Harris is author of the acclaimed novel "Steel Will."

 - Events with Keynote Speaker Army Staff Sgt. Shilo Harris (Ret.)** at Holiday Inn World's Fair Park Banquet Hall:

 - Keynote Dinner** - Jan. 26th, from 6:30-8:30 p.m. (Tickets are \$50/person and there are tables of 8).
 - Keynote Breakfast** - Jan. 27th at 8 a.m. Breakfast is free to the first 150 veterans who register. Please visit www.jointvba.org to register for this event.
 - Business Plan Competition (Barry Allen):** Barry's Law Firm is hosting a business plan competition @ 1 p.m. on Jan. 27th. The prize is \$5,000 from Barry's Law Firm. For those interested in being an entrepreneur, they will also be hosting a boot camp in how to run a successful business. Will take place at TNVBA Expo at Holiday Inn World's Fair Park.
- TN Veterans Business Association 2015 Pre Expo Workshop:** Thursday, Jan. 22nd, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the U.S. Bank building located at 607 Market Street, 2nd Floor Conference room in downtown Knoxville. Come learn resume writing, conduct a digital job search, obtain GI Bill information, learn about personal finance, take part in mock interviews, and learn to dress for success. Open to veterans and family members. Register for the workshop at <http://www.jointvba.us/2015-pre-expo-workshop/>
- Planet Exchange's Suits for Service Members:** All military and veterans, pick up your voucher for free business attire at Planet Exchange. You can also donate any suits to Planet Exchange, 7240 Kingston Pike, Knoxville, TN. Contact Patrice Collins to pick up your voucher(s).
- Wheeler's for The Wounded (Patrice Collins):** Will be honoring our veterans and active duty military with an event on Saturday, Oct. 3rd at 10 a.m. at Windrock Park in Oliver Springs, TN. Their mission is to enhance the physical and psychological quality of life for veterans with disabilities by providing custom trained mobility assistance service dogs. There will be carnival games, live music, guided trail rides, contests, food vendors, and a bounce house for the kids. All proceeds will go to the Smoky Mountain Service dogs.
- Host Meeting Locations for ETMAC (Patrice Collins):** Let Patrice or Owen know if your organization is interested in hosting an ETMAC meeting in 2015 at your location. ETMAC will reimburse you for beverages and food if you wish to provide the meeting at your location.
- Mountain Man Memorial March (Joleen Dewald):** April 10th & 11th in Gatlinburg, TN. Looking for participants, volunteers, and sponsors. 31 gold star families are already registered. They are looking for 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. Social hour is 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. at the Foundry Building. \$75 for individuals, and \$500 for a table of 8. Ticket prices will increase after April 1, 2015. They will be honoring WWII Medal of Honor recipient Charles H. Coolidge, one of the only seven MOH recipients still living. He is also from Chattanooga. They may have other MOH guests to be determined later this Spring. For more information, visit <http://etvma.org/>
- Veterans Treatment Court (Freddie Owens):** January 10, 2015 is the one year anniversary of the Knox County Veterans Treatment Court. Owens announced WBIR would air a major evening announcement Jan. 8th regarding the veterans' treatment court system in East TN. It's the only court in the U.S. started by veterans. Thanks to Don Smith and Tom Humphries for their support of the program. Many of the individuals in the court system are currently from the outlining areas and not from Knoxville. In March or April, they will be conducting an all day mentor seminar. They presently have

51 participants who have asked to be a part of it. They will limit the seminar to the first 100. For more information, visit <http://tnvhc.org/>

- **John Becker with WBIR** announced, in an effort to celebrate the Veterans Treatment Court movement in Tennessee and the first year anniversary of the Knox County VTC, Becker who is WBIR host of "Service and Sacrifice," interviewed 4 Judges from 4 Judicial District in East Tennessee. Visit <http://www.wbir.com/local/service-and-sacrifice/> to watch. The site also provides more information on the treatment court and their expansion news, and includes an interview with Judge Chuck Cerny along with 3 other Judge interviews.

MILITARY UNIT ACTIVITY

- **119th Command and Control (LTC Jeremy Huffaker):** Expressed his gratitude for all the generous gifts given on behalf of the Nash family and their 3 children. Their house burned down the day after Thanksgiving. Thanks to the support for all the outpouring of the gifts, financial help, and extra food. The family thanks all of you.
- **134th Air Refueling Wing (CAPT Stephanie McKeen):** Announced at a recent press conference that in 2016 they will be having an air show at the McGhee Tyson Air National Guard Base. Featured performers will be the Navy's Blue Angels flight demonstration team. It will take place April 16-17, 2016. The 134th is currently holding drill this weekend. Also announced President Obama and Vice President Biden will be arriving on the base on Jan. 9th.
- **1/230 Air Cavalry Squadron (LTC Mel Clawson):** Every member of the 1/230 is now back on U.S. soil. All equipment is back in the U.S and soldiers are now with their families. Thanks to all for their prayers and support. AIR Update: Learned through a recent teleconference, they are moving forward on their aviation restructuring initiative. Estimates it will be 2nd quarter FY2016 until they turn into those aircrafts. More than likely McGhee Tyson will be getting Black Hawks. Army has agreed to accept 48 Apache helicopters. Appropriations Act was passed that would develop the committee that would initiate the aviation restructuring.
- **489th Civil Affairs Battalion (MAJ Bryce Wunder):** Is currently having drill weekend. Majority is home stationed, but has one company in Georgia for daytime/nighttime training in the woods. Announced the 489th will be having a formal dining out event in March. Also, travel orders are taking longer to go through.
- **844th Engineering Battalion (SSG Cristi Szabo-Wichert):** In June/July, they will have a 3 week exercise in Japan which is being planned right now. They will also be the facilitators of the Best Warrior competition in Ft. McCoy, Wisconsin from April through May.
- **I. G. Brown Training and Education Center (COL Jessica Meyeraan):** Had about 300 students on campus. Non-commissioned officers and airmen graduated on Dec. 19th. Ended year on a high note welcoming their new chaplain on Dec. 31st. Also recently promoted Major Meece to Lieutenant Colonel.
- **USCG Auxiliary Division 12 (CDR Dave Roberts):** The Coast Guard is funded. The Coast Guard is small, currently has 80,000 in the workforce. Thanks to those who participate in suicide prevention. Thanks to all who reach out and do what they do to help those in need.

MILITARY AND VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS

- **American Legion (Mike Testerman):** They are continuing with their new building fundraising. Received more money to refurbish the new building. Any veterans are welcome to come out to an American Legion meeting. They meet the first Thursday of each month at 6:00 for dinner and 7:00 meeting begins.
- **Air Force Association (Steven Dillenburg):** Will be celebrating their 25th Anniversary of what they do in Knoxville.
- **HonorAir:** Flight #18, the next Honor Air flight will take place on April 15, 2015. To support Honor Air Knoxville or for more information, please go to <http://www.honorairknoxville.com/>
- **Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (John Dyess):** The number of the Guard and Reserve deployed has dropped to the low 30,000s. Jan. 22nd will be TNVBA's employment seminar at U.S. Bank building downtown. Come learn interview techniques and resume building. Dyess

reports that on average, a HR specialist will only give a resume a 6 second look. Come attend and learn great resume building techniques.

- **American Red Cross Blount County (Jackie Bridgeman):** If any organization or unit needs Red Cross support, please contact the Red Cross; they can also provide support at local events. Call Red Cross so they can place it on their calendars for January through March. Also, April is the month of the military child. Red Cross has been granted a grant to help those children in need, and is currently taking suggestions if you may know of any needs in that area. Call the Red Cross at 865-584-2999.
- **Knox County Veterans Services Office (Tom Humphries):** The Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission's report, which entails a comprehensive study and recommendations, is due to the President and Congress on February 1, 2015. Article below states DOD may be quick to act on some of the recommendations. The 2013 Congressional Budget Office report is provided in the below link as well:
 - <http://www.militarytimes.com/story/military/benefits/pay/2014/12/30/dod-prepares-for-compensation-report/21008055/>
 - <http://mldc.whs.mil/index.php/reports>
 - <https://www.cbo.gov/budget-options/2013/44687>
- **TN Department of Veterans Affairs - East Region (Don Smith):** Longtime TDVA Assistant Commissioner Donald Smith announced his retirement. Jan. 30, 2015 will be his last day. Don started with TDVA in April 2001, and was appointed as Assistant Commissioner in 2011.
 - Announced it was Bonnie Johnson's last day working with TDVA; she was a veterans' benefits representative. Bonnie took a new job now working with the Knoxville VA Outpatient Clinic.
- **MOWW (Military Order of the World Wars) - (Joe Eddlemon):** Meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the Rothchild Catering & Conference Center. 11 a.m. for lunch and social hour. 12-1 p.m. for regular meeting. Knox County Sheriff J.J. Jones will be the next guest speaker.
- **Project Healing Waters (Steve Thompson):** They have had 3 rod building classes, 4 outings, and a regional tournament. They have raised over \$50,000 toward tournament expenses. 35 veterans have participated in the program with over 2900 volunteer hours - 11 of them have been on fly fishing trips to locations such as Alaska, Montana, and Texas. Jan. 7th was their first meeting of the year. They will be hosting the Wounded Warrior Project on May 12th and 13th along the Clinch River. The program will also host a fundraiser banquet on Oct. 16th. A fly fishing tournament will be held along the Clinch River on Saturday, Oct. 17th.
 - Project Healing Waters is an organization registered with the **Kroger Community Rewards Program**; Kroger will give 3% of your dollars spent each time you purchase groceries to any organization registered with them. If you have any questions, call Steve Thompson at 615-207-6765 for their non-profit profit organization number.Project Healing Waters Knoxville Chapter provides fly fishing and related educational activity and outings for disabled active military service personnel and disabled veterans. For more information, visit: <http://www.projecthealingwaters.org/>

Special Thanks: President Ragland gave thanks to the abundance of community support given to the military still serving. Explained that part of ETMAC's job is to have great resources and make them available to the community and on the website at <http://www.etmac.org/>

David Rutherford, former ETMAC Board Member, also gave thanks to ETMAC and appreciated the opportunity to serve the organization.

Next Meeting: Thursday, February 5th at the Knoxville Chamber – 8:30 a.m.