

EAST TENNESSEE MILITARY AFFAIRS COUNCIL

May 7, 2015 MEETING SUMMARY

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

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| MAY 12 | Vietnam Veterans of America's Picnic Event for Vietnam Era veterans |
| MAY 12-13 | Project Healing Waters' Fly Fishing with Wounded Warrior Project |
| MAY 16 | HonorAir Reunion Breakfast |
| MAY 20 | Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall Route Stop at I-40/I-75 Junction |
| MAY 23 | Memorial Day Pre-Placing of Flags on East TN State Veterans Cemeteries |
| MAY 25 | East TN Veterans Memorial Association Memorial Day Reading of the Names |
| MAY 25 | American Legion's Memorial Day Ceremony |
| MAY 25 | East TN Veterans Cemetery Memorial Day Ceremony |
| MAY 30 | Tennessee Smokies' 8th Annual "Salute to Heroes" Night |
| JUNE 12-13 | Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall Viewing at South Knoxville Walmart |

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, May 7, 2015 at the Knoxville Red Cross Office. President Owen Ragland presided over the meeting. A total of 63 members and guests were present.
- **Pledge of Allegiance:** Led by Owen Ragland
- **Introduction of New Attendees:**
 - Dr. Tom Heemstra (Lt. Col Ret.)
 - Mr. Jim Williams, Commandant of Knoxville Marine Corps League
 - Captain Chris Morin, 119th Command and Control Squadron
 - Sergeant Gerald Morris, U.S. Navy
 - Dr. Jesse James, psychological health coordinator for the Tennessee Army National Guard
 - Mr. John Leonard, U.S. Cellular Regional Planning Manager
 - Mr. Jim Cundall, flight coordinator for HonorAir Knoxville Flight

- **Minutes of Previous Meetings:** One change made in April meeting minutes: In MOWW's mention of their active WWII veterans who attend their monthly meetings, Joe Sutter was noted instead of WWII veteran Joe Eddlemon. Minutes have been corrected.
- **Treasurer's Report (Steve Dillenburg):** Last month's ending balance was \$13,414. ETMAC wrote checks for \$248 and made deposits of \$799 from membership dues. As a result, ETMAC has set a new high of dues received. ETMAC's ending month balance is \$13,966. Annual membership is \$25 per individual, and \$100 for corporations/units/organizations. Annual 2015 dues can be paid to any ETMAC officer or on the ETMAC website at <http://etmac.org/>
- **Webmaster's Report:** Please send anything to be added to the calendar to Barry Allen, ETMAC Webmaster, at barry.allen@yourvaadvocate.com
- **Guest Reports:**
 - **Ben Atchley State Veterans Home (Doug Ottinger):** Doug said the positive results from the annual surveys recently issued are a true testament of the hard work and dedication their staff provide for veterans. Thanked his staff for what they do, and also thanked ETMAC for all of their support.
 - **TN Smokies "Salute to Heroes" Night (Matt Strutner):** Saturday, May 30th, is the TN Smokies 8th Annual Salute to Heroes Night, dedicated to honoring all past and present military members and Blue Star and Gold Star families. Pre-game ceremony starts at 6:05 p.m. They'll be presenting roses and a fly over if weather permits. All past and present military members receive free tickets. The program this year is sponsored by Knoxville TVA Employees Credit Union. In honor of military children, they will be giving them a special stadium tour and an opportunity to watch batting practice before the game. The Tennessee Smokies is giving free tickets to active duty military members and veterans; and each will also be receiving up to 3 free tickets for their immediate family members. The Smokies v. Baybears game starts at 7:05 p.m. The first 1,000 fans will receive a free military card set. The Tennessee Smokies along with veteran Robbie Thomas, owner of Efficient Energy of Tennessee, will be creating a military card set featuring the stories of 30 local veterans and/or active military members. Many of the 30 veterans will be signing their cards on the concourse. For any questions, call the TN Smokies' main office at (865) 286-2300. Also, Efficient Energy of TN supports a seasonal program called "Tickets for Heroes" that accepts veteran nominations and recognizes them at the games. They select 25 veterans over the course of the season. From the nominations collected, 11 veterans are selected to receive up to 8 free tickets to the Smokies game of their choice. You may email nominations to Ms. Whitley Patterson at wpatterson@smokiesbaseball.com.
 - **ESGR Special Presentation (Jack D'Araujo/John Dyess):** ESGR honored LTC Melvin Clawson by presenting him with the Patriot Award. ESGR encourages their Guard and Reservists to nominate an employer who goes the extra mile in supporting their employees. There were two nominations from soldiers at the Aviation Support Facility who work for LTC Clawson nominating him for the Patriot Award. LTC Clawson received the award for commanding the 1-230 Air Cavalry Squadron, deploying his unit overseas and recovering them in the middle of transition, while at the same time taking care of his own employees in state.

- **HonorAir (Joe Sutter):** Flight #18 on April 15th was very successful. They had 118 veterans onboard, 31 of which were WWII veterans and the remainder Korean War veterans. Saturday, May 16th, they will be hosting a HonorAir Reunion breakfast, giving HonorAir veterans a chance to get together and share stories from their trips. They will also be giving each of the veterans a DVD from their flight. The next Flight #19 will take place on October 7, 2015.
- **Special Honor Air Announcement (Eddie Mannis):** The next HonorAir Flight #19 will open to accept Vietnam Veterans for the first time. The demand has been huge, Eddie reports. To date, HonorAir has taken over 2,300 WWII and Korean War veterans to Washington, D.C. to see the Memorials. They will still give priority to WWII and Korean veterans, but are now accepting Vietnam veterans. If interested in applying, or for more information, go to <http://www.honorairknox.com/honorairadmin/index.html>.
 - **President's Statement (Owen Ragland):** Owen praised HonorAir and said it needs community support because there are immense expenses that come with it. ETMAC is going to make a contribution to HonorAir. He also said he hoped the community influencers would put the word out about HonorAir and continue to support their wonderful mission.

MILITARY UNITS UPDATES

- **Air Force Recruiting Command (MSgt Chris Robson):** Appreciated their report being sent out in last month's minutes in their absence. Also thanked everyone for getting the word out last month regarding their openings for prior service E4s, E5s, and E6s who want to return to active duty. As a result, they received 25 phone calls in the first 30 days. Still looking for more aircraft mechanics and high speed mechanics.
- **119th Command and Control Squadron (Capt Willie Posey/Capt Morgan):** The site activation task force came to their unit and started their conversion process for the next 2 years. They're **also** working toward their new cyber mission, which changes some of the areas their personnel are working in. Their biggest challenge is to complete all the training and process them over, and then place them in their respective new career fields. Schools are full at this time.
- **134th Air Refueling Wing (Capt Stephanie McKeen):** Colonel Cauthen could not attend as he's wrapping up after the 2015 ANG Executive Safety Summit he attended in Wisconsin. Earlier this week they had an ESGR refueling flight out of Smyrna, TN. Next week they have an orientation leadership flight where 40 plus area leaders will be onboard.
- **1-230 Air Cavalry Squadron (LTC Mel Clawson):** Thanked ESGR for his receipt of the Patriot Award. Have 58 full scale ARIs in full swing. Received their final briefing: all aircraft should be changed over and leaving Tennessee, pending changes from Congress, between now and December. Good news is that they have identified aircraft from the 12th Cavalry out of Germany - 5 of the aircraft will be going to Jackson and 5 to Knoxville. Are completing their school training and MOS changes. Have 26 guys in the air qualification training course. Their upcoming training event is medevac.
- **489th Civil Affairs Battalion (CPT Adam Stickley):** Capt. Stickley said this is their main training year. They have a war fighter exercise, tactical Army training that will take place. They have 200 individuals who will be engaging in the community more. They will be focusing on their ability to network and communicate.

- **844th Engineering Battalion:** John Dyess with ESGR reported that MSG Josh Richardson of the 844th has been promoted to Sergeant Major. He will be joining the 1st Battalion, 108 Regiment, in Fort Jackson, SC, and serving with the engineer trainers. He will continue civilian employment in Knoxville while being assigned to the military unit in Fort Jackson.
- **Co D, 4th Combat Engineer Battalion (MAJ Charlie Hunt):** They had a Marine recommended for Marine NCO of the year, and he was recognized as being in the top 10% of NCO's engineer field of the Marines Corps. This also covers active duty and reserve. They had one receive a veteran scholarship at the University of Tennessee for Reserve Marines, one received a Naval Academy appointment, and they had 3 commissioning program acceptances. They also have two new captains, two new gunnery sergeants promoted from within the unit, and one new second lieutenant.
- **I.G. Brown Training and Education Center (Col Jessica Meyeraan):** Just returned from the ANG's Executive Safety Summit in Wisconsin, along with senior leaders and wing commanders from the Air National Guard. Colonel Cauthen and General Johnson were in attendance. Was a phenomenal 1 ½ day forum with great speakers and inspiring messages. Heard from speaker Jeff Skiles who was copilot of U.S. Airways Flight 1549, who emergency landed on the Hudson River. Also heard from speaker Captain Barry "Butch" Wilmore, who was the previous commander of the International Space Station. He returned 6 weeks ago and spoke about his experiences in space. Dr. Grant Hammond, Provost at the Air University in Montgomery, Ala., gave a special speech, and specifically came to speak as he recognized the ANG has a "can do" attitude in their approaches of getting things done. They're looking to partner with the TEC as they look at ways to teach airmen in the future. Things at McGhee Tyson are coming along. They have 70 people on campus right now for quality assurance training. They're also saying farewell to 30 individuals who were on campus completing leadership training. On May 20th they will be graduating 127 airmen who completed their leadership training. This weekend they will kick off their satellite airmen leadership and the following weekend the NCO program, which 80% of the program is done by satellite training since the class is from out of state and trainers are located in Knoxville. They will come to McGhee Tyson in the summer for 2 ½ weeks for experience. The ANG at large is in a military personnel program crisis.
- **Navy Operational Support Center (LCDR Jeremy Farmer):** Recognized the Red Cross for the servitude at the event they provided to the military children 2 weeks ago. They gave military families free tickets to the zoo, served a free lunch, and gave all the kids a coin. Thanked the Red Cross with a round of applause.
- **President's Statement (Owen Ragland):** Reminded all that ETMAC does not publish deployments in the minutes. Thanks to all the units who shared their updates. Said ETMAC will send their prayers and thoughts to the families.

VETERAN ORGANIZATIONS UPDATES

- **East Tennessee Veterans Memorial Association (Joe Sutter):** ETVMA's Fifth Annual Medal of Honor evening event on May 4th was a huge success. They honored WWII Medal of Honor recipient T/Sgt. Charles H. Coolidge, U.S. Army, one of the only seven MOH recipients still living who served during WWII. He has not travelled outside of Chattanooga for more than a year but was able to join them during the event. Joe said it

was very special to have him there as well as his son, Air Force Lt. General Charles Coolidge, Jr. (Ret.) as the speaker. In addition, WWII Medal of Honor recipient Hershel "Woody" Williams, U.S. Marine Corps, was in attendance. More than 300 guests attended, which was their largest crowd on record. Joe Sutter gave praise to Joleen Dewald, who helped plan the event. To learn about upcoming events or for more information on ETVMA, visit: <http://etvma.org/moheve/>

- **Memorial Day** is May 25th; ETVMA will start their 2015 "Reading of the Names" at sunrise on Memorial Day. They are currently taking volunteers to read every 10 minutes; families and children are welcomed. They'll be reading names beginning at sunrise. If interested, contact Joleen Dewald at the ETVMA website: <http://etvma.org/moheve/>.
- **American Legion (Patrice Collins):** Immediately following the Reading of the Names on May 25th, the American Legion will be holding a 30-45 min. Memorial Day ceremony.
- **Mountain Man Memorial March (Patrice Collins):** Their march took place April 10th & 11th in Gatlinburg. Was a huge success, and the largest crowd ever. They had over 1,000 marchers and participants and honored more than 120 Gold Star family members. They were able to raise \$10,000 for an initial payment for the Gold Star Families Memorial Monument being placed at the East TN Veterans Cemetery on John Sevier Highway. The Gold Star Memorial was founded by the Woody Williams Foundation to remember those families who made the ultimate sacrifice. For more information on the Memorial, visit <http://www.hwvmohfoundation.org/knoxville.html>
- **Air Force Association (Steve Dillenburg):** Will be recognizing a number of local units at their May 16th state convention in Manchester, TN. Anyone is welcome to join; you do not have to be a member of the Air Force Association. I.G. Brown Training and Education Center will be receiving their first Total Force Award, which Col. Meyeraan will be accepting on their behalf. Also wanted to recognize their several Patriot competition winners. Farragut is No. 1 again in the TN State Competition. Steve thanked John Becker with WBIR for filming a segment on it in their "Service and Sacrifice" section. Steve said it's a program rapidly growing and is the largest competition in the country with 24 teams competing every year. L&N Stem Academy had 6 entries this year. Their Teacher of the Year awardee, Dr. Jamie Nelson, teaches at L&N Stem Academy and was a large part of this. A number of outstanding units and people will be joining.
- **Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (Jack D'Araujo):** In the last 30 days, they presented 8-9 awards to LTC Clawson. The significance of that is with the downsizing of the active duty core there will be more dependence on the Guard and Reserve. In East TN he said we're very fortunate, as our level of patriotism among employers is unusually high. About 20,000 guardsman and reservists are still mobilized.
- **Knox County Veterans Services Office (Tom Humphries):** Saturday, May 23rd, the Boy Scouts will be putting up flags for Memorial Day at both of the East TN State Veteran cemeteries located at John Sevier Highway and Lyon Views Pike at 3:30 p.m. All volunteers are welcome to participate. If you have veterans with any questions regarding the Veterans' Choice Card, contact the Knox County Veterans Service Office at (865) 215-5645. Their office can get them in touch with the right people to assist them.

For veterans to be eligible, they must have an appointment more than 30 days out, or reside 40 miles from the closest VA facility.

- **TN Department of Veterans Affairs - East Region (Jacquelyne Weiner):** Will be changing their name to the Tennessee Department of Veterans Services. Also recently hired a new employee.
- **Marine Corps League (Laimon Godel):** Spent time over the past few weeks with the Navy. Their detachment sent over 5 awards to area Junior ROTC Naval cadets at local high schools. Laimon was honored to present 2 of the awards. The League has a state convention in mid-June in Pigeon Forge. Will be having rifle and pistol matches at the Volunteer Rifle & Pistol Club, 2327 Rifle Range Road in Knoxville, TN. Gates open for shooters at 7:15 a.m. and close at 7:30 p.m. For more information, visit

<http://mclknnox.org/>

[EVENTS]:

- May 9th: William H. Gerst Memorial Rifle Match (M1 & M1A). Cost is \$20 per person.
- Sept. 26th: Marine Mud Run. Registration is open. Inform your units and in-service rivalry of the Mud Run event. For more information, visit

<http://www.knoxmud.org/>

- **Vietnam Veterans of America (Don Smith):** Held elections last month and elected Don Smith as their new VVA president chair. Rob Kirby is the new Vice President and Phil Claxton is the new secretary. Don thanked Joe Sutter with Honor Air and WBIR for meeting with them prior to the Honor Air announcement and for opening admission to Vietnam veteran applicants. For more information on VVA or their upcoming events, contact Don Smith by email Donandmarysmith@aol.com or phone (931) 335-0477.

[EVENTS]:

- May 12th: VVA will be having a picnic at Ron's house, and inviting all who served active duty during the Vietnam Era. Contact Don Smith for more information.
- May 20th: The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall will be escorted by motorcade, travelling through Knoxville and stopping at Exit 369 past the I-40/I-75 junction, from 9:55 a.m. to 10:40 a.m. VVA will be there in support.
- June 12-13th: The Vietnam Traveling Memorial Wall will be set up at the Walmart on Chapman Highway. VVA will be there with the local chapter. If you get an opportunity, come out and stop by.

- **Military Order of the World Wars (Nolan Sharbel):** 39 awards were given out this year to the Junior ROTC program throughout East TN. Just finished their annual Region V convention and is now looking forward to their annual national convention in Tampa, FL the first week of August. They missed UT's ROTC awards program because their MOWW co-chair suffered a stroke. Please keep him in your prayers. 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. Jack McElroy will be their next guest speaker. MOWW has an active group of WWII veterans, which include Joe Eddlemon, Col. Westbrook, and Leo Holloway.
- **Women Marines Association (Lindsay Long):** Had the privilege of escorting one of their former woman marine reservists, and WWII veteran, who went on HonorAir flight #18. Said it was an amazing event. They also attended the TN Department of Veterans

Affairs' Women Veterans Summit. Laura Comas, a member of Women Veterans of America and who is from East Tennessee, was named the Woman Veteran of the Year. The Women Marines Association also participated in the last Project Healing Waters event and with the Wounded Warriors. Next month they will have their regional conference in Florida.

- **American Red Cross (Jess Hernandez):** Said it was a privilege to host the ETMAC meeting at their facility. Thanked Red Cross service officer Jackie Bridgeman, and Ellen Sheets for setting up the morning breakfast and doughnuts from Krispy Kreme, who also support veterans and ETMAC. The East Tennessee Veterans Cemetery will have its traditional Memorial Day ceremony starting at 2 p.m. at the East TN State Veterans' cemetery on Lyons View Pike. It's open to the public. The Red Cross will be there early about 12:30 p.m. If any groups will be having Yellow Ribbon family days, contact the Red Cross as they want to support those. Also, regarding any upcoming deployments, Red Cross can send an informational packet out to the families in case of emergency. Red Cross also sends out emergency communication. Call the office at any time for questions: (865) 584-2999. Jess also gave his thanks to all who was present and their support.
 - **President's Statement (Owen Ragland):** Owen commented that every time he runs into a Red Cross employee, their response is "How can we help?" Said ETMAC owes them so much. Greatly expressed his appreciation to Jess Hernandez and the Red Cross for everything they do in the local areas.
- **Project Healing Waters:**
 - [EVENTS]: 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/>
- **MOAA (Jim Fetterman):** James is President of the East TN Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, whose committee is trying to locate a permanent place for the meetings. Nationally, MOAA supports the military coalition. James asked if this area had an interest in having a military coalition to represent the families of the Guard here. On Sept. 17th, MOAA will be having a social event, an inter-service rivalry at a game of miniature golf. Players will be given a yard of string to cheat the ball into the hole. Every time they use the string, they must cut the length off.
- **Knox County Veterans Treatment Court (Freddie Owens):** Expressed his thanks to ETMAC. Last month they had their VTC Mentor Program, where they trained 41 mentors from all over the state. The program was funded from private donations. He thanked those individuals who contributed. Also said Jacquelyn Weiner and Don Smith were instrumental in getting the program started. Knox County is the only hub that represents 7 judicial districts in Tennessee.
- **Joe Eddlemon:** Read a brief story about a pilot who flew a B-17 during World War II.

President's Statement (Owen Ragland): Thank you for all the organizations that have paid dues, which allows ETMAC to support other activities in the community. To become an ETMAC member, go to <http://etmac.org/> or see any ETMAC officer after the meeting. You do not have to be prior military/veteran to join ETMAC, only need 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 to have your parking validated.

Next Meeting: Thursday, June 4th at the Knoxville Chamber – 8:30 a.m.