

Charlotte-Metrolina Chapter MOAA

Chapter Meeting Minutes

March 19, 2025

Call to Order – Chapter President Nelson English called the meeting to order at 11:50 following a period to check in, purchase raffle tickets, and greet friends at the Red Rocks Café in Charlotte, NC. Ed Grant led the group in an invocation, then President English led a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance for all present.

President's Report / Announcements. President English began by welcoming everyone in attendance. A first-time veteran attendee was Capt Cole Garde, USAF, who will soon separate and return to the Charlotte area. Other remarks:

- He mentioned that MOAA is “fighting the fight” to preserve benefits and service to veterans as the federal workforce is reduced.
- The chapter made a \$250 donation to member Nate Huggins’ golf tournament fundraiser for Blessed Assurance, the nonprofit adult daycare program that he operates.
- The chapter donated \$400 to the Blue Star Mothers Military Veteran “Kids’ Ball.”
- The chapter website is being improved to better inform members who are unable to attend monthly meetings of chapter actions and activities.
- After consulting with members, he announced that the next meeting date would probably change from April 23 to April 16 (pending confirmation of the guest speaker) due to multiple requests.
- The JROTC/ROTC Scholarship Committee will make their 2025 selections soon. The next step is for the chapter to determine who will make the scholarship presentations at school/unit awards ceremonies and when. The chapter is no longer hosting an awards luncheon at its May meeting.

Secretary's Report – Secretary Eric Kelly summarized the February 19 chapter meeting minutes, which were unanimously approved. In the final draft he incorporated two comments from Ed Grant.

Treasurer's Report – Susan Bryant reported a Scholarship Fund balance of \$26,089.03 and a General Fund balance of \$6,968.36.

Programs – First VP for Programs Ed Grant gave a preview of the April guest speaker, Reverend Mabry of Matthews Presbyterian, who also serves as chaplain for the Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department’s Independence Division.

Membership Report – None. The Second VP for Membership position remains vacant. Eric Kelly serves as the new “Membership Chair” and gained access to National MOAA’s revised online Committee Module / Near Real Time application, which he will soon learn and update with actual chapter member data from the last year.

Legislative Affairs – Third VP Tony Castle listed National MOAA’s five top priorities with the new Congress, as follows:

1. Suitable Unaccompanied Housing, mainly for junior enlisted members.
2. Addressing long waits for PACT Act benefit recipients.
3. The Military Spouse Hiring Act.
4. Enhancing stability of the military healthcare system.
5. Improving caregiver support for families.

He also mentioned the top state priority of increasing the property tax exclusion for disabled veterans, according to Tricia Vinson, the NC Council of Chapters legislative lead. Three pending bills in the NC House address this.

Surviving Spouse Liaison – Emily McClain remarked that her group will plan the chapter cookout on May 17. She plans to include a “memorial table” there to commemorate Memorial Day.

Program – First VP Ed Grant introduced Peter Amendola and Isaac White from the Charlotte Douglas International Airport’s USO Center. Peter is a retired executive and Isaac is a retired Army SNCO and West Charlotte HS JROTC instructor. Both are center operations specialists with the USO. Peter mentioned that the CLT USO Center is the busiest of 200+ centers around the world, based on the volume of visitors. In his presentation he gave an overview of USO core programs, as well as the local operation. At the end, President English presented both men with chapter challenge coins.

Adjournment – The meeting was adjourned at 1:08 PM.

Eric Kelly – Secretary

Meeting Attendees (16): Ed Grant, Nelson English, Ron Morgan, Larry Stawicki, Susan Bryant, Carolyn Hogue, Erica Deshaie, Ed Marohn, Eric Kelly, Tony Castle, Harley and Martha Ellinger, Gary Aljets, Kathy French, Emily McClain, and Cole Garde.