

MONGRC Quarterly Meeting July 20, 2024 Saturday 11:00 A.M.

Family Warrior Support Conference Room Patriot Center

Ike Skelton Training Site

2302 Militia Drive Jefferson City, Mo 65101-1203

Randy Rodenberg	Gaila Sullivan	Alan Garrison (VTC)
Bill Leeper,	Dan Hatcher (VTC)	Jim Dunn
Gary Gilmore (VTC)	Breck Ferguson	Gary Boyd
Donal Firebaugh (VTC)	Tom Bamvakais	
John Lewis (RSO)	Stella Druml (RSO)	Todd Henderson (RSO)

Call to Order

The Meeting was called to order by Chairman Randy Rodenberg

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Jim Dunn

Roll Call – Quorum

The Secretary, Gaila Sullivan, took roll call, 11 Council members were in attendance. Quorum was established with 7 members in person and 4 members via VTC – Electronically.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The April Meeting Minutes were reviewed; no corrections required. Motion to approve minutes as written/distributed/ was made by Thomas (Tom) Bamvakais and second was made by James (Jim) Dunn. **Motion Passed**

Guest Introduction

The meeting opened with introduction of Guest Amy Cantrell MONGA President and Family Warrior Directorate CW5 Dan Eagan.

MONGA President provided legislative updates info:

House Bill 1495, new program to better understand and prevent suicide among veterans.

Senate Bill 912 includes additional provisions to:

- Allow active-duty military members and their spouses stationed in Missouri to serve as election judges
- Clarify that signing bonuses are considered salary or compensation for military income tax deductions in Missouri
- Establish a new medallion for the Missouri Veterans Program for every military operation during the Afghanistan War
- Authorize certain tuition fee waivers and grants for Missouri National Guard members seeking an undergraduate degree
- Establish the Missouri Veterans and Job Opportunity Grant Program
- specialized license plate programs for disabled veterans
- POW/MIA SSG Paul Hasenbeck Memorial Highway" designation in Osage County.

Additional Accomplishment and Updates

2024 - Inactive Duty Pay 100% state tax-free in Missouri

Update 2025 State Conference will be held at The Resort of the Lake of Ozark for the next 3 years. Contract with Holiday Inn Columbia, Mo has been cancelled.

MONGA Conference Dates: April 11-13 2025 anyone interested in attending, should plan to register early. Additional conference details will be available soon.

MONGRC addressed needs/concerns to be considered during planning process of Annual conference:

- 1) Designated room on Friday, that can be shared for MONGRC meeting and MONGA Retiree caucus meeting
- 2) RAD meeting space that'll need to be large enough to accommodate Vendors/ Retiree's
- 3) Include MONGRC Chairman, Retiree Representative Will Johnson at a minimum, as part of the conference planning committee, to assist with de-conflicting briefing times for TAG.

4) Easy accessibility for Handicap individuals, possibly include RSVP in retiree mail-out, and on conference registration site.

MONGA Update

Please attend the Meet and Greets that are being hosted across the state. You'll find them posted at weblink: www.mongaonline.com

MONGRC Charter

This item was tabled for future discussion.

Committee Reports

The 2025 Statewide RAD committee request that the MONGRC, be included in the MONGA walk-thru of the conference facility.

Reminder for RSO office to include in the budget, postage cost for 2025 RAD mailings.

Contact either Steve McQueen or Randy Rodenberg if interested in being a member of the 2025 RAD planning committee.

Old Business

Council members were requested to send their regional council information to Sharon Perry.

RSO Report

1. "My FSS" (Air Force portal) is continuing to have technical issues. Retirement packets are still backlogged from November 2023.
2. Updates to the Family Warrior and Support changes:
 - Effective 20 June, The Family Warrior and Support Offices that report under J1 Directorate is now the Joint Resiliency Directorate. CH(Col) Patrick Moore transferred positions from the State Chaplain on the same day.

3. Stella will be completing the annual RSO Certificate Course in North Little Rock, AR. The prerequisite for qualified counseling is for personnel conducting briefings to be certified every year.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Final Formation Event Danner Hall, Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo on 3 August
- Unit briefing with 229th MMB, Fulton, Mo 3 August
- 157th ACOMF, Jefferson Bks (Virtual), BRS -4 August
- Co B, 1/138th Inf Reg't - BRS briefing, Retirement Briefing, and R3SP Briefing(s) 4 August
- Missouri State Fair - 11 August (inside Matthewson Exhibition Center)
- 206th Med Group, Springfield, Mo - Retirement Briefings and BRS Briefings
- Ft. Leonard Wood RAD - 13=14 September
- Southeast Retiree Appreciation Event/Breakfast, Poplar Bluff, Mo - 26 October
- The prerequisite for qualified counseling is for personnel conducting briefings to be certified every year.
- Veterans Homecoming Week, Branson, Mo @ Ballparks of America -
3-11 November

Upcoming leave schedule for the Retirement Services Office personnel.

- Todd - TBD
- Stella - 20Aug, 15-18 Oct
- John - 31 Jul, 5 Aug, 16Aug, 30Aug,3-8 Oct
-

Kitty funds - \$ 105.00

Election of Officers: October 2024 - July 2026

Chairman - Steve McQueen nominated by Jim Dunn, 2nd by Tom Bamvakais

Co-Chairman - Breck Ferguson nominated by Tom Bamvakis, 2nd by Jim Dunn

Secretary - Sharon Perry nominated by Randy Rodenberg, 2nd by Gaila Sullivan

Parliamentarian - Tom Bamvakais nominated by Gary Boyd, 2nd by Alan Garrison

Motion to close nominations by Jim Dunn, 2nd by Gary Boyd

Voting was closed and each positions was filled by acclimation

Regional Reports:

Southeast - Donal Firebaugh

Donal, reported he has successfully found someone interested in becoming a new member for this council from his region.

MONGA Meet-up: Cape Girardeau Edition: 19Jul 2024

Southwest - Jim Dunn, Jackie Adams, Gary Gilmore

Jim commented Houn Dawgs hosted The Adjutant General's Rifle Match 15-17 March 2024. They raffled off an engraved AR -15rifle.

The 203rd Engineer Battalion is planning 20 yr. reunion on 16-17 August 2024 any past is invited. The 203rd EN BN Reunion's purpose is to bring Service Members and their family member's together for fellowship and to celebrate the Houn Dawgs. This reunion is open for all 203rd members, past, present and their families. We will also be celebrating the 20 year anniversary of the Houn Dawg's return from OIF 03-04. Don't Kick Our Dawg! Reunion will be held at the Downstream Casino Resort, 69300 E Nee Road Quapaw, Oklahoma 74363

We are having a MAC 5 in August with meals provided.

West - Breck Ferguson, Gary Boyd,

Breck reported, he would be emphasizing the importance of KC chapter members attending the upcoming quarterly meeting, which will be held this Wednesday night at 7 PM at the Kansas City Ozark Armory.

These meetings are crucial for staying informed and engaged with the issues that directly impact our community. This quarter, we have several important topics on the agenda:

1. ****Next MONGA Convention****
2. ****Upcoming Legislation****
3. ****Retiree Support****

Central - Will Johnson, Sharon Perry

No Report

East - Bob Julis, Dave Simons, Tom Bamvakais, Bill Leeper

Bill, stated, The Area V Chapter is still having difficulties with finding someone to take on Officers and other positions such as bartender, head cook and serving table leader. If no one volunteer's by the next dinner meeting, it's very likely that the Area V Chapter will be forced to suspend its operations.

Retiree FOG will hand-out School supplies 1st weekend in August.

Northwest - Tom Morris, Randy Rodenberg, Gaila Sullivan

Gaila commented, on the 53rd EANGUS conference, Detroit MI, Aug 18-21 2024

Accolades to RSO Assistant Ms. Stella Druml for the outstanding briefing she providing during June 7th event held at the 139thAW.

The Sound of Speed Air Show - Thunderbirds headline Sept 14-15 2024 Rosecrans Memorial Airport, St. Joseph, Missouri

Northeast - Alan Garrison, Steve McQueen, Dan Hatcher

Dan, spoke about Steve McQueen attending 20 year reunion with Iraq veterans.

Macon and Kirksville chapters remain engaged with each other.

The Marshall unit is planning a BBQ during summer timeframe. Al Garrison is looking for help with making contact with the Moberly Unit. Possibly RSO staff can help with knowing someone in that region.

Chaplains Update

Chaplain Gilmore's informative remarks are included at the end of the July minutes.

Benediction by Gary Gilmore

Motion to adjourn council meeting at 13:04 by Jim Dunn and seconded by Tom Bamvakais

Next Meeting: Saturday October 19th at 10:30 A.M.

Meeting location: RSO office conference room.

Outgoing and Incoming Officers will meet at 10:00 for planning purposes.

Chaplain's remarks:

As our meeting progressed today, I took note of recurring issues that impact our work and, more importantly, the satisfaction and quality of life for our retirees. This is our mission! At the risk of being perceived as unhelpful, I want us to reflect on what we have just discussed: Bottom Line UP Front (BLUF) we make conflicting requirements that the retiree cannot fulfill without great effort and difficulty. Basic database letters and emails don't reach the customer, there's no money to travel, and necessary funding is delayed. Simply put, we can't shoot, move, or communicate. We now have workarounds to our workarounds instead of rethinking the process and clearly communicating to our retirees. Orders Retirees have had difficulty in obtaining their orders in a timely manner. Nothing happens without this first step, impacting their packets and all other retiree benefits. An example is TRICARE... no order means no ID card means enrolment deadline is missed, prompting a delay to enroll for medical care until the next open season. And where do they obtain care in the meantime. The reality is NOT what is described in the Retiree-Benefits briefing. Retirement Services Office The Retiree Services Office (RSO) is a required stop in the retirement process to create a packet and learn about benefits. They are constantly busy. Yet, RSO personnel cannot access the Portal to observe/manage our retiree's packet through the process. There has been a 60% kickback rate. Some packets have a minor detail missing and their packet process is closed by ARPC... with no notice to the service member OR the RSO! Significant time passes before this is noticed... usually prompting Congressional inquiries (which receive little action anyway.) The RSO has not been able to communicate with retirees (a 30-40% return rate on both letters from the database), and the office is not able to verify that messages even to the Council (a much smaller number than a message to all retirees in the database) are getting through. Estimated at 50% until this meeting, we have not had a There is inadequate funding to operate the office and severe, repetitive restrictions on promotional items that can be purchased. Money is not received in a timely manner (April's money received in July!). There is no money for travel, yet RSO personnel are expected to support Yellow Ribbons, Final Formations, Armory visits and personal appointments. And we, the Retiree Council, are not allowed to even create a private fund to assist with these problems (Mixing appropriated and non - appropriated funds? and Public/Private partnerships? Family Readiness Group? MONOGA, why can't we take matters into our own hands and fix something?)

Retirees cannot get appointments to get required ID cards. Some retirees have not heard they need the new indefinite card (See communication issues above.) Those cards are essential to accessing other benefits. (See TRICARE comments above). The ID card locations are not easily accessible in secured armories. To even get an appointment far in the future, retirees must go

online and request the appointment. While "going online" is becoming more commonplace, it is this very generation of Veterans that has the least experience and access to computers. It makes

no sense to make this the only avenue to even get an appointment for the basic service to obtain the ID card they MUST have. The timelines to obtain the card and to apply for other benefits are not compatible. The registration window for the benefit expires before the retiree can get the appointment to get the card. (See TRICARE comments above!) ID card locations have staffing problems, and the buildings/units must pull their personnel to get this done. True. And it IS a problem for the unit, no doubt. But the ID requirement is not going to go away. The ID card process remains complicated and depends on multiple computer systems to verify the data. It requires a level of competence by the staff, and at least the appointments insure that retirees who travel to the site are seen! (The Army Reserve Center in SGF has been doing some; a comment was made to go to Arkansas/Illinois/Kansas/Iowa to get the service. And I'm sure they are happy to send retirees to Missouri. Does, not communicate value to the retiree!) The Retiree Council until this meeting, we have not had a functional Zoom/Teams/Webex call. Our participation could improve if we spent less time on the road and utilized modern technology for this civilian focused endeavor. The Civilian Retiree groups are more effective at communication and staying in touch with members than we are. (Could we use the MONGA communication platform?) The Retiree Council worked for a year on a charter defining our role and input to the TAG. No meeting has taken place after the TAG's signature was affixed on the document. Every member of our Retiree Council wears many hats and devotes additional time and effort to this group. We want to succeed and represent other retirees as well as support the ongoing missions of the Guard. But we have dealt with these same issues repeatedly. I think there is a role for the Retiree Council in implementing and communicating the positive features of Senate Bill 912 and Senate Bill 1495 across the state. We ALL want to offer solutions... but these overlapping issues have created a conundrum blocking our effective service and service to the retirees