



Approved Minutes

October 14, 2025

VCOC Biannual Meeting

Approved January 13, 2026

1. Administration

The meeting began with Col Diana Kupchella and Col Monti Zimmerman discussing various topics, including federal regulations and healthcare issues. They mentioned that doctors' appointments were being canceled due to support staff not closing them out. COL Doug Yurovich, representing the Mount Vernon chapter, was unable to attend in person. He attended via Zoom. CAPT Mary Lou Wassel announced there would be a tour of the Virginia War Memorial, with a docent set to lead it in 15 minutes. Chapter representatives were asked to remain at the meeting rather than go on the tour.

The meeting was called to order at 1016 by VCOC President COL Diana Kupchella.

The Invocation was given by VCOC Chaplain LTC Ken Ruppard.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by COL Diana Kupchella.

Determination of quorum and roll call of chapters was conducted by LTC John Huber, appointed secretary for the meeting.

Central Virginia – LTC John Down

Falcons Landing – COL Phil Walsh

George C. Marshall – Not present

Heritage – LCDR William Broome

Heritage Hunt – Not present

Mount Vernon – COL Doug Yurovich

Northern Neck – Not present

Piedmont – Not Present

Portsmouth Area – CDR Ken App, LT Joyce Johnson, CAPT Bruce LaLonde,

Potomac – Not Present

Richmond Area – COL Mark Rich, LCDR Wayne Sine

Southwest Virginia – CAPT Gary Powers, VCOC 1st VP Elect

Virginia Peninsula – COL Jim Pauls, COL Ron Corson, LTC James Schnepf, MAJ Kathy Schnepf

A quorum was present for the meeting.

VCOC Officers Present:

President–COL Diana Kupchella

VCOC President Elect - CAPT Mary Lou Wassel

VCOC 3rd VP–COL Monti Zimmerman

VCOC Treasurer– MAJ Sherry Ferki

VCOC Secretary Elect – LTC John Huber

VCOC Chaplain–LTC Ken Ruppard

VCOC Legal Counsel– COL Vince Cammarata

Others Present:

CWO4 Letia Jackson, MOAA National Rep

Mr. Andrew Jackson

Bruce Ferki

CAPT Jim Hoffower

DeeAnn Hoffower

Donna App

Kathy Rich

Ray Wassel

Teresa Wilfong

LTC Huber asked for approval of the agenda. CDR Ken App so moved and COL Mark Rich seconded. The agenda was approved as published.

LTC Huber asked for approval of the July 8,2025meeting minutes. COL March Rich so moved and CAPT Gary Powers seconded. The minutes were approved as published.

2. President's Report

COL Diana Kupchella noted that she is President thru December. COL Kupchella reported that the council received 5-star ratings in 2023 for the Levels of Excellence and Harris Communications Award and in 2024 for the Levels of Excellence Award. COL Kupchella announced that CAPT Gary Powers will take over as First Vice President and Communications Chair.

3. Treasurer's Report

Treasurer MAJ Sherry Ferki presented the treasurer's report showing a current balance of \$9,026.56. The report was provided to the members via email prior to the meeting. MAJ Ferki also noted that liability insurance processing was ongoing, with an expected premium of

\$175.

Treasurer MAJ Ferki asked for approval to defer dues until the January meeting. CAPT Wassel so moved, and COL Zimmerman seconded. The motion was approved.

4. Surviving Spouse Resources and Updates

Surviving Spouse representative MAJ Ferki discussed the resources available for surviving spouses on the VCOC and MOAA websites and emphasized the importance of spreading awareness through newsletters and liaisons. She shared a personal experience involving a surviving spouse's ID card issue at Arlington and highlighted ongoing challenges with transitioning to new military ID cards. COL Kupchella also mentioned that Gary Powers will take over website management, and she addressed the issue that Network Solutions no longer accepts checks for website payments.

5. Membership

CDR John Prevar was not present. COL Zimmerman and COL Doug Yurovich discussed John Prevar's absence, confirming he is in England.

6. Veteran Services and Legislative Priorities

COL Zimmerman discussed several key points regarding veteran services and legislative initiatives. He highlighted concerns about VA care, noting that doctors at the Washington D.C. VA Medical Center are overwhelmed with non-medical tasks, leading to appointment delays. COL Zimmerman is working to gather congressional support to address this issue. He also mentioned the importance of the Virginia Veterans Network, urging more veterans to register, and discussed initiatives to support military members transitioning to civilian life. He outlined five legislative priorities, including efforts to stop "claim sharks" from exploiting veterans and improving data collection on veteran suicides. He emphasized the need for collaboration with state senators and delegates to advance these initiatives.

LTC Down discussed the five JLC (Joint Leadership Council) initiatives for veteran support in Virginia, including a textbook grant program seeking \$1,000 per student annually for approximately 11,000 eligible students, and legislation to exempt 501c19 veterans' organizations from strict use of proceeds requirements for charitable gaming activities. He also explained efforts to expand benefits for Commissioned Corps members of NOAA and Public Health Service, who are currently eligible for VA benefits upon retirement but lack comprehensive military status. The conversation ended with a discussion about the Richmond Area Chapter's upcoming 18th Annual Registrar Forum and clarification about the difference between "uniform services" and "armed forces" terminology in state and federal codes. The JLC initiatives are on

the VCOC website. January 15th is JLC day to lobby for the JLC initiatives.

The Congressional Appreciation Luncheon is still on the table.

7. 2026 Meeting Dates and Awards

The incoming President CAPT Mary Lou Wassel announced meeting dates for 2026: They are: January 13, April 14, July 14, and October 13, all held on Tuesday evenings from 3 to 5 PM. COL Zimmerman was tasked with drafting language for an Executive of the Year Award to be added to the bylaws.

MAJ Ferki proposed creating an Ad Hoc Finance Committee, which was seconded by CAPT Gary Powers. The motion passed. MAJ Ferki will develop the committee.

8. Virginia Council of Chapters Memorial Service

VCOC Chaplain Ken Ruppard conducted the Memorial Service, to honor chapter members and spouses who have passed away since October 2023. A representative from each Chapter read the names of their deceased members and placed a flower in remembrance.

After the memorial service that was a break for lunch.

9. Virginia Council Officer Installation

CWO4 Lelia Jackson, MOAA National Board Member and Senior Advisor at HUD and retired Marine Corps warrant officer, installed new officers for the Virginia MOAA Council of Chapters. She highlighted the upcoming Total Force Plus conference, which will be held on October 29-30, despite the government shutdown. CWO4 Jackson encouraged attendees to use the Legislative Action Center to advocate for service member pay during the shutdown and discussed the growth of virtual chapters. She presented outgoing VCOC President, COL Kupchella with the MOAA National President's Award.

The new officers were then installed.

President – CAPT Mary Lou Wassel

1st Vice President and Communications Chair – CAPT Gary Powers

2nd Vice President and Membership Chair – CDR John Prevar

3rd Vice President and Legislative Chair – COL Monti Zimmerman

Treasurer – MAJ Sherry Ferki

Secretary – LTC Joh Huber

Outgoing President COL Kupchella thanked all for their support during her time as President.

Incoming President CAPT Mary Lou Wassel is looking forward to continuing the achievements

of VCOC, particularly in the legislative area,

The meeting adjourned at 1340.

Next steps

- COL Kupchella to fix the missing medallions on the streamers and provide feedback to Frank at MOAA headquarters about missing medallions.
- Maj Ferki to pay the \$175 premium for the liability insurance once the invoice is received.
- LTC John Down to send information about the Virginia Veterans Network to COL Kupchella for posting on the VCOC website.
- LTC John Down to send a summary of the Department of Veteran Services care centers to COL Kupchella for the website.
- COL Zimmerman to write a draft for the Executive of the Year Award to be included in the bylaws for the next meeting.
- CAPT Gary Powers to take over and update the VCOC website and communications.
- MAJ Ferki to draft a proposal for an Ad Hoc Finance Committee to be discussed at the January meeting.
- Chapter representatives to follow up with their surviving spouse liaisons to connect with MAJ Ferki regarding resources.
- Chapter representatives advocate for the JLC initiatives with their state legislators, particularly after the November elections.
- COL Kupchella to send out LTC John Down's contact information to all members for questions about the JLC initiatives.
- Chapter representatives to inform members about the ID card transition and provide information from the MOAA website to those without internet access.

Respectfully submitted,

John J Huber
LTC(Retired)
Meeting Secretary

