

HIGH COUNTRY CHAPTER
MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



SECRETARY'S REPORT

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Date: August 4, 2026

Location: South End Brewing, Boone, NC

Next Meeting: September 1, 2026

The Board of Directors of the High Country Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) met at South End Brewing to conduct chapter business, review chapter finances, discuss legislative affairs, plan upcoming events, and consider future chapter initiatives. The Secretary participated remotely via Zoom.

Participants

Present

Melanie Trado, MAJ, USAR – President

Frederick "Fred" Schmitt, CAPT, USCG (Ret) – First Vice President

Adam Greene, LTC, USA – Secretary / Legislative Affairs Chair (Remote)

George Brudzinski, LtCol, USMC (Ret) – Treasurer

Mary "Frankie" Groff – Immediate Past President

James "Jim" Fisher, CAPT, USN (Ret)

Lisa Ninnis, MAJ, USAF (Fmr)

Dinah Pinney, MAJ, USAF (Ret)

Patsy Alley – Surviving Spouse Representative

Not Present

David Hollis, LTC, USA (Ret)

Guest

Bob Gibbard – Representative, Boone American Legion

Quorum: Yes

Call to Order

President Melanie Trado called the meeting to order at 1700. Members recited the Pledge of Allegiance followed by an invocation recognizing the anniversaries of Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Purple Heart Day, and the sacrifices of American service members.

Approval of Secretary's Report

The Secretary's Report for the July 2026 Board of Directors Meeting was presented.

Motion: Approve the July 2026 Secretary's Report.

Made by: Jim Fisher

Seconded by: Lisa Ninnis

Outcome: Approved unanimously.

Legislative Affairs

The Legislative Affairs Chair presented the August Legislative Affairs Update, highlighting the proposed Take Care of America's Veterans Act and the differing positions taken by national veterans service organizations regarding the legislation.

Discussion included:

- The Major Richard Star Act and other veteran priorities incorporated within the proposed legislation.
- Concerns regarding provisions affecting future disability compensation for sleep apnea and tinnitus.
- The importance of providing members with balanced information outlining both the potential benefits and concerns before encouraging legislative advocacy.
- Expansion of the chapter's Legislative Affairs Update to include additional counties within the chapter's area of responsibility.

The Board approved release of the August Legislative Affairs Update to the chapter membership. President Melanie Trado volunteered to distribute the update electronically, and the Legislative Affairs section of the chapter website will continue to serve as a reference archive for members.

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer presented the July financial report.

Highlights included:

- Interest income of \$4.70.
- Website hosting expense of approximately \$48.
- Certificate of Deposit balance of \$10,302.98 as of July 31.
- Net operating loss of \$1,106 for the fiscal year, substantially better than the projected annual loss.

The Treasurer reported the chapter remains in a strong financial position despite the anticipated annual operating loss.

American Legion Partnership

Bob Gibbard, representing the Boone American Legion, briefed the Board on opportunities for increased collaboration between the organizations.

Topics discussed included:

- Availability of the American Legion building for Board meetings, chapter activities, and veteran-related events.
- Potential use of the facility for future fundraising activities, including a spaghetti dinner.
- Availability of the commercial kitchen and dining facilities.
- Encouraging MOAA members to support the American Legion's monthly breakfast.
- Continued cooperation between the organizations in support of local veterans and community programs.

Mr. Gibbard also shared the history of his involvement with the American Legion and emphasized the importance of supporting veterans' organizations through collaboration and community engagement. The Board expressed appreciation for the invitation and agreed to continue exploring opportunities for future partnership.

General Membership Meeting – August 13

The Board finalized preparations for the August 13 General Membership Meeting at the Blowing Rock Park Pavilion.

Discussion and decisions included:

- Board members will arrive at 1630 to set up the pavilion.
- The General Membership Meeting will begin at 1730.
- Twenty-six members had RSVP'd, with anticipated attendance of approximately thirty-five.
- Frankie Groff will coordinate pickup of the barbecue using a chapter check provided by the Treasurer.
- The Board approved purchasing desserts for the event using chapter funds rather than asking individual Board members to provide them.
- Bob Gibbard will serve as the featured speaker, providing an overview of the American Legion and opportunities for cooperation between the organizations.

Veterans Memorial Bench

The Board reviewed the proposal to install a commemorative granite bench near the Boone Veterans Memorial.

Discussion included:

- Potential locations identified in coordination with the Town of Boone.
- Preliminary funding through donations.
- Coordination with Town officials regarding placement and maintenance responsibilities.
- The potential use of a granite bench with engraved recognition of the chapter's role in developing the Veterans Memorial.

The Board reached consensus for George Brudzinski to continue gathering information regarding project costs, funding opportunities, and coordination with the Town of Boone before returning the proposal to the Board for further consideration.

Event Security

The Board received an update regarding security planning for Memorial Day, Veterans Day, and other public ceremonies.

Discussion confirmed that the Boone Police Department and Watauga County Sheriff's Office routinely provide security support for major public events and remain proactive partners in helping ensure the safety of participants and attendees. The Board agreed to continue coordinating with local law enforcement as part of future event planning.

Speaker Program

The Board discussed improving coordination of speakers for General Membership Meetings.

Discussion included:

- Designating a volunteer to coordinate and confirm speakers well in advance of each meeting.
- Contacting the Appalachian State University Chancellor regarding serving as the speaker for the October General Membership Meeting.
- Continued planning for Veterans Day programming.

Future Fundraising

The Board discussed future fundraising opportunities for the chapter.

Ideas included:

- Hosting a spaghetti dinner utilizing the American Legion facility.
- Partnering with local businesses willing to donate food and supplies.
- Continuing to recognize businesses and organizations supporting chapter activities.

The Board agreed to continue evaluating fundraising opportunities during upcoming meetings.

Other Business

Additional discussion included:

- Recognition of Coast Guard Day.
- Planning for the September Board Meeting during the President's anticipated absence.
- Continued improvements to remote meeting capabilities and chapter communications.

Action Items

- Distribute the approved August Legislative Affairs Update to the chapter membership.
- Post the Legislative Affairs Update to the chapter website.

- Continue gathering information regarding the Veterans Memorial bench proposal.
- Finalize preparations for the August 13 General Membership Meeting.
- Continue discussions regarding use of the American Legion facility for chapter activities.
- Explore future fundraising opportunities, including a spaghetti dinner.
- Continue development of the chapter speaker program.

Next Meeting

The next Board of Directors Meeting is scheduled for September 1, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

Adam K. Greene, LTC, USA

Secretary and Legislative Affairs Chair

High Country Chapter, Military Officers Association of America (MOAA)