

MOAA Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter
MINUTES
Chapter Meeting, 20 July 2021

Contact: mssvc02@gmail.com

Attendance: 38, by Zoom

Recording:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Jy2XzBQdQt8cMHAUIvzbWU8RDC4Cb1Yr>

Members introduced themselves and chatted informally as they joined the meeting.

Micki Costello called the meeting to order at 1:06 PM EST. After leading the chapter in the Pledge of Allegiance, Micki reminded the attendees of the purposes of the chapter:

- *Provide information and exchange ideas
- *Find solutions to problems or issues affecting surviving spouses
- *Be a resource for surviving spouses
- *Reach out to younger surviving spouses and to those living where MOAA chapters are not available
- *Be an enhancement to regular chapters—the virtual chapter does not take the place of a regular MOAA chapter.

Barb Smith reported on membership of the Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter. There are 169 members from 34 states. Our membership is sparse in the New England states, and we welcome our new member from Delaware.

Gail Joyce introduced Kathy Partain MOAA Vice-President of Membership and Marketing who reported that membership is one of MOAA's more challenging issues. Generational differences, the global pandemic, how we can be sensitive to what's happening around the world, all impact how we approach membership. Surviving spouse membership numbers are relatively stable. The average age of surviving spouse members is 87. The challenge for National is finding surviving spouses. MOAA relies on chapter members to spread the word, to listen to what is going on in the lives of those with whom you come in contact, and pair up MOAA's values with their concerns. Kathy noted that the best 'tool' in the MOAA toolbox is YOU.

Gail Joyce introduced Jon Brenneman, President, MOAAVacations, official travel agency of MOAA. He spoke from on board a ship on the Mississippi about the services of MOAAVacations, and specifically about the Signature Group cruises which are exclusively for MOAA. These trips cater to the participants' needs. Family and friends are welcome.

Upcoming trips:

December 2021, Holiday Markets, itinerary: Nuremberg to Vienna

April/May 2022, Tulips and Windmills, itinerary: Belgium and the Netherlands

June 2022, Douro River Valley Cruise, itinerary: Portugal and Spain

Webinars are available on these trips. (www.MOAAvacations.com, 1-800-211-5107)

In addition to offering these MOAA-exclusive cruises, MOAA Vacations is a full-service travel agency.

Gail Joyce introduced LTC (USA Ret) Mark Belinsky, Director, Currently Serving and Retired Affairs, who gave a legislative update:

-Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act, H.R.2214/S.1669, to direct the forgiveness or offset of an overpayment of retired pay paid to a joint account after the death of a retired member of the Armed Forces. [TAKE ACTION: [Ask Your Lawmaker to Support the Military Retiree Survivor Comfort Act](#)]. This low-cost bill has potential. Please take action by going to MOAA's Take Action Center on the website. You can read more here: [MOAA - Survivor Comfort Act Introduced in the Senate](#)

-Caring for Survivors Act of 2021, H.R. 3402/S.976, is very good legislation that would improve dependency and indemnity compensation. MOAA and The Military Coalition support this legislation and will have to take the long view on this legislation to address concerns over cost. DIC improvement remains a priority.

-Supporting Families of Fallen Soldiers, HR3793, to increase the maximum amount of a policy under the Veterans' Group Life Insurance and Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance to keep up with inflation. This legislation was introduced by Rep. Chip Roy R-TX, and is one to watch for the future.

Gail Joyce reported on leadership training.

-*August 27, 2021* - Virtual, Barbara Bowman and Gail Joyce

This is open to everyone.

If you wish to attend contact Gail at VirginiaGailJoyce@gmail.com

-*September 17 and 18* – In Person, Raleigh, North Carolina,

Targeting Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama and Georgia. Please get the word out to surviving spouses. Let Gail know if you wish to attend. Gail reminded us if we've attended Leadership Training, it wouldn't hurt to attend again.

-*November 19 and 20* – In Person, San Diego Details tba

July 29, 2021, 8 – 11 CST - VA and DOD Survivor Forum

We are encouraged to donate to the MOAA foundation and Scholarship Fund.

Jeri Graham reported that the MOAA Board of Directors has approved the Chaplains' Virtual Chapter, the fourth virtual chapter, along with the Nurses, surviving Spouses, and Public Health Services virtual chapters. Four chapters can constitute a Council. The Board has also approved the application to form the Council of Virtual Chapters.

Micki thanked all the presenters. The next meeting will be Tuesday, August 17 at 5 Eastern.

Adjournment at 2:25 EDT

Respectfully submitted
Barbara Bowman