

## Northeast Georgia Veteran Organizations Coalition

### Meeting Minutes

March 5, 2012

#### I. Persons Present:

Dave Dellinger, Commander American Legion Post #7

Ron Kellner, Vietnam Veterans of America and Vice Commander, American Legion Post 7

Emile "Cookie" Salinas, Commandant, Marine Corps League Detachment 665

James Gilmer, Disabled Veterans Outreach Program

Paul Godfrey, Personal Affairs Officer, Georgia Mountain Chapter, Military Officer Association of America

#### II. Call to Order

Meeting began at approximately 7:15

III. Deliberations. This second meeting opened with discussion about the organizations represented and the common issues of each. The three common issues were fund raising, membership, and identification of veterans in need.

##### 1. Fund raising:

a. In fund raising, Cookie explained about the Detachment 665 program for sustained fund raising through a materials reuse process, to wit, clothes hangers. He also cited the difficulties of fund raising such as raffle tickets and street corner donation solicitation primarily due to the relatively advanced age of the majority of the detachment members.

b. Godfrey related the barbecue sales activities and raffle activities of Post #328.

d. Godfrey cited the Wounded Warrior golf tournament sponsored by the GMCMOAA as their recurring fund raising activity. He identified the basics of the tournament in past years and identified a goal the \$100K for this year, and identified the [www.gmcmoaa.org](http://www.gmcmoaa.org) Web site for additional information.

c. VVA cited their donations solicitation link on their national web site.

d. With the exception of the above, most fund raising activities mentioned were of a short term, transient, or targeted nature.

d. As in Det 665, the age of the typical active member and its impact on physical fund raising efforts was cited by all.

e. The issue of veterans who were active having membership in multiple organizations was also identified.

f. The one shot or short term project nature of fund raising activities and the lack of a cohesive strategy for fund raising within the separate organizations, except as noted above, was identified as a need to be worked on.

g. With the exception of American Legion Post 7 and Post 328, where funding of current or future real estate, e.g., the Post 7 Clubhouse and the Post 7 pavilion and the Post 328 plan to procure a facility, the major planned fund expenditures of all organizations represented was, first, in support of the needs of its members for things such as burial assistance and fiscal crises, and for funding of member expenses for participation in organizational events at regional or other levels, the bulk of funds were for targeting needy veterans in the service area, primarily Hall County, of the organizations.

## 2. Membership.

a. As cited above, all organizations faced the problem of aging demographics among their users. The recent announcement of draw downs in active forces was mentioned in conjunction with the desire to get more of the younger vets involved.

b. Another issue was the difference between members "on the books" and members actively involved. Each organization seemed to have between 10 and 20 members attending meetings. Godfrey cited that over 32% of the Post 328 members attended its latest meeting. (Although not cited in the meeting, similar attendance was true of the Det 665's latest meeting).

c. Lack of information as to person's eligible for membership, hence available for recruitment, was cited. In general, information held by government agencies was not available to the organizations.

## 3. Identification of veterans in need.

a. The last item above has proven to be an impediment to the location of veterans in need as well as an impediment to recruiting.

b. Several ideas of identifying those in need were discussed ranging from contact with Hall county churches, which has been tried in the past, to formation of target teams to go out in the community and find vets needing help. Naturally enough, this most aggressive approach was put forward by the Marine rep.

c. Godfrey pontificated on the classifications of vets in need, citing there were three levels of consideration. The three levels identified were 1) the homeless and indigent, 2) the needy too proud to ask for help, and 3) the Vets who knew not whom to ask for help.

(1) First were the homeless and indigent. These may be the most in need of help, but are extraordinarily difficult to identify. The recent "Stand Down" sponsored by Post 328 demonstrated the difficulty in identifying these. Many local outreach agencies had been asked for assistance in identifying homeless

and indigent in an effort to get them to the Goodwill facilities which hosted the post's activities in support of these, but few actually were serviced. The lack of information as to who these may be was lacking. Lest we assume there are few to none, it was noted by Godfrey that the VSO in Lumpkin county advised that there were some 3000 veterans in residence there, the circumstances of most of whom was unknown. There is no reason to believe the circumstances in Hall County are significantly different except having a larger number.

(2) Second, as to the proud, Godfrey related the support the GMCMOAA members are providing to one the family of vet virtually a vegetable in Lumpkin County. While the member had VA services daily, the family still needed help. As part of that was his advisement that the GMCMOAA did not, by charter, have a structure for such support and it was that lack that was cause for the MOAA participation. He also noted that the GMCMOAA area included all or parts of 14 counties and that the efforts in Hall were just a beginning for this organization to be involved, principally with the hope that Hall County could begin to provide a model for the other counties in North Georgia.

(3) The last group were discussed in relation to the government, both federal and state, programs that were available and the possibility of enlisting their help in a coordinated effort to "get the word out" in the military vernacular.

4. The meeting concluded with a commitment by all to get leadership in their organization, as well as organizations that were unable to have representatives at this meeting, to attend the next with the aim of establishing formalized relationships and understandings among and between them, and, of necessity, governmental agencies charged with provision of veteran support, to provide an organized, cohesive, long term, open-ended effort. There being no action structure, no specific action items were created.

III. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned at approximately 9:30 pm