



# MECMOAA CHAPTER NEWS



May was the month to celebrate the young men and women who will serve as future leaders in our Armed Forces and communities:

Junior ROTC and ROTC cadets.

Led by LTC (Ret.) Ed Champion, several MECMOAA members participated in numerous award high school JROTC award ceremonies, and we presented two annual scholarships at our last brunch meeting.



LCDR (Ret.) John Rice & Dr. Herb Ladley present the CAPT Herb Ladley Scholarship to Cadet Aiden Monette, Daniel Boone High School



LTC (Ret.) Ed Champion & LCDR (Ret.) John Rice present the MECMOAA ROTC Scholarship to Cadet Ian Anderegg, East Tennessee State Univ.



LTC Kent Monas (ETSU Professor of Military Science), Cadets Aiden Monette and Ian Anderegg, and LCDR (Ret.) John Rice

The following members represented MECMOAA  
by presenting MOAA's JROTC and ROTC Awards throughout the month of May:



COL (Ret.) Jack Woolley prepares for the Tennessee High JROTC awards ceremony

- Cherokee High School - Maj (Ret.) Mark Tipton
- Greene County High Schools - Col (Ret.) Don Thompson
- Greeneville High School - MAJ (Ret.) Brett Monette
- Sullivan East High School - LCDR (Ret.) John Rice
- Tennessee High School - COL (Ret.) Jack Woolley
- West Ridge High School - LT Eric Carlson
- Daniel Boone, Science Hill, David Crockett, and Dobyms-Bennett High Schools; East Tennessee State University - LTC (Ret.) Ed Champion

## MOAA Outstanding Service Award



For over a decade, CW4 (Ret.) Jim DuBose teamed up with Ed Champion to present all JROTC and ROTC awards in person at locations all over Northeast Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. While this was a huge feat each year, it is only part of Jim's legacy of service. For his many contributions to National MOAA, the Mountain Empire Chapter, and our

local communities, Jim received the MOAA Outstanding Service Award.

Bravo Zulu, Jim!

## Advocacy in Action Update

Col Don Thompson, USAF (Ret.)



Cosponsors of the **Richard Star Act** (granting concurrent receipt of retirement pay and VA disability pay to combat injured and medically retired service members) have grown from 209 in early April to 239 in the House and from 57 to 59 in the Senate. Neither of our Tennessee senators are cosponsors, and our Tennessee House cosponsors are Representatives DesJarlais, Harshbarger, Cohen and Kustoff.

Many of the toxic exposure and burn pit issues that have been a priority of MOAA and other Veterans Service Organizations have been rolled into the **Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022**. The House passed this bill in March and sent it to the Senate. The Senate voted on the bill June 15, 2022, and it passed 84-14. It was sent back to the House of Representatives for quick reconciliation and will hopefully go quickly to the President for signature. The bill provides for presumptive exposure for many service members. It is anticipated that there will be many new disability claims and that the Veterans Administration will be overloaded in processing these claims as they attempt to increase staff to process claims. One in five veterans will be helped by this bill. If you intend to apply, the sooner you submit your claim, the sooner your start-date for any benefits will be established. Talk to a VSO that helps with filing assistance, such as the VFW and many others, as soon as possible.

For more information on toxic exposure, follow this link to MOAA's site:

[Toxic Exposure Reform Bill](#)

Don't forget that you can stay up-to-date on MOAA's advocacy efforts and engage your elected representatives at any time through the [Legislative Action Center](#).

As organizations exempt from federal taxation under Sec. 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code, MOAA and its affiliates must take care to avoid engaging in partisan political activities. Under IRS rules, we are prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

### Member Spotlight: Brett L. Monette, MAJ, USA (Ret.)



Brett Monette is currently the Treasurer for MECMOAA and a member of our board. When it requires money, Brett will happily take anyone's hard earned cash and apply it to our bank account and scholarship programs! Although retired from the Army, he currently works as a Program Integrator for

the Project Management Office Apache based out of Redstone Arsenal in Rocket City (Huntsville Alabama).

Let's get a glimpse of Brett's time in service. Brett enlisted in the Army in 1993 immediately after graduating high school. He attended Basic Training at Ft. Leonard Wood, MO, and then Advanced Individual Training at Ft. Lee, VA, where he was awarded the MOS of Automated Logistics Specialist, 92A. Brett's next stop would be Ft. Benning, GA, to experience the thrills of intentionally jumping from perfectly good airplanes at the U.S. Army Airborne school. Following the pinning of

his airborne wings, he was then stationed at Ft. Bragg, NC, in the fabled 82nd Airborne Division for his first active-duty assignment. While manning a machine gun position in a muddy, mosquito-infested fox hole during a training exercise at Ft. Polk, LA, Brett sat in awe as he watched an AH-64 Apache Attack Helicopter land in a field just outside his concertina wire perimeter. Looking through his night vision goggles at the pilot as he climbed out of that beautiful aircraft, Brett made a silent pact to himself. "I want to be THAT guy!" Well, who wouldn't after being 15 hours into a 12-hour guard shift because your buddy overslept? Brett soon ETS'd out of the Army in 1997 with a new goal to become an Army Aviation Officer.

After some much-needed partying, jobs to pay for the fun, and a short stint in the Tennessee Army National Guard, Brett began his journey to higher education. Starting at Walter State Community College then transferring to East Tennessee State University on a full ROTC award in 2000 A.D., Brett graduated with a Criminal Justice Degree and was commissioned as an Aviation Branch 2d Lieutenant in December 2003. Brett, now newly married to his beautiful wife Alisha, was then stationed at Ft. Rucker AL for flight school and soon became a father to a son, Aiden!



During flight training, Brett was qualified in the TH-67 Creek, OH-58 Kiowa earning his Aviation Wings. His training continued to qualify as an operator of the venerable AH-64D Longbow Apache, the primary attack helicopter for the U.S. Army. Produced by Boeing, it is a twin-turboshaft helicopter with a tandem cockpit

and only carries two pilots. It has nose-mounted targeting and night vision systems and is heavily armed with a 30MM chain gun, 2.75" rockets and Hellfire missiles. The Apache is the most technologically advanced helicopter in the world and has the highest pilot workload than any other military aircraft.

Brett's first assignment as an Army aviator was with the 3-6 CAV, 6th Air Cavalry Regiment located at Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek, South Korea and promoted to 1st Lieutenant. His Scout Platoon Leader duties included DMZ patrols, over-water attack and shipboard operations planning, unit supply supervisor and personnel administrative tasks.



Brett was selected to be the Army Liaison with the Navy on two occasions with sea time on the Arleigh Burke-class destroyers, USS John S. McCain, and the USS Stethem. In 2007 Brett and his family was assigned to the 3-159 Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 12th Combat Aviation Brigade in Illishiem, Germany, where he was promoted to Captain and served as an Attack Platoon Leader and a Battalion Staff Officer. His Attack Platoon leader duties included Attack and Scout Mission planning, aircraft and sensitive items inventories and deployment training. As the Battalion S4, Brett was responsible for all the logistics planning and execution of the unit's next deployment.

In 2008-2009, he was deployed to a 14-month combat assignment to Basrah, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. There, he flew over 500 hours of combat flight time on missions including Convoy Security, Combat Air Patrols, enemy UAS interdiction and general support to ground units all over Iraq.

In 2010, the Monette Brood was selected to attend the Maneuver Captains Career Course at Ft. Knox, KY. This course would prepare him for the leadership, training and administrative requirements of a successful Company Command and the tactical planning responsibilities of a Battalion level Operations Staff Officer.

Disclaimer: his assignment to the home of the U.S. Gold Reserves had nothing to do *officially* with his appointment as our treasurer.

Before long, Brett was again donning a black cavalry Stetson after being assigned to 6-6 Cavalry, 10th Mountain Division, Ft. Drum, NY. His positions included another role as the Battalion Logistics Officer and selection to Command. He successfully led Bravo Company, 1-10 Attack as part of an Aviation Task Force with 10th Combat Aviation Brigade and a 12-month deployment to Jalalabad, Afghanistan in 2011 in support of Enduring Freedom XI. Missions during that deployment included Quick Reaction Force response, Troops-in-Contact support, local area security, multi-national aviation support. His actions during combat operations in Nangahar Province earned him an Air Medal with Valor for direct support to Special Operations missions. Brett's unit also supported the same Operators ultimately responsible for relieving Osama Bin Laden of any requirements to continue his earthly existence!



Upon completion of Company Command, Brett was then assigned as an advisor to the Commander of the Royal Saudi Land Forces Aviation Brigade at King Khalid Military City, Saudi Arabia in 2013. He provided Security Cooperation support to the Kingdom's Foreign Military Sales purchase of 24 Apache's and set the conditions on the ground for the successful delivery of those helicopters. His responsibilities included revising the unit Safety Program, coordination with the Army Corps of Engineers to build airfield infrastructure, airfield tarmac marking and standardization of airfield flight procedures to facilitate the growth of their current attack helicopter unit. While on that assignment Brett was promoted to Major. In 2014, his family moved to Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas as he was selected above his peers to attend the resident Command and General Staff Officers Course. CGSC is a 10-month graduate level program that prepares mid-career field grade officers for battalion command or staff positions at the division or brigade level.

After graduating CGSC, Brett was then stationed at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Washington State as the 7th Infantry Division HQs as the Chief of Aviation Operations. Shortly after his arrival, the Division deployed its HQs to Kandahar Afghanistan for a 12-month rotation in 2016. Brett was appointed the Chief of Operations for a multi-national Combined Joint Operations Center responsible for supervision of all military operations for the southern half of Afghanistan in support of Operation Freedom's Sentinel.

In 2017, he moved to the 128th Aviation Brigade, Ft. Eustis VA to serve as the Brigade Operations Officer in Charge. During this time, he finished out his 20 years of service and decided it was time to let the younger Soldiers continue to hold the blanket of Freedom for America while he retired. Brett officially retired December 31, 2019, and moved his family one last time to Fall Branch where they staked their claim and built their forever home on 10 acres of beautiful East TN countryside. Now, he's an invaluable member of MECMOAA, and we're sure glad to have him, Alisha and Aiden in our great community!



## **Branches at our local Officers Club**

We meet at Blackthorn Club in The Ridges. Cost is \$25 at the door.

- **Begin gathering at 12:30** in the outdoor pavilion (white tent)
- **Meeting formally begins at 1:00 with brunch**, chapter business and our speaker's presentation

Here's the remaining 2022 brunch schedule:

**July 17**

**September 18**

**November 20 (Annual Business Meeting)**

**Note:** Nametags are funded for members and spouses through membership dues. Once you pay your 2022 dues, we'll order you and your spouse a new nametag, if you did not receive yours in late 2021. If you have not received the new nametag, please let Mark Tipton know by emailing [mecmoaa@gmail.com](mailto:mecmoaa@gmail.com).

**We'll see you at brunch on July 17!**

We hope you enjoyed this newsletter. Please send any comments or suggestions to [mecmoaa@gmail.com](mailto:mecmoaa@gmail.com).

***Never Stop Serving.***

Mountain Empire Chapter (MECMOAA) is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America

Mailing Address: PO Box 5024, Johnson City, TN 37602-5024

Email: [mecmoaa@gmail.com](mailto:mecmoaa@gmail.com)

Website: <http://www.mecmoaa1.org/> (Webmaster - Stan Gedelman)