

THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



November 2026



MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER
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President's Comments: Colonel Dana Tucker

North Carolina rates in the top half-dozen “Military Friendly” states in the USA. Some recent actions by the VA will certainly bolster that assessment. The VA recently awarded \$35 million in grants to 25 community organizations throughout our state to assist homeless Veterans and those at risk of homelessness. Plus, \$1.5 million was distributed to three organizations that provide local suicide prevention services to Veterans. Lots more will be done for all Veterans if Congress passes the Take Care of America’s Veterans Act (TCAVA - HR 9237) during the lame-duck session after November elections. TCAVA encompasses twenty MOAA supported bills, including the long-overdue Major Richard Star Act that that allows combat injured Veterans to receive both retirement and disability pay without the hugely unfair offset procedure. While we push for passage of that act, we need to keep pushing the Pensions for Retired Uniformed Service Members Act (HR 3732) so that USPHS and NOAA retirees continue to receive their retirement pay during government shutdowns. So, I ask that you please go to the MOAA Legislative Action Center to make your voice heard in MOAA’s advocacy campaign to provide earned pay, benefits and support programs to servicemembers, Veterans, caregivers, survivors, and their families. I feel our advocacy efforts are extremely important at this point in time when government funding (\$1.5 trillion) is largely flowing to facilitate the ongoing paradigm shift in military technology and strategy; that is, a full-blown Revolution in Military Affairs. While that’s happening, we must reinforce our efforts to support those who’ve clearly earned pay, benefits, and services.

It’s sad that many of America’s aging military heroes from previous wars have passed away. At the same time, it’s great that the next generation of warriors is eagerly entering the armed forces. We need the younger generation because they have agile minds and they’re steeped in technology; thus, they’re well primed to be key players in the ongoing transformation of our nation’s military. The days of “squirrel plinking” farm boys being drafted and sent overseas to charge into an attrition-based conflict is history. Everyone in today’s military is constantly embracing new technology and preparing for or already fighting a different type of war. This is changing all those now serving in uniform and those who are just donning the uniform today, from the lowest enlisted ranks on through to the senior officers. Today’s warriors are trained and equipped to operate high-tech combat gear and lethal weapon systems. With the onset of highly advanced technology, warfighting strategy and tactics have also necessarily evolved. Thus, the Generals and Admirals have abandoned rigid doctrine that has become largely irrelevant. They now employ never before seen capabilities; therefore, they themselves have necessarily evolved to become smarter and tougher Battle Managers. Today’s warriors are also becoming more physically tempered than in the past, so as to have the stamina to fight and win no matter how harsh the combat environment may be. I believe that nearly all civilians perceive the courage, talent, and dedication today’s servicemembers possess. And I also believe that the public is eager to demonstrate their respect and admiration for those serving our country in uniform, particularly in these very challenging times. Their big chance to do that is coming up on Veterans Day. Let’s all participate in local ceremonies and parades to the maximum extent possible in order to give the public an opportunity to honor all who are serving or have served in uniform. Let’s all show that we greatly appreciate being frequently thanked for our service—especially on Veterans Day!

Sergeant Major (Ret.) Steven Johnson was guest speaker at our chapter's recent meeting and dinner. He is the Executive Director of Purple Heart Homes. Based in Statesville, Purple Heart Homes started as a small charity that modified and built homes for service-connected disabled Veterans. It's now providing that support throughout the nation—4,500 projects to date. Currently, Purple Heart Homes is building small homes for Veterans through a home ownership program where the price of homes to Veterans is based on their ability to pay, and whatever they pay goes right back into the charity. And, sometimes homes are gifted at no cost to the needy Veteran. Purple Heart Homes recently erected a display home on the National Mall, and that event was featured in national media. Mr. Johnson's most recent success was getting HR 224 signed by the President to allow wounded Veterans receiving disability to simultaneously obtain H.U.D. loans for homes. Mr. Johnson succinctly described Purple Heart Homes as a "Charity construction company for Veterans." To help in their noble and altruistic enterprise, our chapter President presented our chapter's donation check to Mr. Johnson. To learn about the truly heart-warming origins of this charity and various ways to donate visit www.phhusa.org.

MOAA CVC Photo



Colonel Tucker (l) presents check to SGM Johnson (r)

Treasures of the Revolutionary Era
20 stamp book, 10 unique images
New release at: www.usps.com



*FEDVIP Open Season:
Nov 9th thru Dec*

MOAA CVC Photo



The newly opened Hickory Aviation Museum building

The best kept secret here just might be the recently opened Hickory Aviation Museum. It shares its new building with the Dale Earnhardt Regional Innovation Complex. The first floor of the building is the indoor portion of the Aviation Museum; the second floor is the CVCC Innovation Center, and when the expansive third-floor restaurant opens, it will be the highest elevation point in Hickory. The outdoors portion of the museum features a collection of twenty-five military aircraft. The indoors portion features two major display areas: "The Golden Age of Aviation" focused on aviation history, and the "Naval Annex" focused on aircraft carrier flight operations. The museum also has an extensive research library and a very nice gift shop. The museum is seeking volunteers to serve in any capacity, including aircraft maintenance. Free entrance for Veterans and active-duty military; same for seniors 65+. The museum is at 821 21st Street North, Hickory 28601. Further details are at website: www.hickoryaviationmuseum.org

Welcome New Members: A hearty *WELCOME!* to our chapter's newest members: former Navy LT Peter Cahill Blinn; Army LTC Brian Magerkurth, Army CPT Tyler Magerkurth, and Air Force Lt Col Kieth Caver. We're looking forward to seeing you all at chapter membership meeting/dinners at the Lake Hickory Country Club!

Veterans Day Deals: There's an incredibly long list of Veterans Day "freebies" on the Military Wallet website. The dining discounts are listed at: <https://themilitarywallet.com/veterans-day-free-meals-and-discounts/> Numerous other retail military discounts are listed at: <https://themilitarywallet.com/veterans-day-retail-discounts/> When capitalizing on these amazing one-day benefits, it's important to bring along proof of service, such as: military ID card, Veterans ID card, etc.

Thank-A-Veteran Discount Card: The Iredell County Register of Deeds has partnered with area businesses to establish the "Thank-A-Veteran" program. The Register of Deeds office will provide Veterans with a special photo ID card to be used at participating businesses throughout Iredell County. The program is free of charge to all Veterans, and the business partners. To obtain a discount card, visit Iredell County Register of Deeds office in Statesville or Mooresville between 8:30am and 4:30pm. Bring a valid photo ID and your DD-214. The extensive list of about 75 participating businesses is posted at: www.iredellcountync.gov/1641/Thank-A-Veteran-Program

VA Fraud Prevention Info: The VA recently posted an article regarding the increase in education benefit scams targeting Veterans. It explains how scammers prey on Veterans and beneficiaries using education benefits such as Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, Montgomery G.I. Bill and Dependents' Educational Assistance programs. Students are confronted and sometimes compromised by scammers, fraudulent schools and identity thieves. The article specific to education benefit scams is at website: <https://news.va.gov/149333/education-scams-fraud-awareness>. There's also extensive VA fraud prevention advice at: <https://benefits.va.gov/BENEFITS/fraud-prevention.asp>

Fort Dobbs Annual Event: The North Carolina military history timeline will be portrayed on November 14th at the world-class Fort Dobbs site in Statesville. This will cover the American Revolution, Civil War, World Wars, and other conflicts. Enactors in various period uniforms will man the many living-history displays, and there'll be weapons firing demonstrations. This Saturday event will be 10am-4pm. No admission charge for active duty or veterans with valid ID. For more info and directions, visit website: www.fortdobbs.org

Identity Codeword: Scammers have upgraded a scam method for targeting individuals; that is, contacting them to say that a relative or friend is in trouble with the law or in the hospital. The scammer insists that money be immediately sent to a location to help the supposed victim. Now, AI is a new tool being used for this scam. If the scammer can copy your family member's voice print via a robocall or otherwise, AI can be used to exactly simulate your family member or relative's voice for use in the scammer's call. A way to counter this sort of scam is to establish a proof of identity codeword that's shared with all family members. That unique and easy to remember identity verification word could be used by any one of them when communicating a dire need of help.

Family Survivors Guides: A useful guide was recently posted on the News and Events page of our chapter website (www.moaacvc.org). The document is titled: "The Day-After Calls: Notifications which must be made with the Passing of a Military Retiree or Surviving Spouse." It was published by the Minnesota chapter of MOAA. It's comprehensive and very useful in the aforementioned situations. That said, keep in mind that the National MOAA website also offers a similar guide. If you go to MOAA website and click on News & Info, then on Publications & Reports, and then scroll down to Survivors Issues, you'll see the Survivors Checklist and Your Guide to Military Burials. **Scammer Alert:** The honor guard detail at any military burial is provided at no cost whatsoever!

Reaching for the Stars: There are several officers among our chapter members who aspired to become Generals or Admirals. A few "O-6" officers may even have filled former "Flag Officer" roles after one of the mandated purging of authorized general and admiral billets in past years—evidently happening again in the near future! At any rate, a new element has just been added to the requirements for promotion to Flag Officer. Now, to be considered for promotion, candidates must pass a Joint Warfighter Evaluation (JWE) that grades their performance in simulated warfare situations. The evaluation measures the Flag Officer candidate's ability to "Fight, adapt, and win" in the heat and chaos of battle. Each individual branch of military service is establishing its own JWE test format: written tests, wargames, simulators, or a combination thereof.

- NEWS FROM THE FIVE MILITARY BRANCHES -

ARMY: A firm in South Carolina was awarded a contract to manufacture and operate a nuclear micro-reactor on Fort Bragg for electric power. Separate initiatives will provide a similar capability at four other Army installations.

NAVY: A new C-130 Super Hercules aircraft and HH-60 Jolly Green helicopter repair, maintenance and Ops facility opened in Kinston, NC. This 750,000 Sq. Ft. Readiness Center serves the Navy, Air Force and Marines.

MARINES: The Marine Corps Robotics Integration Group was recently stood up at 29-Palms, CA to integrate, standardize and institutionalize small unmanned aircraft systems and counter-small unmanned aircraft systems.

AIR FORCE: A new Global Military Spouse Connection program has been established to facilitate job placement for spouses at PCS time. The program has been activated at six U.S. bases and six overseas bases, and will expand!

SPACE FORCE: USSF leaders recently announced that the Space Force will double in size over the next five years, from 11,000 guardians to 25, 000 guardians. Reason for this is that space has become a warfighting domain.

Benevolent Fund: Our four designated charities are: Foothills Veterans Helping Veterans (FVHV), Purple Heart Homes (PHH), Piedmont Veterans Assistance Council (PVAC), and Welcome Home Veterans (WHV). Make Benevolent Fund donations by sending a check to our chapter Treasurer. You may annotate the check to specify any of the above charities, or leave it to our Board of Directors that apportions out funds to the various charities. Major Jim McCauley won the charity raffle at our recent dinner; he donated his winnings to our Benevolent Fund.

Treasurer: CDR Dave Olson, 485 26th Ave NE (Unit A), Hickory, NC 28601

2026	<i>Christmas Charity Dinner: Dec 8</i>
Calendar:	<i>Board Meeting: Dec 17</i>

CHAPTER PRINCIPALS, DIRECTORS AND STAFF

Chapter President: Colonel Dana Tucker
1st Vice President: Captain “Judd” Taylor
2nd Vice President: Major Jim McCauley
Treasurer: Commander Dave Olson
Secretary: Major Dennis McClish
Chaplain: Vacant
Programs Chairman: Vacant
Director: LTC “Davy” Davenport

Director: Colonel Joe Cansler
Director: Vacant
Legislative Liaison: Colonel Dana Tucker
Surviving Spouses Liaison: Mrs. Mary McClish
Membership Chair: LTC “Davy” Davenport
JROTC Coordinator: Lt Col G. Jane Harmon
Personal Affairs & TOPS: Colonel John Liburdi
Newsletter/Website: Colonel John Liburdi

Join National MOAA: MOAA is the country’s leading organization protecting the rights of military servicemembers and their families. Those who belong to MOAA not only lend their voices to a greater cause, but they also gain access to extensive benefits tailored to the needs and lifestyles of military officers. MOAA members proudly hail from every branch of the uniformed services. To them, MOAA has made the same promise that they have made to their country: Never Stop Serving! Membership is open to those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, U.S. Public Health Service or the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration. Learn more about MOAA National and join at either Basic, Premium or Life level by visiting their website: www.moaa.org/content/join-moaa/why-join-moaa

Join MOAA Catawba Valley Chapter: Our chapter covers six counties: Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Iredell and Lincoln. The chapter is active in the community through its Benevolent Fund (explained above) and JROTC support. The chapter also engages in ad hoc charitable support and activity, with emphasis on homeless Veterans. Please note that National MOAA and this affiliated chapter are nonpartisan, without any political party affiliation, bias, or designation. *A one-page chapter membership application mail-in form is available via the “Join Chapter” button on our chapter website homepage at: www.moaacvc.org.*



RESERVATION FOR MOAA CATAWBA VALLEY CHRISTMAS CHARITY DINNER



This is my reservation for MOAA Catawba Valley's Christmas Charity Dinner on December 8th, (a **Tuesday**) at Lake Hickory Country Club. Cocktails/social time begins at 6:00 p.m. and dinner will be served in the Elijah Brown room at 6:30 p.m. Glenn Fox "Encore" will provide live oldies & holiday music. And, a 'Jim Shore' Christmas themed large figurine will be raffled off, with all proceeds going to our chapter's Benevolent Fund. Attire: Mess Dress or Service Dress uniform encouraged, otherwise coat & tie.

Name of attendee(s): _____ & _____ & _____

Indicate number of entrée selections: Cordon Bleu _____ Baked Salmon _____ Veggi Platter _____

Please send this slip and your check (**\$40.00 per attendee**) to arrive no later than Tuesday, **December 1st** to:



Commander Dave Olson, 485 26th Ave NE (Unit A), Hickory, NC 28601

(Please be aware that participants attending this event may be photographed or recorded for MOAA media products)

*VA's 24/7 Crisis Line: Dial 988 and press 1, or text 838255, or chat
online at website: VeteransCrisisLine.net/chat*

*VA's Fraud & Scam Protection reporting desk: VSAFE.gov and
1-833-388-7233*

*Surviving Spouse virtual chapter website, with application form
www.moaasurvivingspousevirtualchapter.org*

DoD ID Card Office Online at: <https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/>

Ideas for Guest Speakers always welcome—no sales pitches please!

Tell prospective members about our website: www.moaacvc.org

*FYI: - Receive this newsletter via e-mail by requesting to: moaacvcnews@hotmail.com
- Directly access the MOAA "Legislative Action Center" at: www.moaa.quorum.us*