

# THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



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**MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER**  
117 Wildwood Loop, Statesville, NC 28625-8903 / E-mail: moaanc11@outlook.com / Phone: 828-495-1259

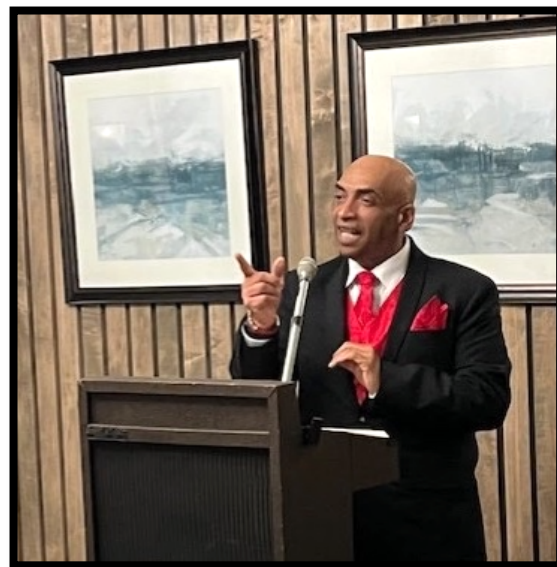
## **President's Comments: LTC "Davy" Davenport**

Hurrah! The Catawba Valley Chapter did it once again, winning an MOAA Five-Star Levels of Excellence (LOE) Award for 2023—our sixth Five-Star award! The annual LOE awards are MOAA's most prestigious affiliate awards, honoring councils and chapters for their efforts across the full scope of the association's mission. I do find the award to be very gratifying, but this huge laurel is obviously attributable to the altruistic efforts of our Board of Directors, staff members, and all chapter members. Our collective efforts epitomize the MOAA motto: Never Stop Serving. Congratulations to us all! Likewise, our chapter newsletter and website were awarded 2023 Colonel Marvin J. Harris Five-Star Communications Awards. Our newsletter traditionally earns this annual award; it's nice to see our chapter website also get that same honor this year. Many thanks to Colonel John Liburdi for publishing our informative newsletter and website—for well over a decade now! Of course, we'd be very much remiss if we didn't thank Commander Dave Olson for the superb work he has done as our Treasurer—and so much more—for nearly two decades! Meanwhile, Major Dennis McClish has done yeoman's work for a decade now as our vigorous and meticulous Secretary. Perhaps most importantly, Chaplain CW3 (Rev.) Bob Herron routinely negotiated for our chapter to receive blessings from a higher authority. And, while we're expressing thanks, let's thank Colonel Dana Tucker for his recent "boots on the ground" action in Washington. Beyond his role as our chapter's Legislative Liaison and Surviving Spouse Liaison, Dana is the Second Vice President of the NC Council of Chapters, and he was one of three North Carolina members who joined MOAA's lobbying efforts at the federal level last month, meeting with members of Congress and staffers. Again, my thanks to all of you!

Memorial Day is being observed on May 27th this year. There'll be lots of outdoor events, including the Indy 500 and the Coca Cola 600. Traditionally, they both feature military ceremonies of some form and always host many in-uniform servicemembers as spectators. But the more close-to-home Memorial Day ceremonies will take place in cities and towns throughout America. At those ceremonies, citizens stop to remember and honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country, mostly on foreign lands and unfriendly seas. In WWI and WWII combined, more than 520 thousand servicemembers died, 36 thousand died in the "Forgotten" Korean War, and more than 58 thousand died in the Vietnam War. Sadly, more than 7,000 servicemembers have been killed during the ongoing War on Terror. Albeit decreasing, those shocking numbers are very painful for Americans. Unlike a couple of other major powers, our country does not subscribe to costly attrition warfare, where vast numbers of nondescript soldiers fall on the battlefield and simply fade into oblivion. America respects and honors its well-trained and highly dedicated military, and we mourn the passing of each and every servicemember lost in battle. We always remember who they are and we will continue to pay tribute to them forever. The way we do that on Memorial Day depends on our individual circumstances: display the flag on our home, a few minutes of solemn reflection, reading a war documentary book, visiting a war memorial monument, attending the town's Memorial Day ceremony, or even serving as the featured speaker at such an event. So, I'm sure we'll all be enjoying family outings and sports events on that day, as well as paying tribute to those who came before us and made the ultimate sacrifice in order to protect our nation's freedom—especially the heroes who never made it back from "Over There." The American military cemeteries in 17 countries can be virtually visited at website: [www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov).

Dr. Daren Graves was the Guest Speaker at our last General Membership meeting/dinner at Lake Hickory Country Club. Daren is the Veterans Service Officer (VSO) for Mecklenburg County, servicing about 25,000 Veteran clients in his domain. He is a U.S. Army Purple Heart Veteran himself, and he is undoubtedly the most enthusiastic and charismatic Veteran Services Officer in the country. He handles about twenty client cases face-to-face each day! Daren gave amazing insights into what motivates him to engage in such selfless service to Veterans, and he recounted a number of his success stories that are often in the context of appeals—his specialty. He explained that our country takes care of its Veterans like no other, and that Veterans are failing to capitalize on the huge amounts of funding available to support them. He further explained that homeless and destitute Veterans aren't really homeless. They simply don't know how to "get in line" to obtain the robust services and support available to them, and that's where the VSO can help. There's a VSO in every North Carolina County. He also pointed out that the key to receiving disability benefits from the VA is demonstrating that the given malady is "service-connected." And, he highlighted the amazing education and training benefits available to Veterans. Daren then held a lively and informative Q&A session. Afterwards, our Chapter President presented Dr. Graves with a token memento in appreciation for his dynamic presentation to our Chapter.

MOAA CVC photo



***Dr. Daren Graves outlining his VSO activity***



***Memorial Day  
is on May 27<sup>th</sup>***

***D-Day Anniversary is on June 6<sup>th</sup>***

Aviation Images Ltd.  
Alamy Stock Photo



***Cessna C-208B Caravan beats weather on final-approach***

The IOMAX firm in Mooresville recently upfitted and delivered a Cessna C-208B Grand Caravan aircraft to the Royal Jordanian Air Force (RJAF). The new aircraft had Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance capabilities added to it; this included electro-optic/infrared and radar systems. There will be a total of four such upgraded aircraft delivered, adding to the six "Caravans" that the RJAF already flies. The upgrade is part of a more encompassing DoD program to supply allied forces with right-sized aircraft for border security and tactical missions. Brigadier General Mohammad Hiyasat—Commander of the Royal Jordanian Air Force—was present at Lake Norman Airpark to receive the newly upgraded aircraft, as was Senator Ted Budd. The C-208B is a legendary single turboprop aircraft, with a 30-year history of reliable flying throughout the world. It has a high payload capacity, with low operating and maintenance costs. It's capable of many mission types, often operating in very austere environments. IOMAX also produces the "Archangel" aircraft that is highly capable of operating in hostile settings.

**Chapter Supports Veterans Stand Down:** The Foothills Veterans “Stand-Down” was held on April 12, 2024, at the Catawba Valley Community College’s indoor Tarlton Complex, in Hickory, NC. As in the past, our chapter was a major sponsor of this annual event by helping fund it. Mr. Larry McMullen and Dr. Ric Vandett directed the event, and Colonel Tim Herndon was our chapter’s on-scene interface with event organizers. Veterans were provided with: medical services, dental care, tax assist, employment counseling, eye care, haircuts, shoes, and community resources. The “Stand-Down” events are always hosted by the Foothills Veterans Helping Veterans organization. If you desire to get directly involved, they meet on Fridays at 9:30 a.m. in the Hickory Soup Kitchen.

**Get a Passport Card:** The U.S. passport card is a wallet-sized, plastic passport that has no visa pages. The card is proof of U.S. citizenship and identity, and has the same length of validity as the passport book. The card is for U.S. citizens who travel by land and sea from Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, and Caribbean countries. The passport card is NOT valid for international travel by air and is cheaper than the passport book. You can apply for either the book or card, or both documents. If you already have a passport book, simply apply for the card as a “renewal” using State Department form DS-82. To get started, visit website <https://travel.state.gov>.

**Protecting ID Cards:** Commercial establishments can ask to see your military ID card to verify entitlement for special military/Veteran discounts for goods and services, but they cannot make a copy of the ID card. This does not apply to medical facilities that are allowed to make a copy in order to file insurance claims, nor does the rule apply to federal government agencies that need a copy to perform official government business. Remember, the NC DMV offers a "VETERAN" designation on driver licenses and and/or photo ID cards as proof of prior military service. Also, The VA offers a digital Veteran ID Card (VIC) that can be used to get discounts offered to Veterans at restaurants, stores, etc. Apply at website: [www.va.gov/records/get-veteran-id-cards/vic/](http://www.va.gov/records/get-veteran-id-cards/vic/).

**Military Rings:** There are many sources for buying military rings, but few offer the possibility to fully personalize a military ring. One vendor that does offer full personalization is Dunham Jewelry Manufacturing in El Paso, TX, and they have an A+ BBB rating. Their on-line system allows a person to select style, tailor design, and then purchase a ring that portrays: branch of service, rank, specialty, unit, etc. Rings are offered in seven types of metal, and prices reflects that—modest to expensive. Also, beyond ring finger size, ring styles are offered in various sizes in terms of bulk; some with few size options and others with more sizes. Our chapter has no relationship of any kind with this firm; this paragraph is just for info purposes. Website is <https://dunham.jewelry>.

**Pills in the Pizza Oven:** Your metal mailbox in the hot sun is like a pizza oven during July and August. So, if you use Express-Scripts mail-order pharmacy, it may be a good idea to refill prescriptions to the maximum extent allowed in the late spring, when it’s not quite as hot out. Another option is to select accelerated shipment when ordering refills; the more costly modes of delivery allow for delivery tracking. That way, you’ll know just when to be on the lookout for the delivery truck so that pills aren’t laying on your porch all day in the blazing hot sun.

**Ghost Army Gets Gold:** The WWII Ghost Army’s amazing and heroic actions were kept secret until 1996, hence the belated Congressional Gold Medal they just received. Using sound effects, costumes, scripts, props, including inflatable armaments, the 23rd HQ Special Troops and its sister unit, the 3133rd Signal Service Company Special, employed stagecraft to dupe the German army about the location and size of Allied forces. 1,100 sound engineers, radio broadcasters, fashion designers, artists, actors and theater set designers unofficially known as the “Ghost Army” masqueraded as a combat force more than 30 times its actual size. Operating as close as a quarter-mile from the front lines, the Ghost Army saved the lives of tens of thousands of U.S. soldiers by luring away the enemy during more than 20 full-scale deception campaigns—most notably for the Normandy Landings!

**VA’s Wartime Pension:** It’s good to be aware of the VA’s Wartime Pension, available to honorably discharged servicemembers who: started serving before one of several 1980/1981 cutoffs, meet certain net worth limits, and even just few of the many other eligibility options. While the pension is rather small, it may be a godsend to disabled or impoverished Veterans—even elderly widows may be eligible for the benefit! Most wars are covered, from the 1916 Mexican Border period thru to the Gulf War. Full details at: <https://www.va.gov/pension/eligibility>.

## - NEWS FROM THE FIVE MILITARY BRANCHES -

ARMY: 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne soldiers now have the Next Generation field helmet. Unlike Kevlar shattering, the new helmet's lighter polyethylene material deforms on impact, thereby dissipating ballistic and fragmentation energy.

NAVY: Naval Station Sigonella, Italy received its first huge MQ-4C Triton surveillance drone; it operates in conjunction with Navy P-8 Poseidon maritime patrol aircraft on a variety of missions, including search & rescue.

MARINES: During a recent war game, marines utilized a new system that measures bullet trajectory down to an inch, and identifies simulated wounds on different parts of the body. The new system replaces laser tag training.

AIR FORCE: USAF (and USSF Guardians) now receive an incentive bonus for accepting an assignment at locations where the temperature drops below -20 degrees F. The graduated bonus ups to \$5K for -50 degrees F.

SPACE FORCE: USSF partnered with two commercial firms to successfully demo awareness and reaction to on-orbit aggressors in space; that is, to deter aggressors from attacking and to protect U.S. satellites from attack.

**Benevolent Fund**: Our designated charities are: MOAA American Patriot Scholarship Program (**MOAA-APS**), Purple Heart Homes (**PHH**) and Welcome Home Veterans (**WHV**). Donate by sending a charity-specific (any or all three) annotated check to Treasurer: CDR Dave Olson, 485 26<sup>th</sup> Ave NE (Unit A), Hickory, NC 28601. Colonel Dave Eidson won the raffle at our last dinner; he kindly donated all his winnings to our Benevolent Fund.

**2024 Calendar**: General Membership Meetings/Dinners: **16 May, 19 Sep**, and the 5 Dec Christmas Event

Board Meetings: 27 Jun, 22 Aug, 24 Oct, 12 Dec

## ———— CHAPTER PRINCIPALS, DIRECTORS AND STAFF ————

Chapter President: LTC “Davy” Davenport  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Captain George Taylor  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: *Vacant!*  
Treasurer: Commander Dave Olson  
Secretary: Major Dennis McClish  
Chaplain: Reverend (CW3) Robert Herron  
Programs Chairman: *Vacant!*  
Director: Colonel (Dr.) Don Gemeinhardt

Director: Colonel Joe Cansler  
Director: *Vacant!*  
Legislative Liaison: Colonel (Dr.) Dana Tucker  
Surviving Spouses Liaison: Colonel (Dr.) Tucker  
Membership Chair: *Vacant!*  
JROTC Coordinator: Lt Col G. Jane Harmon  
Personal Affairs & TOPS: *Vacant!*  
Newsletter/Website: Colonel John Liburdi

**Join National MOAA and this Chapter**: 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 and Atmospheric Administration. The MOAA Catawba Valley Chapter covers six counties: Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Iredell and Lincoln. Our 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 its affiliated chapters are nonpartisan, without any political party affiliation, bias, or designation. ***A one-page chapter membership mail-in application form is available via the “Join Chapter” button on our chapter website homepage at: [www.moaacvc.org](http://www.moaacvc.org)***. Also, you can 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](http://www.moaa.org/content/join-moaa/why-join-moaa)**

*FYI: Receive this newsletter via e-mail by requesting to: [moaacvcnews@hotmail.com](mailto:moaacvcnews@hotmail.com)*

*Directly access the MOAA “Legislative Action Center” at: [www.moaa.quorum.us](http://www.moaa.quorum.us)*

## NMOAA CATAWBA VALLEY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING/DINNER

This is my reservation for MOAA CVC's General Membership meeting/dinner on May 16<sup>th</sup>, (a Thursday) at Lake Hickory Country Club. Attire is jacket & tie. Cocktails/social time begins at 6:00 p.m. and dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. The evening's Guest Speaker will be Navy Veteran and Kidney Donner, Mr. Danny Murray, spokesperson for the Donor Outreach for Veterans "DOVE" nonprofit program.

Name of attendee(s): \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please send this slip and check (**\$35.00 per attendee**) to arrive no later than May 13<sup>th</sup>, a Monday, to:

**Commander Dave Olson, 485 26<sup>th</sup> Ave NE (Unit A), Hickory, NC 28601**

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

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*Tell prospective members about our website: [www.moaacvc.org](http://www.moaacvc.org)*

*New members joining chapter now do not pay 2024 annual dues!*

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

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

*Surviving Spouse virtual chapter join e-mail: [mssvc02@gmail.com](mailto:mssvc02@gmail.com)*

*Scammers ask for bank info to pay you non-existent sweepstakes winnings!*