

# THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



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**MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER**  
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## **President's Comments: LTC "Davy" Davenport**

The DoD and the Defense Industrial Complex are now focused on developing and fielding new advanced weapon systems and on backfilling armaments and ammunition that have gone to Ukraine for their war effort. As might be expected, the Congressional Budget Office and senior military leaders are busy searching for funding sources and, sadly, some view reducing military pay and benefits as a sensible solution, albeit only partial. Please realize that such ideas are not simply political babble; just look at our big hike in pharmacy costs! So, TRICARE For Life (TFL) has now become a potential target, and the CBO has put forward two proposals that shift healthcare costs to retirees who use the TFL benefit. The first proposal is to establish an annual TFL annual enrollment fee of \$575 per individual or \$1,150 for family coverage. The second proposal is that the individual would pay out-of-pocket for the first \$850 of Medicare cost-sharing and, after that deductible is satisfied, TFL would only cover fifty percent of the next \$7,650 in Medicare cost-sharing. One bizarre piece of logic put forward with these ill-begotten proposals is the idea that by increasing the cost burden on the TFL subscribers, they'll be less inclined to use medical services and, therefore, the DoD will save lots of money—Wow! These proposals would be harmful to uniformed service retirees, especially those who can't possibly bear the increased costs—most enlisted and many officers. We can't let such concepts emerge as bills in Congress. Please visit the MOAA Legislative Action Center and send the pre-staged and pre-addressed e-mails that encourage your legislators to oppose TRICARE for Life fees. "Take Action" by visiting: [www.MOAA.org](http://www.MOAA.org), or go directly to: <https://moaa.quorum.us>

I never aspired to be a general, and maybe it's best that I didn't become a member of that now vulnerable breed. It was recently reported that some politicians have proposed reducing the number of flag officers to save Defense Dollars. So, perhaps we should just get rid of all Army generals and go with 480 thousand independent soldiers, each one being a lone force, going wherever and doing whatever suits them. And, perhaps we don't really need Fleet Admirals anymore; it'll be just fine for Navy ships to whimsically sail the oceans. Most of today's politicians have never served in the military. Many don't understand that the military's 900 or so Flag Officers have the Big Picture and are, therefore, able to orchestrate and employ the DoD's resources and forces to deter, counter and destroy those who threaten our national security and interests. Plus, the "Grim Reapers" are rationalizing their proposed cuts to flag officer billets based on a perceived top-heavy flag officer to enlisted ratio. That misperception doesn't consider all the duties and tasks that have been contracted out to civilian entities, nor does it take into account the many new technologies that are recognized as being force-multipliers. Those methods of accomplishing the mission still must be commanded like any other resource, at both strategic and tactical levels. Remember, we've been through this flag officer reduction process a couple of time in the recent past—after the Vietnam War and the Cold War. Admittedly, those of us who aren't Flag Officers probably won't draw our swords and fight to save the Generals and Admirals; they'll have to fend for themselves. But when dialoging with others, we should have it in mind that "whacking" Generals and Admirals as a cost-cutting measure isn't going to hugely bolster the Defense Budget, and that it would be foolhardy to remove many of our most seasoned leaders who see the big picture and know the way ahead for our nation's military as we face very determined adversaries.

**Man's Real Best Friend:** Electromechanical dogs were highlighted in a past edition of our newsletter. They're fascinating machines and they do serve their purpose, but they hardly measure up to the Military Working Dog (MWD). In fact, the unofficial K-9 Veterans Day is on March 13<sup>th</sup>, a day in which many celebrate these amazing members of our military. The Military Working Dog National Monument is located on the Lackland portion of Joint Base San Antonio, TX. The military's largest Military Working Dog training center and the Military Working Dog Hospital are also located on the that Joint Base. MWDs are each trained for at least one of nine specific duties, the most common being assisting with guard duty and finding explosives. Performing another duty, pack dogs transport up to 40 pounds of food and supplies on the battlefield. MWDs are held in very high esteem. They often receive Purple Hearts, and four have earned the Military Courage Medal. Some even achieve military rank, such as the dog "Jiggs" who holds the rank of Marine Sergeant-Major. Recently, Ukraine's President Zelenskyy gave Ukraine's famous bomb-sniffing dog "Patron" a Medal of Honor. Obviously, the bond between a Handler and his or her dog is extremely strong, and hugely therapeutic for persons suffering PTSD! That's why there's an ongoing effort to make K-9 Veterans Day an official holiday.



**Military Working Dog monument in San Antonio**

National Military Brat's Day  
Sunday, April 30th



Vietnam Veterans Day  
March 29th



**MOAA Catawba Valley Board & Staff Meeting**

**There's a Board in the Background:** Our MOAA Chapter has a Board of Directors and staff that keep the small organization running smoothly and on-course for the future. The board meets every other month at Lake Hickory Country Club, in the newly remodeled "Redden's Tavern." Besides the Chapter President and his Board, there's the Secretary, Treasurer, Chaplain, \*Membership Chair, \*Programs Chair, JROTC Coordinator, Legislative Liaison, Surviving Spouses Liaison, \*Tops & Personal Affairs Officer, and the Newsletter/Website Manager. Vacant staff positions above are marked with an asterisk, and there's also one vacant Director position. Obviously, decisions are taken, and plans are made during the board meetings. Formality is kept to a minimum, and there's always a very cooperative and positive spirit in the air. After official business, members enjoy a tasty lunch and pleasant chatting; that is, some cordial camaraderie! Please contact our Chapter President if you're willing to fill one of the open positions. Your doing so will help keep our local chapter strong, and continually at the MOAA Five-Star Award level!

**MOAA JROTC Awards:** Our chapter's JROTC Coordinator, Marine Lt Col Jane Harmon, has procured and distributed annual MOAA JROTC Award medals and certificates to the nineteen JROTC units we support. The respective Senior Instructor of each JROTC unit will award the medal to their most outstanding senior year cadet. The award certificates are signed by our Chapter President. Any chapter officer can volunteer to make a medal presentation at the JROTC participant school of their choice. For a list of the JROTC units and contact info, go to our chapter website and click on the "JROTC Support" button. The medal awarding policy is also posted there.

**VA Expands Suicidal Prevention:** Veterans experiencing an acute suicidal crisis may now go to any VA or non-VA health care facility for emergency health care at no cost – including inpatient or crisis residential care for up to 30 days, and outpatient care for up to 90 days! Veterans do not need to be enrolled in the VA system to use this benefit. This increases access to acute suicide care for nine million Veterans not currently enrolled in VA!

**Old Scam Returns:** A local Sheriff's Office announced an ongoing scam in our area. The scammer telephones saying that a family member of the targeted victim is in jail and bail money is needed. The scammer or an associate shows up at the victim's home (claiming to be a bondsman or lawyer) to receive the bail money for the family member supposedly in jail. If you receive a phone call saying a family member or relative is in jail, terminate the phone conversation immediately and contact the relative who is supposedly in jail. If someone comes to your home with a similar fake claim, send them away and immediately report the incident to the police or your sheriff.

**Express-Scripts:** Express-Scripts is no longer allowed to automatically refill our prescriptions. Each refill request must be initiated/confirmed by the participating patient. In reaction to this development, Express-Scripts is now e-mailing and text-messaging many refill reminders and shipping status. By the way, Express Scripts has a mobile App for both Android and Apple smartphones; the App is titled "Express Scripts." With it, you can manage your prescriptions and even load your COVID vaccine history into your smartphone! Also, Accredo is the only TRICARE in-network pharmacy for high-cost specialty medications; to fill them, call Accredo at 877-882-3324.

**Foothills Stand Down Reminder:** The next Foothills Stand Down is planned for April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2023 (9:00 AM to 2:00 PM) at Catawba Valley Community College, indoors in the Tarlton Complex. Our chapter will be a major sponsor of this event, and chapter members are encouraged to serve as volunteer staff members. A volunteer's shift lasts just three hours and you pick one of twelve types of jobs; plus, you get to keep your free Staff Member T-Shirt! There's a low intensity, short-duration Training Day at the Tarlton Complex the day before the event. The mail-in or Fax-in volunteer application form is on the Stand Down website, with the mailing address and Fax number right on the form itself. All the details are at website: [www.foothillsstanddown.com/2023-stand-down](http://www.foothillsstanddown.com/2023-stand-down)

**Veterans Bridge Home:** Some members might not be aware of the Veterans Bridge Home based in Charlotte. This very large Veterans support organization serves: Charlotte, Triad, Triangle, Sandhills, and Midlands SC. All six of our MOAA Catawba Valley Chapter counties are in the area serviced by Veterans Bridge Home. Here's their mission statement: "Veterans Bridge Home connects Veterans and their families, in any state of transition, to the community. Through our network of partners, we help Veterans navigate employment, create social connections, and settle their families. We look at the whole Veteran and connect them to the resources needed to be successful and thriving leaders in our community." Veterans Bridge Home looks to be an excellent asset for Veterans, especially when seeking housing and employment. Lots more info at: [www.veteransbridgehome.org](http://www.veteransbridgehome.org)

**Special SBP Open Season:** The special Survivor Benefit Plan open season recently began, and it runs through January 1, 2024. This allows retirees receiving retired pay, eligible members, or former members awaiting retired pay who are currently NOT enrolled in SBP or RCSBP (Reserve Component Survivor Benefit Plan) to enroll. The SBP Open Season also allows eligible members and former members who are currently enrolled in either SBP or RCSBP to permanently discontinue their SBP coverage. The critical decision to either participate in or withdraw from SBP is based on one's personal circumstances, including one's age. Full details at: [www.dfas.mil](http://www.dfas.mil)

**PACT Act Info:** NC Council of Chapters February newsletter (page 21-23) features info on criteria/processes for PACT Act disability benefits. Visit [www.moaa-nc.org](http://www.moaa-nc.org), then click on "Newsletters." FYI: New Airborne Hazards & Open Burn Pit Registry at: <https://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/burnpits/participants.asp>

**- NEWS FROM THE FIVE MILITARY BRANCHES -**

ARMY: If a soldier in paygrade E-1 through E-3 recruits a new soldier, he or she will be promoted one rank up. That's one of several new Army recruiting tactics; another one is awarding enlistment bonuses of up to \$50,000!

NAVY: The USNS Earl Warren ship was recently christened. The 746-foot "oil tanker" is named after Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren who was a major force in the civil rights movement during the 50's and 60's.

MARINES: Camp Lejeune Environmental Management again wins the SECNAV and SECDEF award for "Environmental Restoration, Installation." Covers: 150,000 acres of developed land, forest, wetlands & water!

AIR FORCE: Airmen parents are now authorized 12 weeks of leave following the birth of their child. This is for both the birth parent and non-birth parent, and this also includes adoptive parents and eligible foster parents.

SPACE FORCE: Space Force (3 years young) and the U.S. Coast Guard (230 years old) established an agreement to focus on coordination and collaboration that will enhance space-based capabilities for the Joint Warfighter.

**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.

**2021 Calendar**: General Membership Meetings/Dinners: 23 Mar, 25 May, 28 Sep, and 30 Nov

Board Meetings: 27 Apr, 22 Jun, 24 Aug, 26 Oct, Dec 14

**CHAPTER PRINCIPALS, DIRECTORS AND STAFF**

Chapter President: LTC "Davy" Davenport  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: *Vacant!*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: LTC James Cole  
Treasurer: Commander Dave Olson  
Secretary: Major Dennis McClish  
Chaplain: Reverend (WO3) 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: **<https://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" website at: <https://moaa.quorum.us>*

## RESERVATION FOR MOAA CATAWBA VALLEY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING/DINNER

This is my reservation for MOAA CVC's General Membership meeting/dinner on March 23<sup>rd</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 Guest Speaker will be Dr. Kathy Wilson, MD, Director of the Sleep Center & Respiratory Department at Catawba Valley Medical Center, giving an informative presentation on insomnia.

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

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

Please send this slip and your check (**\$35.00 per attendee**) to arrive no later than March 20<sup>th</sup>, a Monday, to:



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

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

*Amazon.com's shop via "Smile" charity program has ended*

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

*Personal MOAA nametags available at: [www.naagtag.com/moaa](http://www.naagtag.com/moaa)*

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

*New members joining chapter now do not pay 2023 annual dues!*