

THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



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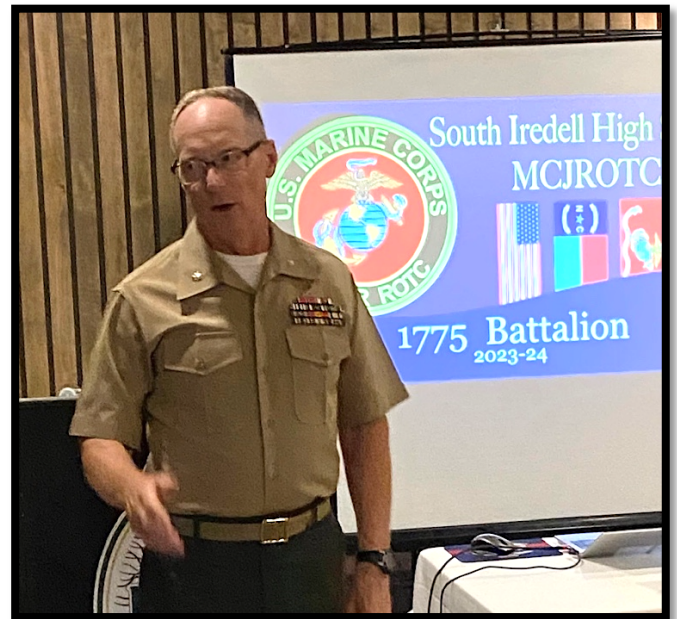
President's Comments: LTC "Davy" Davenport

Albeit strangely late into 2023, I'm pleased to reiterate the fact that our chapter recently won a 2022 MOAA Level of Excellence 5-Star Award. This designates our chapter as being among the absolute best of MOAA's 400 affiliate chapters. Obviously, I'm proud of our chapter's achievements, and I'm grateful for the altruistic work done by chapter members. Together we contributed to: MOAA American Patriot Scholarship Program, Purple Heart Homes, Welcome Home Veterans Center, Moldova World Children's Fund, Bomb Techs Without Borders, and the Veterans Motocross Foundation. Plus, we were a major sponsor of the local Foothills Veterans Stand Down event; Colonel Tim Herndon kindly served as Point Man for that event. Lt Col G. Jane Harmon again procured and provisioned our 19 associated JROTC units with MOAA Award medals and certificates. Major Dennis McClish continually published flawless Board of Directors meeting minutes. Colonel (Dr.) Dana Tucker deftly covered Legislative matters, and he kindly stepped in to serve as our Surviving Spouse Liaison. Commander Dave Olson did an amazing job as Treasurer, keeping finances in order, maintaining our 501c charity status, and organizing chapter events at Lake Hickory Country Club! Likewise, Colonel John Liburdi published excellent newsletters to keep us informed. CW3 (Reverend) Bob Herron was present at every chapter event, keeping divine light shining upon us. We should all be very proud of our chapter's success, and thankful for the work done by the members of our Board of Directors. Beyond the recent Five-Star award, I believe that we've been following the MOAA "Never stop Serving" ethos and that we'll continue to do so in the future. My sincerest thanks to every officer who has been part of our collective efforts to contribute to the military community in various ways.

Is there a move afoot to sabotage military recruiting efforts throughout the country? There's 1.4 million persons serving in the military. Yet, the media ferrets out very rare individual gone-bad scenarios and then implies that they're rampant throughout the entire military. Sadly, some politicians use the military as pawns in the legislative domain: risk military pay, block flag officer promotions, etc. Then, there are budget shortfalls and prioritizations that diminish quality of life for military personnel and their families: healthcare, decent barracks, family housing, etc. Somebody please reminded the politicians that about 50% of servicemembers are married and over 40% have children. Of course, the application of military power in hostile settings routinely receives heavily biased criticism from "Talking Heads" on TV, most of whom never donned a uniform. Topping it off is the entertainment industry that continually produces TV series and movies that portray a fictitious military person gone awry in one way or another, inflicting violence on civilians—all for the sake of "entertainment." Plus, wonderful charities air TV ads, necessarily featuring our severely wounded warriors. (And yes, they've absolutely earned and need maximum support!) So, all these negative aspects appearing together in the information domain makes it obvious why our military recruiters fail to meet quotas. No, I don't advocate censoring the news or generating one-sided military propaganda. But we do need to at least isolate and protect funds for military pay, benefits and quality of life. Plus, let's have some self-restraint on the part of TV and movie executives. And, dare I say it, we need more respect and support from some politicians who negatively impact the military forces that protect our country, including its constitutionally based institutions! To wit, the "Pay Our Military Act" (S 2835) is still parked in committee.

Guest Speaker at our last meeting/dinner was Lt Col Gerald Harper (USMC, Ret.). He's the Senior Instructor of the JROTC unit at South Iredell High School. His unit is well-provisioned, extremely competitive, and very proud. His cadets wear USMC furnished uniforms, and their training focuses on: citizenship, character building, and leadership. Colonel Harper provided lots of insights on cadet activity, and their successes in the academic domain, marksmanship contests, and drill competition. His unit is continually involved in the community including, Color Guard duties, Toys for Tots program, and various public events. His unit was selected as a Naval Honors School for 2022-2023; that's the 22nd time the unit has won this national award! The unit has amassed many other laurels and is well known at the national level. Interestingly. Some parents are initially lukewarm about their son or daughter joining JROTC, but their enthusiasm quickly grows as the cadet progresses in the program. Colonel Harper also mentioned the nation-wide shortage of JROTC Instructors. LTC Davenport then gave Lt Col Harper a memento in thanks for his superb JROTC briefing.

MOAA CVC Photo



Lt Col Gerald Harper briefs on JROTC Program

*Happy Veterans Day!
Saturday, Nov 11th*



Public Domain USMC Photo



Past USMC birthday ceremony on Camp Lejeune

*FEDVIP Open Season
Nov 13 – Dec 11, 2023*

Happy Birthday USMC! The U.S Marine Corps' birthday is November 10th. The Marine Corps was our country's first branch of service, established in 1775. Thus, it's the 248th birthday for the Marines. The Corps has evolved over the years in terms of tactics, weapons and technology, but the Sempre Paratus ethos and associated traditions persevere. Marine Corps birthday ceremonies take place all over the world, in headquarters, in tactical settings, and at U.S. embassies throughout the globe. Whether it be a ball or a simple gathering, the focal point is the traditional Marine Corps birthday cake. The cake is always cut with a military sword to symbolize the Corps being a band of warriors, brandishing the sword to ensure America lives in peace. It's also a tradition that the most senior officer present offer a slice of cake to the most junior Marine; this symbolizes the passing of wisdom and experience to the newest generation of Marines. Interestingly, the Marine Corps is the only branch of service that continues to meet recruiting goals. The best example of eagerness to join the Corps was PFC Jacklyn "Jack" Lucas from North Carolina; he was the youngest Marine ever at age 14. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions on Iwo Jima. Happy Birthday to our chapter's USMC officers!

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Shop/Ship Gifts Overseas: Many chapter members and their families have served overseas. During their time in a foreign land, close friendships may have been made with host nation employees, neighbors, or even landlords. Some of us have spouses from foreign countries, and thus have extended families “over there.” Today, the cost of sending holiday or birthday gifts to a foreign address often exceeds the value of an item being gifted. Although we don’t advocate any particular merchants, one does present a way to avoid heavy shipping costs. Amazon.com has sister versions in other countries, like Amazon.de, Amazon.it, Amazon.co.uk, Amazon.co.jp, etc. Purchases from those stores will ship cheaply from an overseas warehouse. If you normally shop Amazon, you’ll find that the overseas version of Amazon automatically utilizes your default payment info in the Amazon system; however, be sure to change your default U.S. shipping address to the name and address of the person the gift is going to!

Headhunter MOS: The Army has experienced severe recruitment shortfalls over recent years: 15,000 in 2022 and 10,000 in 2023. Most Army Recruiters are of various military occupational specialties; their recruiting duty is an out of career field assignment, usually lasting just a few years. That’s not at all compatible with their civilian counterparts—known as Talent Acquisition Specialists—who develop recruiting skills and techniques through many years of experience. Therefore, Army senior leaders are planning on establishing a career-long Recruiter specialty, and giving those career recruiters the rank of Warrant Officer is also under consideration. In addition, the Army intends to up the Recruiting Command senior position rank from two-star general to a three-star general

MWR Travel Deals for Veterans: American Forces Travel is a DoD online leisure travel website that’s managed by Morale, Welfare, and Recreation; it’s supported by Priceline. Through American Forces Travel, Veterans can access exclusive deals on hotels, flights, rental cars, cruises, travel packages and event tickets. Plan your next vacation and obtain these money saving MWR deals by visiting website: www.AmericanForcesTravel.com.

Telehealth Suicide Prevention: The VA recently established a new telehealth program to support Veterans at risk of suicide. It’s the Suicide Prevention 2.0 Clinical Telehealth program, or “SP 2.0.” It offers varying levels of interventions based on each Veteran’s specific needs: A one-time Safety Planning Intervention; Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for suicide prevention; Problem-Solving Therapy for suicide prevention, and Dialectical Behavior Therapy in individual or group sessions for Veterans with a borderline personality disorder. SP 2.0 is an innovative clinical suicide prevention program operating via telehealth. Veterans Crisis Line are ready to listen and help any Veteran make a plan to stay safe. Crisis support is available day or night: Dial 988 then Press 1 or Chat at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat or Text 838255.

Free Event Tickets for Vets: Vet Tix is a national nonprofit organization that provides free event tickets to Veterans, although there may be a small ticket shipping fee. Events include concerts, athletic sports, motor sports, performing arts, and family themed events—even the Super Bowl! Tickets very are donated by professional and collegiate sports teams, artists/performers, and private donors who aren’t going to use their tickets—most are high value tickets! No cost to join Vet Tix, but one must be a Veteran (all eras), a member of the military, or the immediate family member of a service member who was killed in the line of duty. Create a no-fee Vet Tix account at Vettix.org; your Veterans status will be easily verified through the VA’s commonly used “ID.me” system.

Survivor Benefit Plan Open Season: This SBP/RCSBP Open Season ends January 1, 2024. Before enrolling or disenrolling, consider these relevant factors: RCSBP/SBP annuity is inflation protected because of the yearly cost of living adjustments; thus, the value of the annuity remains the same in the future. Your monthly premiums are deducted from your retired pay before it is taxed, lowering your taxable income. Your premiums only pay about half of the cost and the government pays the other half. Your health is NOT considered in the premium cost. In most cases, your survivor will recoup the benefits that you paid in the program in less than three years. To learn more, go to www.dfas.mil and then navigate Home / Retired Military / Provide for Loved Ones / SBP.

VA Docs Adopt AI: Five VA medical centers just started working together to develop an Artificial Intelligence algorithm that can predict if a case of prostate cancer might spread to other parts of the body. This new AI-based method will use diagnostic images (like MRIs), high resolution scans of prostate biopsies, and social determinants of health. VA officials stated this approach will, “... serve as a roadmap to develop similar AI algorithms for other cancers, such as lung cancer, and even non-cancerous diseases that commonly affect our Veterans.”

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- NEWS FROM THE FIVE MILITARY BRANCHES -

ARMY: Fort Sill Air Defense Artillery soldiers recently received a Directed Energy Maneuver-Short Range Air Defense system mounted on a Stryker vehicle. It's a low-cost laser air-defense system used against enemy drones.

NAVY: The newest Virginia-class fast-attack submarine was commissioned by the CNO on October 14th. The USS Hyman G. Rickover (SSN 795) honors Adm Hyman G. Rickover, the "Father of the Nuclear Navy."

MARINES: The Corps' Advanced Manufacturing System is developing the capability to 3D print key mission-critical components and repair parts on the battlefield; this will diminish reliance on traditional supply lines.

AIR FORCE: Hermeus Co. was just awarded a \$60 million contract to build three hypersonic uncrewed concept aircraft, including their new Quarterhorse aircraft that's expected to ultimately achieve speeds beyond Mach 4.

SPACE FORCE: Exercise Black Skies 23-3 was recently completed. It's the third iteration of an exercise focused on tactical Space Electromagnetic Warfare. The exercised provided realistic combat training to space warfighters.

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 26th Ave NE (Unit A), Hickory, NC 28601.

2023 Calendar: General Membership Meetings/Dinners: 30 Nov

Board Meetings: Dec 14

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

Chapter President: LTC "Davy" Davenport
1st Vice President: *Vacant!*
2nd Vice President: LTC James Cole
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.*** 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

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

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RESERVATION FOR MOAA CATAWBA VALLEY CHRISTMAS CHARITY DINNER



This is my reservation for MOAA Catawba Valley's Christmas Charity Dinner on November 30th, (a Thursday) 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. Color Guard will be the Lincolnton AFJROTC unit, and entertainment will be provided by Glenn Fox, featuring Christmas and Oldies music. A holiday themed 'Jim Shore' prize will be raffled off, with all proceeds going to our chapter's Benevolent Fund. Attire: Service Dress or Mess Dress uniform is highly 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 **(\$35.00 per attendee)** to arrive no later than November 27th, a Monday, to:



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

X "@MOAACVC" on Twitter

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

SBP Open Season to enroll or disenroll ends on January 1, 2024

Surviving Spouse virtual chapter join e-mail: mssvc02@gmail.com

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

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

