

THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



January 2026



MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER
117 Wildwood Loop, Statesville, NC 28625-8903 / E-mail: moaanc11@outlook.com / Phone: 704-452-7999

President's Comments: Colonel Dana Tucker

It's my great honor to take the helm as President of the MOAA Catawba Valley Chapter. First off, I'd like to thank LTC "Davy" Davenport and his staff for handing me the reins of an exemplary and vibrant MOAA chapter. No need for me to reinvent the wheel; rather, myself and the Board of Directors will just surge forward with an award-winning chapter that was smartly built and is running smoothly. I'd also like to express my appreciation for the altruistic spirit of those who have volunteered to serve on the Board of Directors and the chapter staff, some of whom have been at it far past their expected tenure. With that in mind, my expectation is that we'll continue to collectively push for passage of state and federal legislation that benefits those serving or who have served our country in uniform, and their families! On a local level, I'm sure we'll continue with our benevolent initiatives to support Veterans in the local domain. And I also expect that we'll continue to enjoy social events that foster camaraderie and spawn new and lasting friendships

Just to briefly reiterate the goal of pushing for passage of legislation that supports uniformed service members and their families, I'd like to inform everyone about MOAA National's emerging capability to track activity in MOAA's Legislative Action Center (LAC). They are implementing a mechanism that allows them to see how many of our chapter members have actually registered in the Legislative Action Center, and to see exactly how many e-mails chapter members have sent out via the LAC to their respective members of Congress. This new visibility will facilitate efforts to encourage everyone to be part of MOAA's "One Powerful Voice" that gets heard on Capitol Hill, and to eventually initiate some form of awards program for the chapters that launch the largest number of messages to members of the House and Senate. While on the subject of the MOAA's LAC, please capitalize on the LAC to push for passage of the Pay Our Troops Act—HR-5401 and S-3002. Those bills (as well as the Richard Star Act S-1032) are lingering in House and Senate Committees. I will be challenging us as a chapter to 1) have all chapter members registered in the LAC, and 2) engage with our legislative leaders by contacting them through the LAC.

Perhaps I'm boldly capitalizing on my new-found "Bully Pulpit," but I would like to share a few thoughts about partisanship given my recent experience running for office in the Town of Mooresville. I had thought about it before, but having to discuss the topic with voters at their doors has helped me crystallize some of how I think and talk about it. For my constituents, I shared with them that what I was focused on were two topics that most, if not all, of them felt strongly about- primarily traffic/transportation infrastructure and development. Those were non-partisan issues and I was running for a seat as a commissioner that is a non-partisan seat. I knew very well what the mix of declared party affiliation was of every voter I engaged with because I had access to voter rolls, and they leaned very heavily towards one party. I didn't know how they voted on any one candidate, but with a minor amount of interaction, they often would challenge me to declare a party affiliation. I could have easily pledged to a party or an individual that many of them felt strongly about, and garnered votes that way. I did not. That cost me some votes, but it helped me stay true to some principles that are important to me. I am still a commissioned officer, and will remain ready to serve our country. As a senior military officer (albeit in the Retired

Reserve), I will remain ready to lead our troops and provide best military advice to elected officials if I am called to do so. Over the years serving as our chapter's legislative liaison, and the past two years serving as the NC Council of Chapters VP of Federal Advocacy, I continue to believe strongly in the non-partisan charge we have to advocate for servicemembers, veterans and their families. We are most effective in those efforts when we focus on the specific issues and bills and their impacts to them and our national security. It is tempting to get into the fray of partisan positions, and I encourage all of us to be engaged as citizens of this great republic, but when it comes to party politics, we take our MOAA name tags off and represent our own positions. I will continue to work with MOAA, NCCOC and our Catawba Valley Chapter to engage with federal and state elected officials regardless of party affiliation, on topics that are highlighted by National MOAA or identified by NCCOC and our fellow NC chapters as relevant important state legislative topics that we can support.

It was great to see many of you at the annual holiday dinner and I hope you have had a great holiday season with loved ones. Looking forward to our next general meeting at Lake Hickory Country Club on January 15th.

Our MOAA chapter held its annual Christmas Charity Dinner at Lake Hickory Country Club on December 11th. The event started with a vibrant social hour where members enjoyed beverages and banter in the club's lounge. Our Chapter President then welcomed officers, spouses and guests in the Elijah Brown dining room. After his opening remarks, members recited the Pledge of Allegiance, and participated in the invocation. Then, Colonel Joe Cansler presided over and narrated the solemn "Missing Man Table" ceremony. Toasts were then given to honor military personnel, Veterans, and fallen comrades. After that, everyone enjoyed a superb dinner and desert, accompanied by Glenn Fox's special repertoire of popular holiday music and oldies instrumentals. Finally, the Charity Raffle was won by Marilynn Olson, the prize being an elaborately "carved" Jim Shore Santa Clause figurine. A brief entertainment time-out was taken so that members could (unanimously) vote in our new chapter president and staff. The evening concluded with couples dancing to Glenn Fox's music and exchanging holiday wishes. Some photos of event are on chapter website "Photo Album" page.

MOAA CVC photo



Marilynn Olson wins charity raffle prize



We need volunteers for:

- Chaplain
- Legislative Liaison
- Programs Chair

*e-mail COL Dana Tucker
drdtucker@gmail.com*



Mexican Border Defense Medal: The President and the SECDEF just announced this medal to honor warfighters securing the U.S. southern border. The medal recognizes service members who deployed as part of Joint Task Force Southern Border to the U.S.-Mexico border to provide military support for the Department of Homeland Security and U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Since January 2025, Joint Task Force Southern Border has deployed over 8,500 personnel. The SECDEF stated that border security is a core mission of the military.

President's Day
(*Commander in Chief*)
is February 16th

Alamy Stock Image



Design of North Carolina National Guard Museum building

The new North Carolina National Guard Museum will host its grand opening in the fall of this year. The Museum will represent the NC Army and Air National Guards, both of which have an enviable record of commitment and service to our state and to the nation. The new museum building (depicted to the left) is near the campus of Joint Force Headquarters in Raleigh, at: 2109 Blue Ridge Road. Besides historical documents, artwork, and military artifacts, the museum will also contain static displays of armor, wheeled vehicles, artillery and aircraft. The museum curator welcomes artifacts of every description, type, and age, especially weaponry. It can be something a soldier picked up or captured while deployed, specifically, any meaningful memento relevant to State Active Duty. To offer any sort of National Guard memorabilia or to serve as a volunteer (even providing support remotely), you can contact the Museum Director, Maj. Sean R. Daily, at sean.r.daily.mil@army.mil. Learn more about the NC Guard Museum at: <https://ng.nc.gov/about-us/ncng-museum>

Commissioned Forever: A retired military officer's commission continues for a lifetime, unless the officer formally resigns his or her commission. Involuntary recall of retired military officers is generally restricted to those under the age of 60; furthermore, an involuntary recall to active duty typically requires a declaration of war or national emergency by Congress or the President. On the other hand, voluntary recalls do not actually have an age limit, although each service may set its own age limit—Army age 70, Air Force age 58, etc. However, those limits may be waived to bring in officers with critical skills when needed (doctor, scientist, lawyer). It's worth noting that retired officers who are receiving retirement pay can be still held accountable for criminal actions via recall to active duty and court martial under the UCMJ for offenses committed, even such actions after retirement!

Four Chaplains Day: On February 3rd, we honor four WWII U.S. Army Chaplains who heroically gave their lifejackets to four soldiers as the SS Dorchester troop ship was sinking after being torpedoed by a German U-Boat in the North Atlantic. Their religious denominations were: Methodist, Catholic, Jewish and Dutch Reformed.

VA Infrastructure Funding Boost: The Veterans Administration has terminated the previously mandated \$77 million program to provide solar-powered electric vehicle charging stations at many of its facilities. Instead of that "Green Energy" initiative, VA officials have reallocated the \$77 million to fund other construction and technology projects that are more focused on critical care of Veteran patients.

Dusty Documents: Some of us older officers may have performance reports, award certificates, and other military documents from back in the day when social security numbers weren't strictly protected. For example, some older performance reports show the social security number of the ratee, the rater, and every person who indorsed the report! Those of us who have vulnerable military documents and ancient income tax files sitting in closets or attic storage boxes would do well to dig them out and shred them in order to protect social security numbers.

VA Extends length of Community Care: The VA recently announced that Veterans referred by the VA to community care for eligible standardized types of care will receive 12 full months of uninterrupted treatment at VA expense before having to obtain a VA reauthorization. Prior to the change, some VA community care specialty referrals were reevaluated every 90 to 180 days. The list of year-long community care authorizations for standardized types of care includes thirty standardized types of care. The list of standardized care types is at: <https://news.va.gov/press-room/va-offers-yearlong-community-care-authorizations-for-30-services/>

SNAP for Veterans: Unfortunately, recent federal legislation removed Veterans from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) work requirements exemption list. This means that most Veterans must meet SNAP's 80-hour per month volunteering, or working, or training requirement to maintain eligibility for the long term. However, some Veterans may still remain eligible for SNAP benefits via another exemption category, such as disability. The contact list for each county's SNAP office is at: www.countyoffice.org/nc-food-stamp-office/

SGLI & VGLI Insurance Upgrade: The VA has announced a positive amendment to Servicemember Group Life Insurance (SGLI), Family SGLI, and Veterans Group Life Insurance (VGLI) Accelerated Benefit Option regulation. The change now allows a person other than the servicemember (termed an "Alternate Applicant") to apply for the accelerated benefit on behalf of a terminally ill member who is medically incapacitated. This would be up to 50% of the insurance policy face value, paid in increments of \$5,000 per month. Obviously, this VA policy change is a tremendous boon to families of terminally ill patients who are covered by SGLI or VGLI.

ECU Smiles Day: Our chapter was recognized at Eastern Carolina University Dental School "Smiles Day." A poster at the entrance recognized our significant donation to the school's operating fund. There's a photo of this on our chapter's website, go to the website homepage and click on the "Photo Album" button to view.

A Higher Calling: In the past, our Chapter has been blessed to have Reverend (CW3) Robert Herron serving as our Chaplain. Regrettably, he has had to bow out from that role. So, now we're on a Holy Crusade to find a new Chapter Chaplain. Any denomination is welcome to become our Chaplain, but the clergyperson or lay-preacher must necessarily be a former or retired Uniformed Officer from any military branch, or USPHS, or NOAA.

- NEWS FROM THE FIVE MILITARY BRANCHES -

ARMY: Small nuclear power generation plants will be installed on Army installations all over the globe. These small reactors will include micro sized power units that can be moved to forward deployed posts and camps.

NAVY: \$448-Million will be invested in AI and Autonomy to accelerate shipbuilding. The initiative aggregates data from multiple associated sources to create a unified, data-driven approach to build faster and at a lower cost.

MARINES: A Medium Landing Ship (LST-100) from Dutch shipbuilder Damen will be the first of a new class of ships. They will be used to ferry and land Marine units without the need to access established port facilities.

AIR FORCE: McGhee Tyson ANG base in Knoxville, TN has been selected as the preferred location to host KC-46A Pegasus air refueling aircraft. These new "Tankers" conduct boom air refueling and transport cargo.

SPACE FORCE: USSF has awarded contracts totaling \$1.6 billion to satellite builders for creation of a 36-satellite network to provide continuous global-coverage warning of advanced threats such as hypersonic missiles.

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. Our chapter's Board of Directors recently voted to donate \$200 to each one of those four designated charities.

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

**2026
Calendar:**

*General Membership Meetings/Dinners: Jan 15, Mar 19, May 21, Sep 17, Dec 8
Board Meetings: Feb 26, Apr 23, Jun 25, Aug 27, Oct 22, Dec 17*

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. you 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 its affiliated chapters 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.*

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 & 1-833—388-7233

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

*Chapter annual
dues are due by
end of January*

*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*

RESERVATION FOR MOAA CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER'S GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING & DINNER

This is my reservation for MOAA Catawba Valley's membership meeting/dinner on **January 15th**, (a Thursday) at Lake Hickory Country Club. Cocktails/social time begins at 6:00 p.m. and dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. Dress code coat & tie. Guest Speaker will be Army Veteran Anne-Marie Pumphrey, spokesperson for the Welcome Home Veterans Military Museum in Mooresville; this is one of our chapter's designated charities.

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 January 12th, a Monday, 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.)
