

# THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



January 2023



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## MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER

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

The New Year has arrived, and so it's time to consider our chapter's goals for 2023. First and foremost, I hope that we'll all continue our collective efforts to ensure passage of important legislation that helps strengthen our military and improve the quality of life for servicemembers and their families. More about that in the below paragraph. Next, I'd like to see our chapter's membership base expand; it will really help if we all engage in some gentle recruiting whenever we encounter non-member officers in our chapter's expansive six-county territory. And, if I may do a little recruiting myself, please contact me if you're willing to fill one of our vacant Board of Directors and/or staff positions. None are arduous duty or take up much time, and being on our leadership team is a very rewarding experience. Some of our board and staff members are what the Navy terms "Plank Owners," meaning they've been continuously serving since our chapter (the ship) was founded well over a decade ago! Next, we'll certainly be continuing support for our three designated charities via the Benevolent Fund. We do have a couple of other supported organizations, including the Foothills Veterans Stand Down event, of which we're traditionally a major sponsor and have volunteers serving as event staff. Lastly, we should encourage chapter members and potential members to attend our membership meetings/dinners at Lake Hickory Country Club. The prestigious club generously hosts our chapter as guest members, but the club managers need a certain level of attendance to even hit the break-even point on costs for our dinning event and all that goes with it. In fact, I view those dinners as a unique opportunity for local officers and their spouses to enjoy warm camaraderie in an opulent setting that no other North Carolinas chapters can match.

The Legislative Action Center on MOAA's website features a host of pending legislation relevant to military personnel, with the opportunity for each of us to e-mail and/or contact our respective legislators. Currently, there are 143 separate and unprioritized legislative issues that one could act on via MOAA. We've asked National MOAA why there's no prioritization; the response was that they leave that up to each member, based on what they feel are the most important and pressing issues. It's likely that peppering a congressman with 100+ simultaneous e-mails from each member would diminish the desired effect; thus, the need to prioritize. My view is that members of outlying MOAA chapters don't necessarily need to fight hard for acquisition of new weapon systems; Service Chiefs and the Defense Industry are dealing with that, no matter what. In fact, the Pentagon is continually facing the dilemma: either modernize weapon systems or maintain quality of life for servicemembers and their families. Guess what, infrastructure on military bases (especially family housing) has severely deteriorated and health benefits are eroding—for both active duty and retired! And that's reflected in the recruiting shortfalls in all branches of service. So, I'm "taking action" first on issues that relate to quality of life and monetary compensation for servicemembers. Indeed, National MOAA is quick to work such issues, like the recent termination of Kroger group's participation in Express-Scripts' pharmacy network. Now, that's an example of a priority issue to act on via MOAA's easy to use system—it even provides us the draft e-mails! We need to do that because the first question a politician asks is: have my constituents shown concern about this issue; if so, then I'll surely co-sponsor and/or vote for passage of said bill. Let's all prioritize the issues and "Take Action" in 2023!

**Colonel Dana Tucker Assumes Command:** On December 1<sup>st</sup>, chapter member Colonel (Dr.) Dana Tucker went on orders as Commander of the NC Army National Guard's 139<sup>th</sup> Regiment-Regional Training Institute on Fort Bragg. Major General A. Boyette was the Presiding Officer for the formal change-of-command ceremony on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, and a reception was held afterwards. The 139<sup>th</sup> RTI trains hundreds of students annually in the skill sets associated with artillerymen, combat medic, wheeled vehicle mechanic, and motor transport operator/driver. The unit also includes an extensive officer and non-commissioned officer professional development facility, and an Officer Candidate School. The 139<sup>th</sup> RTI campus on Fort Bragg contains 15 classrooms, an auditorium, a computer lab, a dining facility, and furnished barracks for 419 soldiers. In addition, the unit manages and operates the Camp Butner 4,000+ acre training center north of Raleigh. We wish Colonel Tucker a highly enjoyable and successful tour as commander of his prestigious regiment. Learn more about the 139<sup>th</sup>'s ongoing training and mission activity by viewing their Facebook page: "139<sup>th</sup> Regiment NC RTI"

NC Army NG photo



***MG Boyette passes Regimental Colors to COL Tucker***

Shop via "smile.amazon.com" to  
support the MOAA Foundation!  
**amazon**

MOAA CVC Photo



***Mrs. Culp Bomb briefs Bomb Techs w/o Borders***

**Chapter Charity Christmas Dinner:** Our chapter held its annual Christmas Dinner at Lake Hickory Country Club. The club's chef prepared a wonderful dinner, accompanied by Christmas theme music. Colonel Joe Cansler conducted the Missing Man Table ceremony, followed by several traditional toasts. Guest Speaker for evening was former USAF Officer Donna Culp; her presentation was focused on Bomb Techs Without Borders, currently training Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technicians in Ukraine. She portrayed some of the devastation she witnessed first-hand in that country, and she explained the noble and risky work being done in-country by her husband (LTC John Culp, U.S. Army, Ret.) and all team members. Our chapter then made a nice charitable donation to Bomb Techs Without Borders. Learn more about this organization at website [www.btwob.org](http://www.btwob.org). A charity raffle was held at the conclusion of the evening, with all the funds going to our chapter's Benevolent Fund. Mrs. Christine Tucker won the raffle prize, and that was a beautiful Santa statue from the studios of renowned folk artist Jim Shore.

**Clever New Scam:** Scammer letters are being received with markings/logos of a legitimate on-line store. The letter states that an attempt to charge PayPal for a bogus and unspecified backorder has failed, and that the letter recipient must telephone a store representative (with either Visa, Master Card or Discover ready) at a 1-800 number to pay the small amount owed or send in a check or money order to an address given in the letter. Interestingly, no order number or details are given in the letter. The mailing address for the check has no company name, and it's not the real address of the company the scammer is pretending to be. It's best to call the actual company at their real phone number or log on to your customer account to see if there's any money owed.

**New "VALife": Insurance program:** The VA has launched a life insurance program for Veterans, age 80 or younger—although there are special provisions for Veterans older than that. The start date of the program is January 1<sup>st</sup>. This is a guaranteed acceptance program that has a two-year waiting period for coverage to take full effect, but all paid premiums plus interest will be paid to the beneficiary if the Veteran dies during the two-year waiting period. Premiums are based on age of the Veteran and the amount of coverage selected. All the details on this program and a link to the premium rate chart are available at: [www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/valife.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/valife.asp)

**Free Military Service Plaque:** The "Together We Served" organization is offering to create personalized 11" x 6.5" service "plaques," themed with the individual's branch of service. The smart looking plaque is created on-line; then it's downloaded to the individual's computer for print out. Alternatively, the plaque document could be loaded to a CD or a memory stick and taken to a local store that prints on high-quality photo paper. While the plaque is free, one must register with "Together We Served" in order to get a plaque. Yes, most of our retired members have a "shadow-box" that portrays their individual military career, but some don't. Plus, copies of the frameable plaque make a nice keepsake for family and relatives. Visit: <https://togetherweserved.com/basicplaque>

**Airline Perks for Military Families:** The "Military.com" website just posted an extensive update on travel perks for military personnel traveling via commercial air, including an airline-by-airline breakdown on what perks each one offers. It's necessary to book directly with the selected airline because perks may not be offered by third-party booking services. View the perks and procedures at: <https://veteran.com/airline-benefits-military-families> As a reminder, the TSA official site (TSA.gov) states that "All members of the U.S. Armed Forces" including Guard and Reserve members, can use their Department of Defense identification number when making flight reservations in order to be processed via the faster TSA Pre-Check security screening line at the airport.

**Disney's Armed Forces Salute 2023 Program:** This short newsletter can't accommodate the many versions of Disney discount deals for military personnel and families, including National Guard, Reserves, and retirees. However, a visit to the military.com website (URL address below) could pay huge dividends to chapter members planning to visit Disney/EPOCOT with family! The deals on theme park admission, Disney Resort hotels and Disney Cruise ships are quite substantial. [www.military.com/discounts/disney-discounts-for-military-families](http://www.military.com/discounts/disney-discounts-for-military-families)

**Foothills Stand Down:** 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, in the very nice 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 new Staff Member T-Shirt! There is a low stress, 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 sheet itself. All the details are at website: [www.foothillsstanddown.com/2023-stand-down](http://www.foothillsstanddown.com/2023-stand-down)

**Pet PCS Costs:** Congress recently passed legislation that allows the DoD to cover transportation and boarding costs of servicemembers' pets when transferred to a new assignment. The Service Secretaries will be authorized to reimburse up to \$550 for a CONUS pet move and \$4,000 for an overseas pet move. This new benefit alleviates a huge burden for military families who were previously forced to either pay big money to transport pets or find a new home for pets that they couldn't afford to transport—cherished pets are often treated as family members!



## - NEWS FROM THE FIVE MILITARY BRANCHES -

**ARMY:** The Bell V-280 Valor tiltrotor helicopter has been selected as the Army's future long-range assault aircraft, replacing the venerable UH-60 Black Hawk. V-280's can reach 280 mph, and max distance is 800 miles.

**NAVY:** Secretary of the Navy has declared that one of the yet to be constructed Amphibious Assault Ships will be named USS Fallujah; ships of this class are traditionally named in honor of major U.S. Marine Corps battles.

**MARINES:** Innovators developed a transportable Atmospheric Portable Water Sustainment Unit that produces twenty gallons of water a day by converting humid air into liquid and then purifying it for use as drinking water.

**AIR FORCE:** The B-21 Raider stealth bomber was recently unveiled; the Air Force intends to purchase 100 of these nuclear or conventional bombers at \$753 million each. Raiders can be flown with or without human crews.

**SPACE FORCE:** Instead of new PME schools, Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies is now the in-residence Intermediate Service School and Senior Service School for Guardian Officers.

**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.

**FYI:** Our Board of Directors just approved a substantial donation to each one of our three designated charities.

**2021 Calendar:** *General Membership Meetings/Dinners:* 26 Jan, 23 Mar, 25 May, 28 Sep, and 30 Nov

*Board Meetings:* 23 Feb, 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 website: <https://www.moaa.org/content/join-moaa/why-join-moaa>

*The MOAA "Take Action" website is now 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 January 26<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 Guest Speaker will be announced at a later date.

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

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

Please send this slip and your check **(\$30.00 per attendee)** to arrive no later than January 23<sup>rd</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)*