

THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



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

As you may or may not know, our chapter submitted a nomination for a 2021 MOAA Level of Excellence Award, and MOAA will announce award winning chapters soon. Obviously, 2021 was a difficult year in many ways for all of us. However, our chapter was able to persevere and excel by exercising reasonable precautions and utilizing Internet-based capabilities. National MOAA has already scrutinized our award nomination package and I'm sure we shined amongst other nominated chapters. But no matter what the outcome, I'm proud of our chapter and the many members who invested considerable time and energy in the context of MOAA's "Never stop serving" ethos. It's probably transparent to most everyone, but several chapter members altruistically spent time traveling down the highway to attend meetings, conferences, and lobbying events. Their efforts ensured our chapter had continual presence and participation in events that improved pay, benefits, and quality of life for those serving in uniform and for those retired from service. We should also be grateful to those members who worked to keep our local activity on track, especially administrative, financial, and newsletter/website. Respectively, they are: Major Dennis McClish, Commander Dave Olson, and Colonel John Liburdi. Likewise, the JROTC Coordinator, Legislative Liaison, and dinner coordinator have earned our collective thanks for their excellent work over the past year, and beyond! Respectively, they're: Lt Col Jane Harmon, Colonel Dana Tucker, and again Commander Dave Olson. It's my hope that our inevitable win of a Level of Excellence Award will prompt the ever-growing number of non-members officers throughout our six-county area to join our local MOAA chapter.

That brings me to the subject of recruiting new members for the Catawba Valley Chapter. North Carolina has become a huge draw for retiring military officers. The relatively low cost of living, favorable climate, employment opportunities and elimination of tax on retirement pay is prompting military officers to flow into the Piedmont area. So now they're popping up all over the place: church groups, shopping centers, community events, military ceremonies, dining venues, etc. It's not uncommon for one of us to strike up a conversation with a military member when we notice their military service displayed on a ball cap or automobile. If the person is or was a uniformed officer, please hand them one of our chapter's business cards prior to bidding farewell, or at least mention our chapter website: www.moaacvc.com. I've inadvertently become our chapter's primary recruiter, and I'm fine with that. However, the more of us who reach out to the non-member uniformed officers in our community, the more we're going to increase our chapter's size. The benefits to the potential member are obvious, not the least of which is comradery. Likewise, our chapter also benefits. One way is that we'll potentially fill some of our staff's open leadership positions; although, there's absolutely no pressure on any new member to do that. Another consideration is that we maintain enough members to ensure that we continue to meet Lake Hickory Country Club's minimum number of participants for hosting dinner events in their world-class facility. So, I again ask that we all capitalize on every opportunity to invite the increasing number of officers in our six-county area to join the chapter. Your chance encounter with a fellow officer during the long summer might bring a new member on board, and maybe even spawn a lifelong friendship!

MOAA NC CoC President Visit: CWO-4 (Ret.) Jay Garbus was Guest Speaker at our chapter's meeting and dinner in May. Jay is the President of the NC Council of Chapters. He began his remarks by explaining that the Council exists to help the chapters in dealing with critical issues. Thus, he has appointed a Personal Affairs Officer and a Health & Welfare Officer to the Council. They will strive to assist chapters with member problems, and they'll collaborate with the Council's Surviving Spouse Liaison, as necessary. Jay was a Special Agent in the Army. He recounted his month-long experience dealing with the aftermath of the 9/11 attack at the Pentagon immediately after the plane crash. As he articulated events, it became apparent to everyone that it was truly arduous duty, requiring hazmat suits and working in the midst of a full-blown disaster. Jay's duties included retrieving bodies of victims; sifting through rubble to secure classified material and hijack evidence. Rescue of victims trapped in the Pentagon basement was a special challenge, requiring floors above to be opened. Albeit a grueling ordeal, in retrospect Jay noted that it manifested how the whole country comes together in during critical times. At the conclusion, our Chapter President gave Jay a nice memento in appreciation of his visit and prestation.



NCOC President speaks at chapter dinner



Foothills Veterans Stand Down Day event activity

Foothills Veterans Stand Down: : Our chapter was a major sponsor of this June 17th event held at Catawba Valley Community College in Hickory, and the MOAA logo was embossed on event T-shirts to display our support. Chapter members Colonel Dana Tucker and Colonel Tim Herndon kindly served as volunteer staff members at this event. Veterans were provided a broad spectrum of community resources, supplies and services, at no cost. This included employment assistance, dental services, medical visits, clothing and hygiene items, access to counseling, and homeless Veterans received help in finding permanent quarters. The theme was helping Veterans rebuild their lives, specifically by connecting with other veterans, veterans' organization, volunteers, and service providers. The beauty of this particular Stand Down event is that it was held in a very modern indoor facility and special mobile clinics, thereby making it a weatherproof event. Another aspect of the Stand Down was that Veterans from all over Western North Carolina again enjoyed some military camaraderie, especially during the free breakfast and lunch provided by local restaurants.



Chapter newsletter received MOAA 5-Star award and website received 4-Star award!

Our One Powerful Voice: MOAA National has reiterated its request that MOAA members support legislative issues, including: **(1)** Major Richard Star Act (provide concurrent receipt of retired and disability pay for combat injured veterans); **(2)** Stop Copay/Overpay Act (overturn the doubling of TRICARE copays for mental health care for Uniformed services families and retirees); **(3)** Ensure a 7.2% military pay raise to maintain the link to the Employment Cost Index (ECI) established by statute. Please elicit your legislators' support on these important issues and any of about 20 others shown on MOAA's easy to use "Take Action" website: <https://moaa.quorum.us>

Free Hearing Help: The Hickory VA Clinic has an Audiology & Speech Pathology department that provides a full range of audiology services, such as hearing and balance evaluation; selection, management, and repair of hearing aids and assistive listening device assessments, and evaluation and treatment for auditory processing disorder. You do not have to have an existing VA disability to receive this specialized and comprehensive care. They're only open on weekdays. Bring your DD-214 to the first appointment! Main phone: 828-431-5600

Urgent Care is Authorized: Most TRICARE beneficiaries can go to an urgent care center whenever they need to, but it's necessary to check out and follow the urgent care rules in one's health plan. Urgent medical conditions are usually ones that aren't considered emergencies but still require professional medical attention within 24 hours. Examples might include a small cut that might need stitches, a fever, or a sprained ankle. If you reasonably believe you have an emergency, always call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. If you have questions about your injury or illness, you can always call the Military Health System Nurse Advice Line. Nurses are available 24/7 to help you find the care you need: phone 800-874-2273 (choose option 1), or go to the Nurse Advice Line for an on-line chat or live video session—website: <https://mhsnurseadvice.com>

Gun Safes in HHG: Joint Travel Regulations for all service members were updated to exclude the weight of gun safes from the overall weight of household goods (HHG) when a member moves to a new base. The exclusion is up to 500 pounds for a gun safe. Furthermore, in addition to the gun safe weight exclusion, the Air Force is distributing 150,000 cable gun locks to bases throughout the world, available to airmen on a first-come-first-served basis. The driver behind all this is gun safety, to diminish suicides and accidental child injuries and deaths.

New "VALife" Insurance Program: Starting in January 2023, the VA will offer Veterans a whole-life insurance program, with cash value accruing after the first two years of being insured. The program will be offered to Veterans of any disability level: 0 to 100%. "VALife" is a guaranteed-acceptance, whole-life insurance program that will be available to Veterans age 80 and below, and certain veterans older than that may even be eligible. Monthly premiums are locked-in for life and are based on the selected insurance amount and the age of the applicant. Full info about "VALife" insurance is available at website: www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/valife.asp

Nutrition Kitchen: The Air Force Medical Service just launched a series of on-line nutritional cooking classes geared toward service members and their families. The series inspires healthy meal choices by making changes to traditional meals and providing nutritional knowledge. Each episode addresses a classical menu, offering simple ingredient substitutions and ending with a USAF chef-curated recipe. Access the series by Googling "Nutrition Kitchen series, YouTube." Or, just go to website: www.airforcemedicine.af.mil/Nutrition-Kitchen/

Guard & Reserve Burial Benefit: The recently enacted Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2022 contains a bipartisan measure that allows all Guard members and Reservists to be buried in Veterans cemeteries that receive federal grant funding through the VA. Previously, state Veterans cemeteries were only allowed to inter Guard members and Reservists called to and actually serving on active duty. Now Guard and Reserve members have the same burial rights as all their comrades in arms who served in the U.S. Armed Forces.

TRICARE Telehealth Visits: Telephone-only telehealth appointments will become a permanent benefit under TRICARE as of July 1st. But, at the same time, the longstanding waiver that removed copays for all telehealth visits will end. Telephone-only visits allow more physicians to participate in Veteran health care and allow patients who don't own a video call capability to obtain medical help more easily, especially those in rural areas.

- NEWS FROM THE FIVE MILITARY BRANCHES -

ARMY: The congressional commission tasked with removing Confederate-related names from military bases has recently concluded that Fort Bragg's name should be changed to Fort Liberty to represent the ideal of liberty.

NAVY: Regs now allow retired sailors to wear beards while in dress uniform. Active-duty male sailors may now have flat-top, high & tight, faded, and bald hairstyles. Women can even have one side of their head shaved!

MARINES: Snipers will soon get the MK22 Mod 2 Advanced Sniper Rifle with: sound/flash suppressor, 10-round detachable magazine, 7x35 precision scope, and changeable barrel to allow use of several types of ammo.

AIR FORCE: In honor of Colonel Gail Halvorsen, the "Candy Bomber" during the Berlin Airlift, a C-17 Globemaster III transport was recently dedicated as the "Spirit of the Candy Bomber," with fuselage artwork!

SPACE FORCE: A \$1.4 Billion contract was recently awarded to the "BlueHalo" firm to provide augmented satellite control capability for U.S. Space Force satellites that will achieve a ten-fold communications capacity.

2021 Calendar: *Board Meetings*: 25 August, 27 October, 15 December

General Membership Meetings/Dinners: 22 September, 1 December

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.

———— 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 (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. 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 legislative "Take Action" website is located at: <https://moaa.quorum.us>

OUR NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING/DINNER WILL BE ON SEPTEMBER 22ND