

THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



September 2026

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER

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President's Comments: Colonel Dana Tucker

I was very pleased to see that passage of the North Carolina state budget is giving a big “shot-in-the-arm” to the NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (NCDMVA). One of the biggest elements moving forward is rebuilding the Fayetteville State Veterans Home, thereby ending lots of consternation regarding its ultimate fate. The home will return to being a huge boon to hundreds of North Carolina Veterans. Another big element of the budget's funding is an investment in the State Veterans Cemeteries to improve daily operations and ensure that the final resting place for each Veteran reflects dignity and respect. In an overall sense, the NCDMVA leaders stated that, “North Carolina’s state budget represents meaningful growth for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. By investing in infrastructure, staffing, and maintenance, it enhances the services Veterans, servicemembers, and their families rely on every day. While there is always more investment to be made, this budget expands capacity, supports modernization of critical programs, and is a step forward in strengthening the state’s commitment to ensuring no Veteran, servicemember, or family is left behind.” Our MOAA NC Council of Chapters will continue to follow the work of NCDMVA to ensure that these efforts do not stall out. Herb Segal is the NCCoC VP for State Advocacy and is participating actively in NCDMVA council discussions.

Most of our chapter members received e-mails from National MOAA that announced what is essentially a “time out” for the comprehensive Take Care of America’s Veterans Act, which is a package that advances more than twenty individual MOAA-supported bills. Yes, some Veterans support groups are dissatisfied with several elements and the language of this bill. But, as was explained to us, the Take Care of America’s Veterans Act isn’t perfect, but it surely brings so many much needed and long-awaited Veterans related initiatives to fruition. MOAA views this as “A pivotal moment for the Veteran community.” You can voice support for it now at MOAA’s Legislative Action Center (www.moaa.quorum.us). Plus, be ready to similarly act when MOAA prompts all of us to simultaneously give it (H.R. 9237) a big push via their Legislative Action Center. Meanwhile, in light of an imminent Continuing Resolution and a potential Government Shutdown, consider similarly supporting the Pay Our Troops Act of 2026 (H.R. 5401), which is now in the House Committee on Appropriations.

Military officers all go through service schools and joint training where they learn a dictionary’s worth of acronyms. One of them is FEBA, which translates to: Forward Edge of the Battle Area. That is, hostile fire on the forward side of the line and relatively safer conditions on the rear side. FEBA became obsolete with our engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine and our conflict with Iran further show there is no "rear" and "forward" with missile and drone warfare. Now logistics, maintenance, communications and command personnel positioned remotely and the sailors and marines aboard ships are much more vulnerable to lethal attacks from the enemy. Thus, it’s no longer only the so-called “trigger-pullers” who face the enemy. Now, everyone on both sides of what was the FEBA is a warfighter who must continually muster up the courage to face and defeat our enemies in a greatly expanded battlespace. Despite the increased risk, they bravely remain fully in the fight to defeat those who wish to do our country harm. So, I simply ask that on this Patriots Day your prayers and thoughts include all of our nation’s deployed military personnel, many of whom have never before been so much in harm’s way.

One last thought here, let's all give a hearty ***Welcome Aboard!*** to Catawba Valley chapter's newest member: Air Force Lt Col Pierre "Lou" Davignon, who resides in Hickory. Also, it sure is nice to see our chapter growing!

New Marine Museum: The Carolina Museum of the Marine opened on June 8th. Located in Jacksonville, NC, the \$30 million museum took two years to construct. The museum focuses on the Marines of the Southeastern coast of the U.S., especially North and South Carolina. And, it also includes sailors of the so-called "Gator Navy" amphibious fleet. The 25,000 square foot museum houses 22 exhibits, with the historical time-line starting around 1941. The museum is a stunning edifice on a grand scale, and there are several magnificent monuments on the landscaped grounds. The pathway to the museum entrance is being paved with engraved bricks that anyone can order to honor a Marine or to commemorate a legacy of service in the Corps. By the way, The museum's website has a "Valor and Virtue" page with interviews of Marine Corps Veterans. Plus; there's an on-line gift shop with unique Marine themed items. To learn how to order a tribute brick or to plan a visit, go to website www.museumofthemarine.org.

Carolina Museum of the Marine Photo



The new USMC Museum building in Jacksonville, NC

**POW/MIA Recognition
Day September 18th**



**9.11 Patriot Day
September 11th**



Alamy Photo



Kings Mountain Historical Museum hosts special exhibit

There's a special Catawba exhibit at the Kings Mountain Historical Museum that may be of interest to members of our Catawba Valley Chapter, especially history buffs. The title is "Choosing Sides; the Catawba Nation and the Fight for Independence." It provides fascinating insights into the Catawba Nation's activities during the American Revolutionary War. Those so-called "People of the River" were warriors and guides, allied with the Patriot cause. The Native Americans ("People who were here before us.") not only defended their homeland, they protected the settler communities. What's more, they participated in important battles of the Southern Campaign of the American Revolution. The exhibit at the museum offers accounts reflecting the Catawba nation's courageous legacy, many of their artifacts, and some artistic images of their culture and exploits. The exhibit runs through October 24th, and the museum is open on Tuesdays and Saturdays from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM. The museum is located at 100 East Mountain Street, in Kings Mountain, NC. You can view further details at website: www.kingsmountainmuseum.org

Till Death Do Us Part: Here's an interesting quote verbatim from author Jim Absher on the Military.com website, July 10th. Quote: When an officer retires, their commission normally remains in force and effect forever. In return for the privilege of being legally entitled to being addressed by their military rank and getting all their retirement benefits, they basically remain an "officer of the United States" until death. They can resign their commission, but few do. That means that, if there is a recall, the officers can be brought back without an act of Congress or presidential recall. End Quote. So, prudent officers might maintain at least a service dress uniform that fits, just in case it's needed someday. Interestingly, when a retired officer wears his or her service dress uniform, it may be the uniform authorized at the time of retirement or the currently authorized uniform, but not a mix of the two.

Initiative to Abolish Squatter Rights: There's a recently introduced bill in Congress titled, the Service Member Residence Protection Act (HR-3356). The purpose of the bill is to amend the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act to preempt any squatter's rights established by State law regarding real property owned by a member of the uniformed services. When passed, this bill will negate any state's law that establishes squatter's rights laws as it would have applied to premises owned by a servicemember. Picture the scenario without this law: A combat soldier returns from deployment wearing a bronze star (with "V" device) and a purple heart, only to find his home occupied by squatters with legal rights to continue occupying his home. Let's push for passage of Bill HR-3356.

Free Veterans Day Poster: The VA has created an 11" x 17" Veterans Day poster. It's compatible with most home office printers and is free to download. They recommend selecting the "Fit to page" option under the Page Setup menu prior to printing on 11" x 17" paper. The poster image is downloadable to your computer by clicking on a button on the VA's poster webpage. There are also two other buttons for wide format printers and commercial printers. The downloadable poster is available at this website: <https://department.va.gov/veterans-day/poster/>

Challenge Coin: The mailman performs the arduous duty of delivering loads of catalogues, many of which we simply toss out. But, a recent "Govmint" catalog offers a silver coin titled "Thank You for Your Service." Those words are on the face of the coin, along with a very artistic design of a soldier saluting. The obverse side of the coin features an eagle surrounded by the emblems of five military branches. Military personnel often "coin" each other, and this might serve as a unique "challenge coin" to give to a relative who just mustered up to serve his or her country or who is serving or has served in uniform. Of course, silver is expensive. View at www.govmint.com.

Enhanced VA Video Connect: The VA's telemedicine has added enhanced features to its video appointment mobile App. One new feature is the Live Caption View, adding captions at the bottom of the screen to display the conversation in print. This feature can be turned on or off, as desired. The other new feature is the Historical Transcript View, that's a running transcript of the visit as it occurs; this feature can be turned on for display on the left side of the screen. To capitalize on these features, update your VA Video Connect teleconferencing App.

Smoother and Safer Flights: Uniformed officers of the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) are surely proud of their hugely upgraded Graphical Turbulence Guidance Nowcast system. The global system now gives airborne pilots a turbulence forecast every 15 minutes, for 51 levels of altitude up to 50 thousand feet above ground. The system—operated by NOAA's National Weather Service—gives pilots inflight decision-making data regarding maximum expected turbulence caused by clear air turbulence, undulations caused by mountains, and bumpy skies due to atmospheric convection, which often comes in the form of thunderstorms. This new capability now facilitates planning and flying safer commercial flights around the globe. BTW: NOAA's uniformed officers are eligible to become MOAA members, just like officers of the U.S. Public Health Service.

Surviving Spouse Info: Our chapter's Surviving Spouse Liaison is Mrs. Mary McClish, her e-mail address is mdmcclish@bellsouth.net. For your info, Surviving Spouses who are members of our local MOAA chapter may simultaneously be members of the MOAA Surviving Spouses Virtual chapter; their website address is below. Their website contains the membership application form and application procedures. By the way, both our chapter and the Virtual Chapter grant free membership to Surviving Spouses. Here is the MOAA S-S website address: www.moaasurvivingspousevirtualchapter.org

- NEWS FROM THE FIVE MILITARY BRANCHES -

ARMY: Active duty, Reserve, and National Guard soldiers can now wear the “Jungle” tab on their uniforms if they’ve graduated from the tough Jungle Operations Training Course; authorization to wear the tab is retroactive.

NAVY: 19 Virginia Class submarines (SSN) have been redesignated as Guided Missile Submarines (SSGN). This involves hull modification to accommodate Virginia Payload Modules for new long-range strike capability.

MARINES: A new Squad Aiming Laser has been fielded to Marine units. This ultra-compact, all digital aiming system allows Marines to locate, identify and engage targets in contentious environments and harsh conditions.

AIR FORCE: A multi-day exercise at Creech AFB, NV involved employment of new Collaborative Combat Aircraft. The uncrewed aircraft operates as “Wingman” alongside fighter aircraft, with autonomous capabilities.

SPACE FORCE: A contract was awarded for 36 new satellites for missile defense tracking as a key element of the Golden Dome which will provide our homeland and deployed forces with defense against missile threats.

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.

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

2026	<i>General Membership Meetings/Dinners: Sep 17, Dec 8</i>
Calendar:	<i>Board Meetings: Oct 22, Dec 17</i>

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. 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 this affiliated chapter 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.*

Reservation Slip for Chapter's General Membership Meeting/Dinner

This is my reservation for MOAA Catawba Valley's General Membership meeting/dinner on **September 17th**, (a Thursday) at Lake Hickory Country Club. Cocktails/social time begins in the lounge at 6:00 p.m. and dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. Attire is coat and tie. Guest Speaker will be Command Sergeant Major Steven Johnson ARNG (Ret), discussing construction of houses for Purple Heart Homes.

Name of attendee(s): _____ & _____ & _____

Number of entrée selections: Chicken Cordon Bleu _____ Baked Salmon _____ Veggi Platter _____

Please send this slip and your check (**\$40.00 per attendee**) to arrive no later than September 14th, 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.)

*VA's 24/7 Crisis Line: Dial 988 and press 1, or text 838255, or chat
online at website: [VeteransCrisisLine.net/chat](https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/chat)*

*VA's Fraud & Scam Protection reporting desk: [VSAFE.gov](https://www.vsafe.gov) and
1-833-388-7233*

*Surviving Spouse virtual chapter website, with application form
www.moaasurvivingspousevirtualchapter.org*

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

*FYI: - Receive this newsletter via e-mail by requesting to: moaacvcnews@hotmail.com
- Directly access the MOAA "Legislative Action Center" at: www.moa.quorum.us*