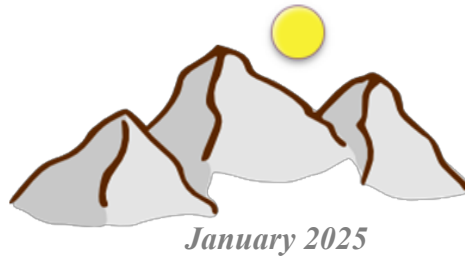


THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



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

My best wishes for a happy and healthy New Year to all of our chapter members and their families. This year we'll see some positive changes emanating from MOAA National in Alexandria, VA. First of all, local chapters are now being termed Affiliate Chapters to reflect the separate but connected relationship each of them has with MOAA National. Another forthcoming change is the implementation of a mechanism that makes it easier to pay chapter dues and make donations. This will be an on-line system where members make payments that ultimately flow back to our Chapter Treasurer. The roll-out of this new capability will start in early 2025 for a dozen or so chapters initially; then, the other chapters will be added throughout the year. Finally, I'll also be receiving a new quarterly MOAA report comprised of data from the Legislative Action Center. That will allow me to access data on chapter member registration numbers and actions taken (letters sent to congressmen and senators).

I'd like to thank those of you who served on our chapter's Board of Directors and those who filled staff positions over the past year. A few of you officers have been altruistically performing those duties for well over a decade and are getting a bit "long in the tooth." Well, that's certainly in line with MOAA's axiom: "Never stop serving." At any rate, we'll be nominating our chapter for yet another MOAA Level of Excellence Award. Our small chapter has engaged in benevolent activity that's properly focused and greatly appreciated by the recipients. Plus, we've continued our annual 19-unit JROTC support, providing MOAA Award Medals and presentation officers. And our General Membership meetings/dinners are enjoyed by all at Lake Hickory Country Club. All in all, I must say that our chapter has a great reputation amongst other state chapters and the state council—thanks to all of you!

I'll forgo the formal goal setting process for 2025 and simply say that we must continue to increase the size of our chapter membership, and also bring some current members on as members of the Board of Directors and the chapter staff. Those who come forward to fill open positions will not be saddled with any burdensome duties. Plus, the board and staff only meet every other month; actually, the meetings take place in Lake Hickory Country Club's "Tavern" where, after conducting formal business, we always enjoy an excellent lunch and pleasant camaraderie. Another goal this year is for all of us is to track and act on legislation that is critical to the welfare of those who are serving or have served in uniform. That's because we're now entering an era where various political entities will be endeavoring to "reinvent" the U.S. military in many ways. Some changes will be controversial, maybe even earthshaking. Thus, we must ensure that the wellbeing of our military servicemembers, retirees, and their families remains a top priority during the inevitable turmoil on Capitol Hill and in the Pentagon.

Because of your generosity, our Benevolent Fund has remained robust and we're sufficiently covering our designated charities, and we've also donated to a few other relevant and worthy military related charitable activities and events in our area. Purple Heart Homes and Welcome Home Veterans are designated charities; they are close-to-home and highly deserving charities. In that vein, our Board of Directors has voted to switch from the MOAA National's Patriots Scholarship Program charity to two additional local organizations; so, our Benevolent Fund now has four designated local military community charities. Info about the two new charities is on the next page. BTW: It's certainly still possible to donate directly to MOAA's Patriot Scholarship Program.

Our MOAA chapter held its annual Charity Christmas Dinner at Lake Hickory Country Club on December 5th. The event started with a lively social hour where members enjoyed beverages and banter in the club's lounge. Our Chapter President then welcomed officers and guests in the Elijah Brown dining room. Afterwards, 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. Following that, everyone enjoyed a robust dinner, accompanied by Glenn Fox's incredible repertoire of popular holiday music and oldies instrumentals. Finally, the Charity Raffle was won by Chuck & Diane Benway, the prize being a very large and elaborately "carved" Jim Shore Santa Clause figurine. The evening concluded with couples dancing to Glenn Fox's music and the exchanging of holiday wishes. Two special guests at this year's holiday dinner event were: Major General "Jim" Mallory (US Army, Ret.), and MOAA NC Council of Chapters Surviving Spouse Liaison Dr. Vivianne Wersel.

MOAA CVC photo



Some of the officers at our Christmas dinner event

President's Day
Commander-in-Chief
February 17th



Photo Courtesy of Purple Heart Homes



MOAA CVC photo



Foothills Veterans Stand Down event from a previous time

As previously stated, we've added two local charities to our Benevolent Fund. The Statesville-based Piedmont Veterans Assistance Council (PVAC) provides assistance to struggling and homeless Veterans through transportation, access to food, housing and employment resources, and support with critical needs. Thus, providing the means for homeless Veterans to transition to being full-fledged, productive members of society. PVAC is partnered with several other organizations, such as Purple Heart Homes (PHH) which is now building tiny homes (pictured to the left) to expand capacity at PVAC's Veterans Transition housing facility. The Foothills Veterans Helping Veterans organization is based in Hickory. They conduct two huge indoor "Stand-down" events each year (pictured to the left), providing an amazing spectrum of on-scene services and clothing directly to Veterans, with special focus on homeless Veterans. We've been a major sponsor of past Stand Down events; so, rather than an ad hoc involvement, it's now one of our chapter's permanently designated charities.

Chapter Dues: Time to pay our very light annual membership dues—only **\$30!** Newly Joined members do not pay dues for first year of membership, and Surviving Spouses do not pay dues. Please send your payment to:
Major Dennis McClish, 117 Wildwood Loop, Statesville, NC 28625

New Chapter Members: Welcome to our chapter's newly joined members: Major General James Mallory, USAR (Ret); Captain John "Felks" Felker, USCG (Ret); Major James McCauley, USAF (Ret); Captain Charles Benway, USA, (Former), and CWO4 Thomas Deatherage, USN (Ret). BTW: Our chapter Secretary recently distributed recruiting business cards that you can give to any potential chapter members you may encounter.

Reoccurring Base Visit Procedure: There's a new procedure for Veterans and Care Givers who make recurring visits to military installations. To enroll for reoccurring installation access, eligible Veterans and caregivers must establish identity, fitness, and purpose on their first visit to each DOD installation they wish to access at the visitor's center. As part of the enrollment, you must: 1.) Present an acceptable credential (VHIC or REAL ID) to establish identity. 2.) Undergo an on-the-spot criminal record and terrorism check to establish fitness. 3.) Have your eligibility for on-installation benefits verified electronically to establish purpose. Full details on how to initiate a three-year enrollment for recurring visits are on a downloadable fact sheet at website: www.militaryonesource.mil/products/process-for-veterans-and-caregivers-to-access-u-s-dod-installations-fact-sheet-1411/ (The fact sheet will also be posted on our chapter website: www.moaacvc.org)

New VA Account Login Procedure: Beginning February 1st, you must use a Login.gov or ID.me account to sign in to manage your VA health and benefits online account. The old sign-in method (My HealtheVet user-ID and password) will no longer be present on the website. You'll still be using the My HealtheVet health portal, it's just a matter of signing in with a Login.gov or ID.me account. If you don't have either of those, simply go to either of those website addresses to establish an account. The ID.me account is actually very useful for other purposes, such as getting military discounts when shopping for large-ticket items, such as computers, motor vehicles, etc.

Best-Kept-Secret NC Benefit: The North Carolina Scholarship Program has been established for any child of certain class categories of deceased, disabled, combat, or POW/MIA veterans. The veteran's qualifying criteria must have occurred during a period of war. The program applies to NC schools only. It's for eight academic semesters and the recipient has eight years to utilize all semesters. Applicant must be under the age of 25 when applying. At time of application, applicant must be domiciled and a resident of North Carolina. The deadline to apply is February 14th if the Veteran's disability is less than 100% service connected or served in a combat zone.

Proposed No-Cost Telehealth: Recently, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced that it is proposing to eliminate copayments for all VA telehealth services and to establish a grant program to fund designated VA telehealth access points in non-VA facilities, with a focus on rural and medically underserved communities. The proposed grant program, called Accessing Telehealth through Local Area Stations (ATLAS), would provide funding to organizations — including nonprofits and private businesses — to offer Veterans comfortable, private spaces equipped with high-speed internet access and the technology to meet with VA providers remotely. Learn more about VA telehealth services by visiting website: www.telehealth.va.gov

Four Chaplains Day: Four WWII Chaplains will be honored on February 3rd. They were aboard the U.S.A.T. Dorchester troop ship crossing the Atlantic. While the ship was sinking after being torpedoed by a German submarine, they each handed their life jackets to four soldiers in need, thus sacrificing their own lives to save the lives of four others. Each chaplain was of a different faith; yet, they all made the same heroic and selfless sacrifice. They were posthumously awarded the "Special Medal for Heroism" as a substitute for the Medal of Honor.

TAPS: We regretfully announce the passing of chapter member U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel James Garland Cole, of Conover. LTC Cole earned two Purple Hearts and two Bronze Stars for Valor in the Vietnam War. He last served as Chief of U.S. Army POW/MIA recovery operations. He is survived by his wife Susan Cole.

- NEWS FROM THE FIVE MILITARY BRANCHES -

ARMY: A \$435 million contract was just awarded to design and build a TNT (trinitrotoluene) production facility in Graham, KY. TNT is used in many munitions. This facility will strengthen the U.S. defense industrial base.

NAVY: The stealthy USS Zumwalt is currently being retrofitted with hypersonic missiles—the first ship of three ships to be so equipped. This converts previously ineffective gun turret ships into hypersonic missile platforms.

MARINES: The Corps' new Advanced MK22 Sniper Rifle has been fielded to infantry and recon units. The rifle comes with a 7 x 35 optical unit, multiple barrels for caliber conversion, and it has a range of 1,500 meters!

AIR FORCE: The Will Rogers ANG Base in Oklahoma City has established a training unit for the OA-1K Sky Warden aircraft. This militarized single engine "Air Tractor" crop duster assumes a reconnaissance role in 2027.

SPACE FORCE: A Space Test Program has just begun with Air Force Research Lab to characterize performance of variable emissivity materials. This is an effort toward solving thermal challenges for space vehicles in orbit.

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.

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

2024 Calendar: General Membership Meetings/Dinners: Jan 16, Mar 20, May 15, Sep 18, Dec 11

Board Meetings: Feb 27, Apr 24, Jun 26, Aug 28, Oct 23, Dec 4

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

Chapter President: LTC "Davy" Davenport

1st Vice President: Captain George Taylor

2nd Vice President: Vacant

Treasurer: Commander Dave Olson

Secretary: Major Dennis McClish

Chaplain: Reverend (CW3) Robert Herron

Programs Chairman: Vacant

Director: Vacant

Director: Colonel Joe Cansler

Director: Vacant

Legislative Liaison: Colonel (Dr.) Dana Tucker

Surviving Spouses Liaison: Mrs. Mary McClish

Membership Chair: Vacant

JROTC Coordinator: Lt Col G. Jane Harmon

Personal Affairs & TOPS: Colonel John Liburdi

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

Reservation for MOAA Catawba Valley General Membership Meeting/Dinner

This is my reservation for MOAA Catawba Valley's General Membership meeting/dinner on **January 16th**, (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. 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 (**\$35.00 per attendee**) to arrive no later than January 13th, 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*

*VA's Fraud & Scam Protection reporting desk: VSAFE.gov and
1-833-388-7233*

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

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