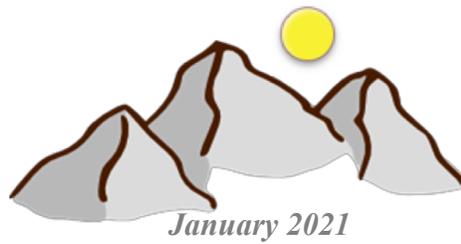


THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER

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President: LTC Cliff Davenport

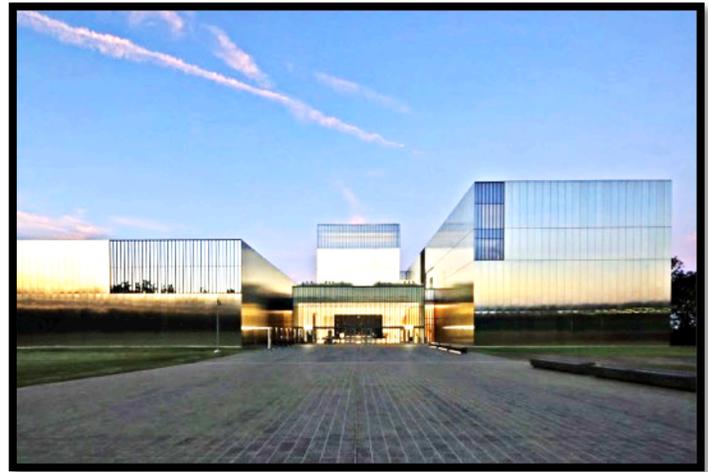
President's Comments: There's no doubt that we're all weary of the restrictions and precautions related to the ongoing pandemic. And, for our more senior (in age) members, it's been a rather tarnished "Golden Year." Thankfully, there's now light at the end of the tunnel, indicating that we're almost out of this worrisome situation. I'm confident that, one way or another, we'll soon be able to again enjoy each other's company at the Lake Hickory Country Club. This should happen sometime in the spring; meanwhile, the newsletters and websites published by our chapter and national MOAA are significant vehicles for keeping us linked together, at least in spirit. Also, our chapter staff members have been participating in board meetings conducted in the video teleconference mode, under the kind auspices of chapter member Colonel (Dr.) Dana Tucker.

On top of the difficulties stemming from the pandemic, this period in our nation's political history is proving to be one of the most challenging times ever for senior leaders in the military establishment. Two starkly contrasting government entities—the incumbent administration and the elected administration—are towering over our Generals and Admirals in the Pentagon. Following the direction of the so-called "Civilian Masters" in these transition months must be highly stressful and frustrating. What's at stake here is the strength of our national defense and the wellbeing of those who are serving or have served in uniform. Of special concern is the potential negative impact on efforts to modernize our military forces in order to stay ahead of potential adversaries who've been making huge investments in weapon systems. Our duty as MOAA members is to stay abreast of emerging military related legislation and policy so that we can quickly communicate with political officials when prompted by MOAA National, at a minimum via MOAA's "Take Action" e-mail system.

During our most recent chapter board meeting, members discussed and voted on the annual Benevolent Fund donations. This year they distributed equal amounts to our three designated charities: the MOAA American Patriot Scholarship Program for children of military parents who died on active duty, Purple Heart Homes that continues constructing or modifying accessible houses for wounded warriors, and the Welcome Home Veterans facility that's a living museum and gathering spot for Veterans throughout our area. Plus, a donation was sent to the Veterans Motocross Foundation that provides mental and physical therapy to Veterans. As mentioned previously, we haven't been holding events that prompt donations to the chapter's Benevolent Fund; so, please consider adding a donation when you send in your annual dues—still a token \$25 after all these years!

The sad loss of some chapter members has left gaps in our ranks. Each one of those officers was a highly respected military professional and a cherished friend. With warm memories in our hearts, we must now push forward and capitalize on every opportunity to muster in other uniformed officers. Increasing the number of chapter members will also help fill several vacant staff positions. Filling those positions will surely preserve the continuity of our chapter's social and charitable activity; plus, it will bolster MOAA's "One Powerful Voice" in support of military related legislation, both on the state level and the national level. Please keep recruiting in mind when state health officials finally give the OK to dispense with the pandemic-related restrictions, thereby greatly increasing opportunities for chance encounters with the many non-member officers residing in our area.

The Army’s New Museum: The long-awaited National Museum of the U.S. Army was recently opened this past Veterans Day. It’s located on a publicly accessible area of Fort Belvoir, Virginia. It’s the first and only museum to tell the entire history of the U.S. Army since it was established in 1775. The Secretary of the Army said, “The National Army Museum is a place for members of the total Army family to gather and share their stories, while also creating an opportunity for visitors to connect with our nation’s history through the eyes and voices of individual Soldiers.” The centerpiece of the National Museum of the United States Army is a major exhibition facility where the stories of soldiers will be joined with thousands of artifacts, documents, and images tracing the history of the United States Army through a series of chronological and thematic galleries. There are also areas set aside for special ceremonies and reunions. This 185,000 square foot museum employs enhanced health and safety practices, and free timed-entry tickets can be obtained via their website: www.themusa.org. You can see a superb three-minute video of the museum at website: https://youtu.be/3MLNA_bf2EE



Newly constructed *National Museum of the U.S. Army*



USO birthday is February 4th.
200 facilities in 14 countries!
www.uso.org

USAF AFRL Image



Air Force’s Skyborg autonomous & attritable UAV

*Please mail chapter
\$25 annual dues to:*

MAJ Dennis McClish
117 Wildwood Loop
Statesville, NC 28625



Unmanned Wingman: In an effort to transform how airpower is employed in combat scenarios, the Air Force Research Lab has initiated the Skyborg aircraft program. This new unmanned aircraft is teamed with traditional manned fighter aircraft on flying missions—as a “wingman.” It will be capable of operating autonomously in air combat scenarios, including on missions that are too strenuous or dangerous for manned aircrews. Furthermore, it’s anticipated that in extremely dangerous warfighting scenarios, a Skyborg wingman might even sacrifice itself to achieve mission success—think Kamikaze! This means that air campaign managers will be able to launch decisive missions with reduced risk to the lives of Air Force pilots. To further explain the autonomous feature, it means that specific maneuvers of the artificial intelligence enabled Skyborg won’t be directly controlled, instead the unmanned aircraft will be able to perceive, assess, decide and act on its own, within the context of its assigned mission. Four different companies have been awarded an open-contract to develop and deliver Skyborg aircraft, each one hoping to be selected to fill future orders of the aircraft for Air Force warfighters.

TAPS: We sadly announce the passing of Captain Allen Stewart, a highly distinguished Naval officer and a chapter member since 1993. Captain Stewart had an amazing legacy of career military service as an architect, responsible for key military construction projects throughout the world. During retirement, he was the Rutgers University Architect and altruistically served his community in multiple venues. Captain Stewart was a Vietnam Veteran, and among his many decorations are the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star with Combat “V.”

MOAA Surviving Spouses and Friends Facebook Page: There’s a new Facebook page for surviving spouses and families. This Facebook group provides a supportive, nonjudgmental group to assist in learning about and keeping up to date on benefits and legislation impacting surviving military families. This is an opportunity to connect with other military spouses who share similar interests. This is a private group, and there are no fees or dues. Membership has been expanded to include not just surviving spouses but also military families, military spouses, council and chapter surviving spouse liaisons, advocates, and others with an interest in issues that impact the survivor community, regardless of MOAA membership status! It’s necessary to answer a couple of brief questions and be approved by the administrators of the group in order to join.

Scammer Frenzy: Scammers are intensifying their rip-off activity. Phishing e-mails generally have an urgent message, such as “your account password has expired.” They direct you to an official-looking link or attachment. But the link takes you to a fake site that requests your username and password. Or the attachment may contain malware, which secretly downloads software that lets thieves steal passwords. Visit the Iredell Sheriff’s Office website “Recent Scams” page for info on scams and defense strategies: www.iredellsherrif.com

Military One Source: This DoD service provides information on every aspect of military life at no cost to service members (including Veterans) and their families. In addition to website support, Military One Source offers call center and online support for consultations on a wide range of issues from everyday concerns to deployment-related issues. Military One Source also offers confidential, non-medical counseling services face to face, by telephone and through secure online chat or real-time video addressing issues requiring short-term attention. Help services are available 24 hours a day, no matter where you live or serve. Here’s the Military One Source website: www.militaryonesource.mil (There’s also a “Military One Source” App for smartphones!)

MWR Digital Library: Part of the above Military One Source service is the Internet-based MWR Digital Library. Free to service members (including Veterans) and their families. The MWR Digital Library offers an array of resources to keep adults, teens and children busy and engaged. Just log in to your Military One Source account or create one and start browsing thousands of books and magazines, many of which are audio books! Again, one must first create a Military One Source account at www.militaryonesource.mil. Some of the imbedded library sources may also require you to establish an account with their specific on-line service.

Four Chaplains Day: This annual event occurs every February 3rd. It’s a national event that honors four military chaplains who purposely sacrificed their own lives during WWII in order to save their comrades in arms. The four chaplains were Roman Catholic priest Father John P. Washington, Methodist minister Reverend George L. Fox, Reform Rabbi Alexander D. Goode, and Reverend Clark V. Poling of the Reformed Church in America. The four chaplains all met at the Chaplains School at Harvard where they were appointed as chaplains. There are two books that tell their heroic story: *The Four Immortal Chaplains: Legacy of Virtue* and *No Greater Glory: The Four Immortal Chaplains and the Sinking of the Dorchester in World War II*. Plus, their story is told in a 2004 movie: *Sacrifice at Sea: Heroic Story of the Four Chaplains & the SS Dorchester*.

Be Prepared For Any Eventuality: Occasionally check your will and powers of attorney to ensure they’re up to date. Any change in one’s life means it’s a time to tend to these legal matters. Most Base/Post legal offices offer to prepare those documents free of charge, and they provide the required witnesses! Appointments are required for this type of service. The Fort Jackson Legal Assistance Office phone number is: 803-751-4287

Wounded Veterans Recreation Act: This legislation was just signed into law, thereby allowing free lifetime entry to national parks for Veterans who suffered or aggravated disabilities during their service in the military.

- NEWS FROM THE BLUE FORCE TRACKER

ARMY: The Advanced Targeting & Lethality System is being tested; it provides instant target recognition and fire control, thus allowing heavy combat vehicles to engage three targets in the time it now takes for just one.

NAVY: USNI News states a \$9.4 billion contract was awarded to start the design and build a dozen nuclear-armed ballistic missile submarines; the first sub of this overall \$110 billion project will start patrols in FY31.

MARINES: As part of a 10-year force-wide redesign, the Corps is eliminating heavy-armor vehicles not suited for lighter naval-based operations. Officers and enlisted in tank-related specialties will either retrain or separate.

AIR FORCE: Tyndall AFB is integrating semi-autonomous robot dogs into their patrolling activity. The computerized canines resemble dogs and patrol areas that aren't desirable for human beings and vehicles.

SPACE FORCE: Similar to titles like soldier, sailor, airman, Space Force personnel are now called "Guardians," and their service motto is: "Semper Supra," which translated from Latin means "Always Above."

2021 Calendar: *Board Meetings*: March 4 Video, April 22, June 24, August 26, October 28, and December 26th
General Membership Meetings/Dinners: January 28 Cancelled, March 25 Tentative, May 27 Probable, July 22, September 23, and December 2nd Chapter's Christmas Charity Dinner.

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.

Treasury: Our chapter is financially sound and has adequate funds to cover all activities planned for 2021.

———— 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!*
1st Past President: Colonel Gemeinhardt

Director: Colonel (Dr.) Don Gemeinhardt
Director: *Vacant!*
Director: Colonel Joe Cansler
Legislative Liaison: Colonel (Dr.) Dana Tucker
Membership Chair: *Vacant!*
JROTC Coordinator: Lt Col G. Jane Harmon
Personal Affairs & TOPS: Lt Col Ted Hayes
Newsletter/Website: Colonel John Liburdi

About This MOAA Chapter: The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a nonprofit veterans association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services, including their families and survivors. MOAA and its affiliated chapters and councils are nonpartisan, without any political party affiliation, bias, or designation. 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. A one-page membership application form is posted on the "Join Chapter" button on our chapter website homepage; the mailing address for the application is shown right on the form itself. **Please join our chapter!** Our chapter website is at: www.moaacvc.org

NOTE: *Regrettably, we've had to cancel our chapter's general membership meetings/dinners due to the ongoing pandemic. Thankfully, CDC guidance and State constraints on restaurant operation should be relaxed before too long. We're hoping that Lake Hickory Country Club will be able to resume hosting our events in late March; however, that restart of in-person chapter events might slip to late May.*



USPS & AARP TEAM UP FOR OPERATION PROTECT VETERANS

In the current Internet age, where scammers are increasingly difficult to locate and arrest, consumer awareness and prevention is the best weapon we have to combat these schemes. For that purpose, the AARP Fraud Watch Network and the U.S. Postal Inspection Service have partnered in the launch of Operation Protect Veterans — a national campaign to warn those who have served in the military about scams and fraud schemes that target Veterans. Together, we aim to expose these frauds and counter the increasing assault on our Veterans. “The U.S. Postal Inspection Service is committed to protecting our Veterans from scammers who continuously prey upon them for their own illicit gains,” said Guy Cottrell, chief postal inspector. “We will continue in our fraud prevention efforts to inform Veterans about scam artists who fraudulently utilize advances in technology and tailor their pitches towards them.” The Postal Inspection Service and AARP are warning all Americans who have served in the military to look out for the following Veteran-tailored scams:

- **The benefits buyout offer.** Scammers take advantage of Veterans in need by offering a quick upfront buyout, usually at a fraction of the value, of future disability or pension payments.
- **The fake charitable giving request.** Scammers make fraudulent claims about charitable giving that benefits Veterans or wounded service members.
- **Fraudulent records offer.** Scammers try to charge Veterans a fee to access military records or government forms, information that is actually available for free through the National Archives (for military records) and VA.gov or local VA offices (for forms)
- **The VA phishing scam.** Scammers posing as VA employees call Veterans to “phish” for Social Security numbers and personal financial information, which they use to access bank accounts and/or open fake credit card accounts.
- **The bogus employment scam.** Scammers post fake job descriptions to collect personal information from a Veteran’s job application, or they charge an employment fee.

These scammers are a devious, diabolical enemy. They know which heart strings to pull in order to get what they want, which is always the same thing: your money, or your personal information. Veterans, and all Americans, should be suspicious of any phone call or email requesting you send or transfer money or asking for personal information of any kind (e.g., Social Security number, address, etc.).

Don’t give it to them. Research and verify all offers and claims. And if they persist or make financial threats, just remember: in the battle against this kind of criminal, the surest tactic for victory may be to simply hang up or press “delete.” If you or a loved one has encountered a financial scam in the last 12 months, please help us (USPS) keep fighting for our Veterans by calling 877-908-3360.