

# THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



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## MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER

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**President: LTC Cliff Davenport**

**President's Comments:** We'll soon be celebrating Memorial Day. Originally termed Decoration Day, it's a time when we formally honor those who died in the service of our country. This special day was established soon after the end of the Civil War when General John Logan—Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic—issued General Order 11 to establish May 30<sup>th</sup> as Decoration Day. The tradition was to strew flowers on the graves of Civil War soldiers. Of course, that floral tradition then continued in the form of red poppies, now distributed by local VFW posts. The poppy tradition emanates from Flanders Fields where fallen WWI heroes lie, largely popularized by Canadian Colonel John McCrae's 1915 poem, *In Flanders Fields*. His sentiments and symbolism were echoed when Moina Michael replied with her own 1918 poem, *We Shall Keep the Faith*. Her poem proclaimed: "We cherish, too, the Poppy red that grows on fields where valor led; it seems to signal to the skies that blood of heroes never dies..." In 1971, Decoration Day was formally changed to Memorial Day (the last Monday in May) to honor those military service personnel who died in all American wars. Then in 2020, an additional Memorial Day feature known as National Moment of Remembrance was established. At exactly 3:00 p.m. local time, all citizens pause for one minute to quietly remember those who died while serving in uniform. I hope every chapter member will display the American Flag and observe the moment of silence on Memorial Day, remembering that throughout our military history, "All gave some, some gave all."

Of course, most of those serving in the military have families that provide tangible and moral support to the military member. Indeed, military spouses are the largely unsung heroes of military life, especially if the family is engaged in a full military career. The spouse handles a myriad of military related tasks and activities, oftentimes acting as a pseudo aide de camp and protocol officer. There are also long duty hours away from home for military members, plus the extended absences for temporary duty assignments and some long overseas deployments or sea duty. When the spouse is able to accompany the military member on an overseas assignment, the household and cultural setting is usually quite foreign, with a big learning curve. Furthermore, the household may be on a base, post, or embassy where there's a strong potential for terrorism or war. In any setting, the spouse not only has to accept long absences associated with military activity; he or she has to reassure herself and the children that daddy or mommy will eventually return home safely from a faraway battlefield or the high seas. During times when the spouse is holding down the fort alone, he or she has to singlehandedly organize school activity, health care, family shopping, household maintenance, car repairs, and financial management for the entire family. Oh, by the way, due to frequent assignment relocations, the spouse essentially gives up his or her career in deference to the importance of military duty and needs. Yes, there are many rewards to military life, but surveys show that spouses are increasingly dissatisfied with military life. This does not bode well for retention of military personnel; that's why MOAA National has given top priority to a host of issues that improve the quality of life for the military spouse and family. In that same spirit, please join me in a salute to our spouses on Military Spouse Appreciation Day—Friday, May 7<sup>th</sup>.

**Military Field of Honor:** The Carolina Field of Honor at Triad Park is a stunning memorial site, located in Kernersville. The mission of the Carolina Field of Honor is to “Preserve the history of veterans who have served this great nation.” The central feature of the park is a 57-foot obelisk and fountains that required a million pounds of concrete and granite to construct. Each branch of service has an individual monument of black granite weighing 15 thousand pounds. Plus, there are inscribed descriptions of every past war. This beautiful, expansive site honors all heroes of all services in a timeless manner. Various ceremonies beyond just Memorial Day and Veterans Day are held at this site, including promotion ceremonies and retirement ceremonies. The Field of Honor staff is now taking on-line reservations for remembrance pavers to be in place before the 2022 Memorial Day ceremony. Pavers will be installed adjacent to the monument of the honored service person’s military branch. Purchase by visiting website: [www.carolinafieldofhonor.org](http://www.carolinafieldofhonor.org). Reaching the Field of Honor isn’t difficult; just head east on I-40 and get off at Kernersville Exit 221; then head north on Macy Grove Road. Carolina Field of Honor’s address is: 9652 W. Market St., Kernersville, NC 27284. It’s less than an hour east of Statesville. Hours are same as Triad Park, shown at website: [www.co.forsyth.nc.us/parks/triad/](http://www.co.forsyth.nc.us/parks/triad/)

Photo by Brandi L. Chappell



*Carolina Field of Honor at Triad Park*

**Armed Forces Day** is May 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Honoring all those serving or who  
have served in our Armed Forces.

 **Memorial Day 2021 is on May 31<sup>st</sup>**

Public Domain Photo



*U.S. Navy’s new “Stingray” unmanned aircraft*

**The New Stingray:** Older (more “salty”) sailors may remember the Drone Anti-Submarine Helicopters (DASH) carried on Navy destroyers in the sixties and early seventies; those drones appeared to be clunky contraptions, made on Christmas day using a gift Erector Set. Compare the DASH with the Navy’s new ultra-sleek, high-tech MQ-25 Stingray UAV, built by Boeing. The carrier-based Stingray is powered by a Rolls-Royce turbofan, it’s 51 feet long and has a wingspan of 75 feet—foldable to 31 feet. Authoritative voices have said that when the Stingray flies with the F/A-18 Super Hornet, the Super Hornet’s operating range will be extended from 450 miles to over 700 miles. Besides its main mission of Intelligence, Surveillance & Reconnaissance, the “tanker” version of the unmanned Stingray can deliver 15,000 pounds of fuel to four aircraft up to 500 miles away from the carrier. Twenty MQ-25A Stingray UAV aircraft will soon be home-based at Point Mugu, CA, along with about 700 personnel and their families. There’s a Stingray test flight video at: [www.youtube.com/watch?v=8\\_HrWcb9MCY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_HrWcb9MCY)

**Immunization Reporting:** Chapter members are kindly requested to inform our Secretary when they've been fully immunized against the COVID-19 virus. This will allow us to determine the number of members potentially able to attend our next General Membership meeting at Lake Hickory Country Club. When you (and spouse) are fully immunized, please inform Major Dennis McClish via e-mail: [demcclish1@bellsouth.net](mailto:demcclish1@bellsouth.net)

**Looking for a Liaison:** Our chapter is in dire need of a volunteer to fill the position of Legislative Liaison. However, with so much info readily available to us on various Internet based platforms, we as individuals always have the opportunity to influence the outcome of military related legislation. Anyone one of us can make an appointment to visit a politician's home office, or even make direct contact via telephone. Another option is to communicate via mail or e-mail, which would certainly be more "For the Record." To obtain a state legislator's contact info, simply go to the website: [www.ncleg.gov/FindYourLegislators](http://www.ncleg.gov/FindYourLegislators); then type in your street address. Or, click on the "Legislation" button on our chapter website's homepage; then click on the NC General Assembly link; then you type in your street address. Either way, you'll instantly see a short list of your legislators in both the NC House and the Senate. Click on any name and all their contact info is immediately displayed, including mailing address and e-mail address. The NC 4<sup>th</sup> Branch website has a similar feature.

**JROTC MOAA Awards:** Thanks to LTC Jane Harmon's foresight and initiative, our chapter has provisioned its nineteen associated JROTC units with MOAA Award medals and certificates. This year, not all chapters were able to obtain the awards and certificates due to sourcing problems at MOAA. These items are purchased by our chapter and are normally presented to each unit's top cadet during a JROTC in-uniform ceremony at each unit's respective high school assembly event. Obviously, most of this activity was necessarily done in the virtual mode this year. Award recipients are authorized to wear the MOAA Award on their cadet uniforms.

**Those Who Never Returned:** The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) administers, operates and maintains 26 permanent American military cemeteries and 31 federal memorials, monuments and markers, which are located in 17 foreign countries, the U.S. Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the British Dependency of Gibraltar. These cemeteries and memorials, most of which commemorate the service and sacrifice of Americans who served in World War I and World War II, are among the most beautiful and meticulously maintained shrines in the world. On Memorial Day, you can make a virtual visit to these overseas sites where military heroes rest in peace. Simply go to the ABMC's superb website at: [www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov)

**Armed Forces Day:** Armed Forces day is May 22<sup>nd</sup>, a Saturday. It's a day in which our nation honors all those who currently serve or have served in any of the six branches of the Armed Forces, which are: the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, Space Force and Coast Guard, including the National Guard and Reserve components. The first Armed Forces Day was in 1950, and President "JFK" designated it to be a national holiday in 1961.

**Military/Spouse ID Card News:** Due to the ongoing pandemic, the DoD has authorized the use of expired identification cards through June 30, 2021, thus extending the previous deadline. **Plus**, this summer, ID card offices will start issuing permanent, indefinite expiration ID cards to eligible retirees and dependents at **age 65!** DoD ID card offices are doing renewals by appointment only, and all renewals must be made via the *Real-Time Automated Personnel Identification System* at: <https://idco.dmdc.osd.mil/idco/> (Our chapter website has a link!)

**COVID-19 Burial Benefit:** Not a cheery subject; however, we wanted to get the word out about this obscure but significant benefit. The Federal Emergency Management Agency will provide up to \$7,000 to reimburse funeral expenses for COVID-19 related deaths that occurred after January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2020. The program just started in April, and info can be found at website: [www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance](http://www.fema.gov/disasters/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance)

**IRS Long-Term Care Deductions:** The IRS recently upped the allowed deduction for Long-Term Care premium expenses for tax year 2021. Here are the new limitations for attained age: 40 or less \$450 / 41 to 50 \$850 / 51 to 60 \$1,690 / 61 to 70 \$4,520 / more than 70 \$5,640. This deduction falls under Medical Expenses.

## - NEWS FROM THE BLUE FORCE TRACKER -

ARMY: Researchers developed technology that allows rotary wing UAVs to autonomously land on moving unmanned ground vehicles (without GPS assist) for a machine-to-machine recharge before continuing flight.

NAVY: The USS Montana (SSN 794) was recently launched. It's the first naval vessel named after that state since 1908. The sub has 12 Tomahawk missile tubes, 4 torpedo tubes, and will cruise at 25 knots for months.

MARINES: The II Marine Expeditionary Force was recently provisioned with Command Platform Airbeam Tents—giant mobile shelters constructed using beams of compressed air that can be inflated in just 30 minutes.

AIR FORCE: The Air Force just released its new mission statement: “To fly, fight, and win...airpower anytime, anywhere.” This strictly “Airpower” version drops the “Space” and “Cyberspace” elements previously included.

SPACE FORCE: First-ever Space Test Fundamentals course just concluded. The program, much like Test Pilot School, provides hands-on training in flight-test fundamentals focused on testing and evaluating space systems.

**2021 Calendar:** *Board Meetings*: June 24, August 26, October 28, and November 18<sup>th</sup>  
*General Membership Meetings/Dinners*: May 27, July 22, September 23, and December 2<sup>nd</sup>

**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.

**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  
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*!  
1<sup>st</sup> Past President: Colonel Don Gemeinhardt

Director: Colonel (Dr.) Don Gemeinhardt  
Director: *Vacant*!  
Director: Colonel Joe Cansler  
Legislative Liaison: *Vacant*!  
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](http://www.moaacvc.org)

*Our website has been upgraded for easy viewing on mobile devices!*

[www.moaacvc.org](http://www.moaacvc.org)

MOAA website “Take Action” feature: <https://takeaction.moaacvc.org>



## ***Pending Legislation to Eliminate Income Tax for Military Retirees***

There are five pending bills in the NC General Assembly that would, if passed, exempt military retiree pay from state taxation. Two are military only, and the other three also cover all government employees. View the current version of each bill by using the search feature on the NC General Assembly website: **[www.ncleg.gov](http://www.ncleg.gov)**. Also, extensive background on this issue and the pros and cons of each bill are explained in a new MOAA NC Chapters point paper that's now posted on the "Legislation" page of our chapter website: **[www.moaacvc.org](http://www.moaacvc.org)**.

Briefly, NC Senate Bill S4, NC House Bill H75 and H52 are each efforts to extend state-tax exemption to government retirees, including the military. The bills are in the context of extending the Bailey Case to recent and new military and government retirees. As separate military only initiatives, NC House Bill H83 and NC Senate Bill S12 both call for eliminating state income tax specifically on military retired pay only.

Members may advocate for whichever bill they prefer, but our chapter as an entity supports NC Senate Bill "S4." This bill seeks to extend the Bailey Case to cover retired military and government employees. However, passage of this bill would grant tax-exempt status to military retiree pay only, and then later grant tax-exempt status to retired government employees at a time when the state can afford to extend that benefit to them.

You can launch a pre-worded advocacy e-mail to your respective legislators by visiting the "Action Center" page of NC 4<sup>th</sup> Branch's website: **<http://4thbranchnc.org>**. The names of your elected officials will automatically display when you type in your zip code and then street address.

### ***Here are some reasons for passing a state tax-exempt bill covering at least North Carolina military retirees:***

- 21 states already exempt all military retirement pay from taxation in appreciation for service to the country.
- Most military retirees need to purchase a home, a big job generator for North Carolina.
- Retirees' consumer purchases and banking activity increase sales tax revenue and the availability of capital.
- Empty-nester military retirees will pay property taxes without utilizing the school system.
- Middle-aged military retirees bring technical and managerial skills that facilitate industrial growth in our state.
- Military retirees come from a "Service Before Self" culture and are likely to engage in community support.
- Providing the military tax-exempt benefit contributes towards making North Carolina a "Military Friendly" state, thereby preserving existing military bases and attracting defense industry with its job opportunities.

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### **RESERVATION FOR GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING/DINNER AT LHCC**

This is my reservation for MOAA Catawba Valley Chapter's General Membership meeting/dinner being held on **May 27<sup>th</sup>** at Lake Hickory Country Club. The social hour in the club's lounge will start at 6:00 p.m. and dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. The guest speaker for the evening will be Colonel (Dr.) Dana Tucker, he'll give a presentation on the NC National Guard's role in the COVID-19 Joint Task Force in the Piedmont Triad.

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

Menu Selection(s): London Broil \_\_\_\_\_ / Baked Salmon \_\_\_\_\_ / Veggie Plate \_\_\_\_\_

***AS A PRECAUTION, WE'RE REQUIRING THAT EVENT ATTENDEES BE ONLY THOSE PERSONS WHO ARE AT LEAST TWO WEEKS PAST THEIR FULL COVID-19 IMMUNIZATION VACCINATION!***

Please send this slip and your check (**\$25.00 per attendee**) to arrive no later than Monday, May 24<sup>th</sup> to:

**CDR Dave Olson, 485 26<sup>th</sup> Ave NE (Unit A), Hickory, NC 28601**