

THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER

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President: LTC Cliff Davenport

President's Comments: Here's an old cliché frequently heard when people are facing tough challenges: "These are exciting times." Well, these certainly are "exciting times" for the U.S. Military Establishment. Military warriors overseas continue to eradicate the dregs of ISIS. The Russian military is bringing cutting-edge armaments on line. The Chinese are becoming even more brazen as they rapidly field copycat weapon systems. A stubborn North Korea looms over South Korea with an initial nuclear capability. Iran continues to be a hateful and volatile threat in the Straits of Hormuz, and the entire Middle East region! Our military services are at somewhat of a pause as they vigorously root out the last vestiges of systemic racism. Military recruitment, training and operations are being hampered by an ongoing pandemic. And, our senior military leaders will soon face severe fiscal constraints as the national debt continues to soar out of control, at the worst possible time!

Yes, that all sounds rather bleak. However, let's remember that our generals and admirals are inherently optimistic and capable leaders who will get us through all of this. Likewise, it's up to us MOAA members to do our part in maintaining a strong national defense posture and protecting the pay and benefits that military service members and retirees have earned. Based on the current circumstances there's soon going to be lots of intense squabbling over spending priorities. As in the past, some politicians campaigning for office will tend to write off the military as an unnecessary and hugely expensive luxury. Some will call for the country's resources to be flowed into programs intended to instantly fix long-standing social issues. Others will focus entirely on recovering from the fiscal damage caused by the pandemic. So, we need to listen as political candidates reveal what priority they give to the military's capability to deter and, if necessary, defeat multiple emerging threats.

MOAA and this chapter are apolitical; that is, no political party affiliation, bias, or designation. That said, we as individuals can proactively advocate, lobby and vote with today's key issues in mind, so as to ensure that supportive politicians are elected. Obviously, we shouldn't just vote for recognizable names on a ballot without knowing the candidates' positions on key issues, in the context of both the national domain and the global community. Thus, we should all strive to fully understand the campaign platform of each candidate. Meanwhile, hidden in the background of all the campaigning, there are currently twelve bills in Congress and nine bills in the General Assembly that impact military personnel, including retirees and families! We can easily send advocacy e-mails directly to members of Congress via MOAA's Legislative Action Center at www.moaa.org.

At any rate, once we sift through the campaign rhetoric and lambasting, it'll be time to go to the polls. The ongoing pandemic makes that more time consuming and somewhat risky. Fortunately, NC House Bill 1169 was signed into law on June 12th. It allows all eligible voters in this state to vote by absentee ballot, for any reason whatsoever! Voters may call the NC State Board of Elections or County Board of Elections to ask that a blank absentee ballot request form be sent to them by mail, e-mail, or fax. Voters may also obtain a printable absentee ballot request form via the NC State Board of Elections at www.ncvoter.org. Click on Voting by Mail to view voting procedures and deadlines, and to print the ballot request form. Their website also says that in September 2020 you'll be able to make the request via a new online portal on that same website." See you all at the polls!

Military Music: Music is a big element of daily life in the military. The bugler sounds reveille at the start of the day, then *To the Color* for the flag raising, *Charge* at the start of a battle, and *Taps* at days end. Sailors hear the Boson's pipe throughout the day while at sea; they quickly learn the meaning of various piped melodies. Flag Officers are recognized and honored with musical *Ruffles and Flourishes* at the start of ceremonies, the very brief melody is sounded once or repeated several times, based on the rank of the Flag Officer. Music has long had its place in battle, the bugler sounding charge the enemy and bagpipes blaring as troops flowed into battle. In fact, music has long been used to encourage warriors in battle or to intimidate enemy forces. In the Vietnam War and several other wars, helicopters with huge arrays of speakers blasted the enemy with music. Bands are a main element of military ceremonies and parades; in fact, the Army, Air Force and Coast Guard have many bands overseas and aboard command ships. Our oldest military band is the Marine Corps band; formed in 1798, it serves as "The President's Own." Then there's the U.S. Army's prestigious Old Guard Fife and Drum corps based in Fort Myer, VA. They dress in Revolutionary War uniforms. You can download lots of free Public Domain military music from: www.music.af.mil.



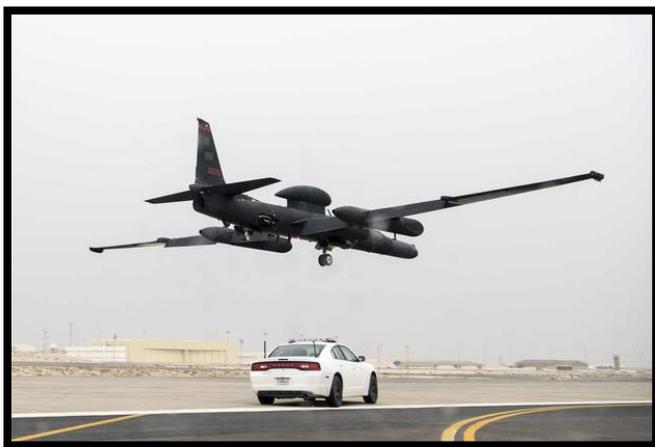
The U.S. Army's "Old Guard" Fife & Drum Corps



Armed Forces Service Medals and Humanitarian Service Medals now being awarded to qualifying service members who participated in COVID-19 operations and activities.



Catawba Valley Chapter just received a 2020 MOAA Levels of Excellence 4-Star Award!



USAF Muscle Car chases down a U-2 Spy Plane

The Need for Speed: The Air Force utilizes "Muscle Cars" to help safely land U-2 Dragon Lady "Spy Planes." The shape of the U-2 aircraft is such that the pilot cannot see the runway during take off and landing. So, a qualified U-2 pilot drives at high-speed, chasing after the U-2 during takeoff and landing. He radios his external view of the aircraft to give the landing U-2 pilot "situational awareness," specifically, aircraft altitude and attitude. During the dicey takeoff, the U-2 has two wheels on poles (called "pogos") under its wings; those drop off as the aircraft lifts from the runway. When landing, it's intentionally brought to a full stall to do a two-point landing. After landing, the aircraft tips to one side, resting on one of its titanium tipped wings. The U-2 operates at about seventy thousand feet, flying at just under twenty miles per hour during the Intel gathering portion of its flight. Pilots breathe pure oxygen for one hour before takeoff, and they lose five percent of their body weight by the end of each flight. The U-2 has been in service for over fifty years; it's flown daily from several airbases throughout the world. U-2 Dragon Ladies are always chased by Made-in-USA Muscle Cars at speeds over 100 MPH!

TAPS: It's with deep regret that we report the passing of Colonel Edwin Nolley on July 21st. The Colonel enjoyed a full career in the Army, culminating as Battalion Commander. He then served in the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, ultimately as the Catawba County Extension Director. Ed was an Elder, Deacon and Missionary in the First Presbyterian Church of Newton; he also engaged in many Habitat for Humanity projects. Colonel Nolley was a highly respected founding member of our MOAA Catawba Valley Chapter.

TAPS: It is with much sadness that we report the passing of chapter member Lieutenant Colonel (USMC-Ret.) William "Bill" Kent on August 5th. Bill was on active duty in the Marine Corps for over thirty years, his combat tours included one during the Korean War where he earned the Bronze Star for valor, and two tours in Vietnam where he commanded a battalion in combat. Although retired, Bill was truly *Semper Fi* his entire life.

Selection in the Blind: The Army is holding its first 0-6 Command Assessment program in September at Fort Knox. The program is a four-day assessment to determine officers' readiness for command and strategic potential. The assessment has built in mechanisms to reduce bias, both conscious and unconscious, during the Army Comprehensive Talent Interview. The interview panel includes diverse representation to provide multiple, independent perspectives including race, gender, branch category, and military experience. The interview is "double blind," meaning the candidates answer questions from behind a screen where they can't see the panel members and panel members cannot see the candidates. To further reduce the possibility of branch, unit, and skill qualification bias, the candidate's identity, branch, and units are masked from the panel members.

Fort Dobbs Lives On: Fort Dobbs in Statesville reduced its operations due to COVID-19 pandemic guidance. However, they still have the "Military Timeline" event scheduled for November 14th. On that day, you'll be able to visit with reenactors who portray soldiers and support personnel from hundreds of years of North Carolina history. The experiences of veterans of the Revolution, Civil War, World Wars and other conflicts will be shared through living history displays and weapons firing demonstrations. Visit www.fortdobbs.org

Charlotte Space-A Travel: The North Carolina Air National Guard based at Charlotte-Douglas airport has nearly completed converting its mission aircraft from the C-130 Hercules to the C-17 Globemaster III. That means that Space-A travel will soon be available from there, courtesy of the 145th Airlift Wing. The NC Air National Guard is currently working on a Space A Facebook page as well as an informational phone number to call once conversion to C-17s is complete. Obviously, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about temporary air travel restrictions. For current info on Space-A travel availability and procedures, visit www.amc.af.mil

Deja Vu for Airmen: 2,400 Air Force personnel recently transferred to the newly formed U.S. Space Force. Meanwhile, the House of Representatives passed a related amendment to the 2021 NDAA. That Bill calls for U.S. Space Force officers to be titled in rank similar to the U.S. Navy; thus, a USAF Lt Col who transfers to the U.S. Space Force will come aboard as a Commander, and might eventually be promoted to Admiral! It's odd that for a few years in the 90s, Air Force officers wore rank bands on their uniform sleeves just like the Navy.

Tip of the Info Iceberg: Are you only seeing the most visible and administrative aspect of the Veterans Administration? Their main website gives useful info, but they have a whole lot more information and insights available if you just know where to look. A visit to "VAantage Point" at www.blogs.va.gov opens up a whole new world of info, and some of it is highly relevant breaking news. In fact, there's a news banner continually scrolling on the upper portion of the homepage. Plus, pull-down menus on that homepage give instant access to a spectrum of Veteran related resources, including a direct link to your personal "MyHealtheVet" account.

NC Veterans One-Stop-Shop: These days, we all suffer "information-overload." That's especially true when it comes to Veteran related info, and some sources seem to have just a fragment of the overall picture. Well, the NC Department of Military and Veterans Affairs just rebuilt their website, making it super easy to navigate. The top of the homepage has click-on words: Services, News, Events, and Resource Guide! That previously unwieldy resource document now has a column of buttons taking you to any specific area of interest you select. Enjoy this beautifully tailored source of information specifically for NC Veterans; go to: www.milvets.nc.gov

- NEWS FROM THE BLUE FORCE TRACKER

ARMY: Researchers are developing autonomous robot systems that interactively learn from a Soldier who can teach the robot to execute new behaviors in operational settings, without returning home for re-programming.

NAVY: The USS Tripoli (LHA-7) was commissioned into the Amphibious Force on July 15th. The 844 foot long “aviation-centric” ship will integrate Marine air combat capabilities, including F-35B Joint Strike Fighters!

MARINES: MCAS Miramar created a micro-grid that can power the base indefinitely by integrating natural gas, diesel power generation, solar photovoltaic and landfill gas power generation into a stand-alone power grid.

AIR FORCE: A 1.2 billion dollar contract was awarded to Boeing for design, production and support of eight F-15EX fighter aircraft with advanced cockpits, new electronic warfare systems and new mission systems.

2020 Calendar: *Board Meetings:* 22 Oct, and 17 Dec. *General Membership:* 24 Sep, and 3 Dec.

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 has sufficient operating and reserve funds to cover anticipated 2020 operating expenses.

———— 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 & Director: Colonel Gemeinhardt

Director: Colonel (Dr.) Don Gemeinhardt

Director: Captain Allen Stewart

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

PLEASE: *If 100% of our chapter members also join MOAA at the national level, we will be eligible to receive increased funding for our community outreach projects. So, we’re asking all local chapter members to also become MOAA national members. Visit www.moaa.org, click on “About MOAA,” then click the “Why Join” button to view all three membership options, of which the Basic level is an available option at no cost to you!*

NOTE: *Our next General Membership meeting/dinner will be held on September 24th if CDC guidance and State restrictions on restaurant operation are relaxed. If Lake Hickory Country Club determines that they can accommodate us, an announcement and reservation slip for the event will be e-mailed to chapter members.*

Try the handy new “Vantage Point” and “NC Vets” buttons on our chapter website’s homepage!

Our Chapter website: www.moaacvc.org MOAA Take Action: <http://takeaction.moaa.org>

(THIS IS TEXT OF A RECENT LETTER FROM THE NC COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS PRESIDENT)

Chapter Presidents,

Each year, the 34 state Council presidents and one additional person from each Council attend an April meeting in Washington D.C. While attending the meeting, the Council Presidents, the one additional Council persons, 36 MOAA Board of Director members, and MOAA staff “Storm-the Hill” to advocate with all the federal legislators. For North Carolina, there are four of us which include two Council members, one MOAA board member and one MOAA staff member meet with North Carolina’s two senators and 13 representatives. It is an all-day grueling effort to meet with all 15 legislators or their designated subject matter experts. We have to split up to accomplish the mission.

Due to covid-19, this year’s “Storming-the Hill” was accomplished virtually. Each state was tasked by National MOAA to organize a team to “Virtually-Storm-the-Hill”, VSTH. The team had all of May to contact the state’s legislatures and advocate. There were ten of us who VSTH for NC

The results were:

	National	North Carolina
Contacts made:	535	15
Telephone calls made	20,808	16
Letters sent to legislators		14
Certificates of Appreciation sent to legislators		14

(Representative Mark Meadows had moved to be Chief of Staff for the President)

The federal advocacy mission for 2020 was to stop all medical billet reductions (18,000 billets) and military treatment facility (MTF) restructuring until an assessment is completed by Congress, The VSTH effort has raised the awareness and education on the impact of the MTF reform.

In addition to federal advocacy, the NCCOC has the responsibility to advocate at the state legislature. For the 2020-2021 sessions of the General Assembly the NCCOC priorities are bills that will be promoted by your Chair of Legislative/Veterans Affairs based on a strategic advocacy plan developed by the NCCOC VP for Legislative/Veterans Affairs The bills to be considered at the state level are:

- Enhanced state initiatives to Improve military spouses license portability;
- “Ask the question” campaign;
- In-state tuition continuity for spouses whose spouse has PCS;
- Virtual school enrollment;
- Licensing compacts recognizing service members and military spouses.

The above is not all inclusive, but they would make North Carolina more of a **military friendly state**. Virginia, Tennessee, and South Carolina are considered to be military friendly states based on assessments by DOD

Your chapter has a Chairman or Chairwomen whose responsibility is to advocate for you and all those who are or have worn the uniforms of the U.S Armed Forces.

NEVER STOP SERVING

Jim

James G. Brumit
COL, USA (Ret)
President, NCCOC, MOAA