

# THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



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## MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER

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**President: Colonel Joe Cansler, USA, (Ret.)**

**President's Comments:** First of all, let me congratulate us collectively for winning the MOAA Five-Star Level of Excellence Award for 2017. According to MOAA's Director, "These awards signify the very best council and chapter affiliates in our organization." This extremely prestigious award reflects the cumulative efforts of chapter members in the management and activity of our chapter. We've done all the right things and had lots of fun doing them; plus, we've reached out and helped numerous Veteran entities in the process. It's really gratifying to see this honor bestowed on our chapter, and I'm the lucky guy who will receive our chapter's award from MOAA's President, Lieutenant General Dana Atkins, at our Williamsburg conference being held a week from now. Naturally, the logo you see in the heading of our newsletter will soon be changed to Five-Star.

MOAA national has designated our chapter as the "beta test" site for a new recruiting technique that we suggested. MOAA HQ will be sending out chapter recruiting e-mails from Alexandria, Virginia once or twice per year. They have all the protected e-mail addresses of potential local chapter members; they're in a position to send out a recruiting e-mail to those individuals without violating any privacy policy. So, MOAA up in Alexandria will be "broadcasting" e-mails to potential members in our chapter's six county area. And, assuming this procedure proves to be an effective recruiting tool, they'll be doing the same for other MOAA chapters everywhere. You'll notice on top of page three below there's an "Elevator Pitch for Recruiting." That's actually the text of the e-mail that MOAA National will be sending to all potential chapter members in our area.

Sadly, we have to sound taps for the passing of two chapter members. Commander (Dr.) Gordon S. Cook passed away on July 27<sup>th</sup>. CDR Cook was a Navy Chaplain, and he was a Past President of our MOAA chapter. A memorial service was recently held to honor him, and he'll ultimately be laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery. Likewise, chapter member LTC David W. Garvin, Sr. passed away on August 8<sup>th</sup>. LTC Garvin resided in Boone, NC. He served a 25-year career in the U.S. Army Medical Corps and enjoyed a second career at a major hospital in Columbia, SC. LTC Garvin was our Chapter Secretary in past years and was extremely active in community service organizations in our local area. A memorial service was recently held in Boone to honor him. Please keep the families of these two highly esteemed officers in your thoughts and prayers.

September 15<sup>th</sup> is POW/MIA day. We'll all display the American flag at our homes, and there'll be black POW/MIA flags flying above most government buildings as well. Indeed, in 1982, the POW/MIA flag became the only flag other than the Stars and Stripes to ever fly over the White House. The artist who designed the POW/MIA flag in 1972 was Newt Heisley, a WWII C-46 transport pilot. The somber soldier depicted on the flag was his ailing Marine son. Many people aren't aware that the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency zealously continues the search for our military personnel who are still missing in action—from WWII up to our most recent conflicts. Their mission is to "Provide the fullest possible accounting for our missing personnel to their families and the nation." On September 15<sup>th</sup>, let's all pause for a moment to recognize and salute our nation's POWs and MIAs; in doing so, we'll be letting each of them know that "You are not forgotten."

**Really Cool Chapter Picnic:** Our chapter recently hosted a well-attended mid-summer picnic event, indoors at the air-conditioned Lake Hickory Country Club. The club's kitchen prepared a superb picnic style buffet that everyone thoroughly enjoyed. Meanwhile, attendees were entertained by an amazing contingent of the Silvio Martinat Swing Band—led by Maestro John Craig. By the way, the band's drummer is an ex-marine! They played a spectrum of music that's well liked in the military community, and the band's grand finale was playing the service song of each branch of the military. Members of each branch stood up in turn as their respective service was honored. Our Chapter President then took a few moments to update attendees on the status of the Bailey Case and the 4<sup>th</sup> Branch, and also reminded members to “get smart” on the military's new Blended Retirement System in anticipation of inevitable questions from military and civilian personnel. Then the charity raffle was held. Colonel John Knight was the winner and he generously donated his winnings to our Benevolent Fund—after joyously declaring, “I've never won anything before in my life!”



*Martinat Swing Band playing a military themed medley*



Oshkosh Defense Photo



The photos above depict the evolution of the light military vehicle: top left is the WWII Jeep (both Willys & Fords); to the right is the Highly Mobile Multi-Wheeled Vehicle (HMMWV); lower left is the Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle, and finally the all new Light Combat Tactical All-Terrain Vehicle (L-ATV). The evolution of these vehicles was largely driven by the advent of the Improvised Explosive Device (IED) that prompted military R&D efforts to “armor-up” light transport vehicles to better protect soldiers. Upgraded HMMWVs provided some degree of protection but the MRAPs provided the truly desired level of protection against IEDs. The new Oshkosh L-ATV provides the same protection as the MRAP but it's much lighter and more maneuverable. The L-ATV base “sticker price” is \$250K each but rises to \$500K when fully equipped.

**Service Birthdays:** September 18<sup>th</sup> is the Air Force's birthday, and October 13<sup>th</sup> is the Navy's birthday.

**Elevator Pitch for Recruiting:** MOAA's vision is to fulfill the promise to never stop serving your interest from local through national level. National MOAA is your advocate before Congress – the local chapter and State Council advocates for you in communities and in Raleigh. Please consider joining your local MOAA Catawba Valley Chapter. By joining, you'll help “answer the mail” as to what the Officer Corps is doing to support the military community in your area. You'll also increase the number and visibility of officers behind state legislative actions affecting all military ranks. Visit your chapter website to view the current newsletter, scan the ongoing professional and social activities, plus enjoy the useful info and links! To obtain a membership application form, just click the “Join Chapter” button on the website: [www.moaacvc.org](http://www.moaacvc.org)

**GI Bill Enhanced:** The so-called “Forever GI Bill” was recently signed into law. This eliminated the former 15-year time limit that Veterans faced regarding their Post/9-11 GI Bill benefits after separation. Now, their educational benefits are available forever! Plus, criteria has been eased so that more Purple Heart Veterans are now eligible for educational benefits. Also, Guard and Reserve personnel will see increased benefits. Lastly, those studying science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields may receive additional benefits to complete their longer programs. There's lots more to the “Forever GI Bill” and it's rather complicated, but it's all good news for the military! The VA's website will soon reflect these changes: [www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/](http://www.benefits.va.gov/gibill/)

**Evolution in Prosthetics:** The Life Under Kinetic Evolution (LUKE) arm is the world's most advanced commercial prosthetic; it's about to change the lives of Veterans with upper arm amputations. Unlike less-advanced prosthetics, the entire LUKE arm can move as one unit, reducing the labor-intensive process of controlling one joint at a time. The LUKE arm also features the first commercially available powered shoulder, with up to ten powered degrees of freedom. Development of the LUKE Arm™ was funded by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency's (DARPA) Revolutionizing Prosthetics program. As the clinical research partner with DARPA, the VA contributed several million dollars and eight years of research participating in the development of this prosthetic arm. The VA has already selected the first veterans to receive the LUKE arm.

**Travel Cheaply:** Two new travel related links have been added to the “Useful Links” page of our chapter website. The first is the military Space Available Travel website. It has travel info and procedures, plus links to U.S. and overseas air terminals of all military branches. Website is: [www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Travel-Site/](http://www.amc.af.mil/Home/AMC-Travel-Site/) The second website (Not sponsored or indorsed by our chapter) is an online guide on civilian Airline Benefits for Military Families on the [www.rewardexpert.com](http://www.rewardexpert.com) website. The full website “URL” address is simply too long to place here, but you'll find it and the military Space-A website on the “Useful Links” page of our chapter website.

**USAF Club Memberships:** Air Force Services Activity officials are encouraging retirees to activate new Air Force Club Member Portal accounts. A free “MemberPlanet” app is available at the App Store or Google Play. The web (and app) based system allows members to choose their payment methods (credit or debit card of choice) and receive real-time event info directly on smart devices or computers. It's said that, “It's an easy process ... you simply update your club membership profile using your smartphone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer.” Members without easy access to smart devices or computers can also stop by their local club for assistance. Members can either show their digital membership card through the MemberPlanet App on their smart devices or print a membership card from the app. More info at: [www.myairforcelife.com/clubs/cmp.aspx](http://www.myairforcelife.com/clubs/cmp.aspx).

**Down in Africa:** Chapter member LTC (Dr.) Dana Tucker recently returned from yet another deployment—13,000 miles from home! This time it was to conduct training with the South African National Defense Force (SANDF); that is, the armed forces of South Africa. After that tough but successful mission, the Colonel is now engaged in strategy and planning activity at the NC Guard Joint Force HQ in Raleigh. Welcome back Dana!

**Gone With the Wind:** Chapter member Captain (Dr. USPHS) Arvo Ederma is in the process of moving to the Raleigh, NC metro area to be closer to his family—daughter Karin already moved there. And, chapter member Lt Col (USAF) Marshall Hiatt and wife Nancy recently moved to Winston-Salem to be closer to their family.

- NEWS FROM THE BLUE FORCE TRACKER -

ARMY: A number of Stryker multi-wheeled armored personnel carriers are being “up-gunned” with rapid-fire 30mm cannons and Javelin anti-tank missiles. This configuration of the \$5M Stryker is nicknamed “Dragoon.”

NAVY: The Naval Research Lab developed a new one-coat paint (“1K polysiloxane”) for ship hulls that retains camouflage properties five times better than standard paint and is more resistant to contaminants and rust.

MARINES: The Honorable Richard V. Spencer was recently plucked from Wall Street and swiftly sworn in as the 76<sup>th</sup> Secretary of the Navy. He is a former Marine CH-46 helicopter pilot—active duty and then reserve.

AIR FORCE: Tests were recently conducted using B-52 Stratofortress bombers to dispense leaflets over large populated areas, using PDU-5/B canisters (a variant of the old Cluster Bomb) that distribute 60,000 leaflets.

**Schedule:** General Membership Events: September 28<sup>th</sup>, and the November 30<sup>th</sup> Christmas Party.  
Board Meetings: October 26<sup>th</sup>, and Dec 21<sup>st</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 your charity-specific (any or all three) annotated check to our Treasurer: CDR Dave Olson, 471 B 26<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Hickory, NC 28601.

**Treasury:** Our chapter has adequate funds to cover all planned activities and events for the rest of the year.

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

Chapter President: Colonel Joe Cansler

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Captain Allen Stewart

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President: Colonel Don Gemeinhardt

3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President: LTC Cliff Davenport

Secretary: Major Dennis McClish

Treasurer: Commander Dave Olson

Chaplain: Reverend (WO3) Robert Herron

Interim Programs Chairman: Captain Allen Stewart

Director: Lt Col G. Jane Harmon

Director: LTC James Cole

Director: LTC David Imschweiler

Director: Colonel Bob Barton

Legislative Liaison: LTC (Dr.) Dana Tucker

Membership Chair: Vacant

JROTC Coordinator: Lt Col G. Jane Harmon

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, 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 special 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)

Find us on   
“MOAA Catawba Valley

**Your Chapter website:** [www.moaacvc.org](http://www.moaacvc.org)  
**MOAA Take Action:** [www.moaa.org/takeaction/](http://www.moaa.org/takeaction/)

**RESERVATION FOR GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING/DINNER**

This is my reservation for the MOAA Catawba Valley Chapter General Membership meeting/dinner on **September 28<sup>th</sup>** at Lake Hickory Country Club. Cocktails/social time begins at 6:00 p.m. and dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. Guest speaker is: Ms. Ute Huckabee presenting "Joy Comes in the Morning." This master storyteller will recount her life's experiences, starting out as a German civilian suffering the horrors of WWII, followed by the intriguing events that ultimately brought her to America.

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

Dinner Entrée Choices: London Broil \_\_\_\_\_ & Grilled Salmon \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ Veggie Plate

Please send this slip and your check (**\$25.00 per attendee**) to arrive no later than September 25<sup>th</sup>, a Monday, to:

**CDR Dave Olson, 471 B 26<sup>th</sup> Ave NE, Hickory, NC 28601**



BE SURE TO MARK **NOVEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup>** ON YOUR CALANDER FOR OUR **CHAPTER CHARITY CHRISTMAS DINNER!**  
Special Guest of Honor / Live Holiday Music / Fabulous Dinner / Wear of Military Uniforms Encouraged / Free Gift  
Culmination of our chapter's 2017 Benevolent Fund activity!



We're still in need of a **Membership Chairman** and a **Programs Chairman!**  
We're also seeking 2018 nominees for **President, V-P** and **Director slots!**  
You can volunteer for any of those positions by calling Colonel Joe Cansler at: 704-878-0743