

THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER

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President's Comments: Memorial Day falls on May 29th this year. It's a day of remembrance for those who have died in the service of our country. After the Civil War, General John Logan, Commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, initiated the observance of Memorial Day (originally Remembrance Day) by issuing his Order No. 11 that called for nationwide acts and ceremonies to honor the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country. Towns in our area continue to hold annual observance ceremonies. Our presence at such ceremonies and the display of Old Glory at our homes reinforce the true meaning of this solemn day. You may also want to visit the American Battle Monuments Commission website for virtual tours of beautiful overseas commemorative cemeteries where many of our nation's fallen heroes eternally rest: www.abmc.gov

Did you know that May 12th is National Military Spouse Appreciation Day? Military spouses endure arduous change-of-station moves all over the world, and they singlehandedly assume all parenting duties while the military member is deployed or even just working long duty hours. In some cases, spouses kindheartedly help their soldiers overcome PTSD when they return from combat. Plus, many spouses give up serious employment opportunities or interrupt their professional careers in deference to the needs of the military member. Indeed, the spouses of senior officers and unit commanders are often expected to serve in an unofficial counselor/mentor capacity to comfort and guide fellow military "dependents" in distress, and also to engage as de facto protocol officers during portions of VIP visits and other military related events. Military Spouses—Hooah!

As you may have noticed, the MOAA NC Council of Chapters State Convention reservation deposit date has been adjusted to May 31st. Our state convention is being held September 7-10 at the Williamsburg Lodge (5-Star!), in historic Williamsburg, VA. The four days, three nights, all-meals-included event is \$1,570 per couple and \$1,270 single person. Reservation form and \$350 deposit are required by May 31st, and there is an option to purchase cancellation insurance for a small fee. Visit www.moaa-nc.org to view full details of the event and to obtain a reservation form. Just click on "Calendar," then click on "NCCOC State Convention." By clicking on "Program Info," you'll see that there'll be minimal business activity and maximum recreational activity.

I certainly wasn't surprised to learn that our chapter newsletter and website both won MOAA Colonel Marvin J. Harris Communications Awards, one national award in each category. John Liburdi has punctually published our informative and easy to read bi-monthly newsletter for nine consecutive years. He also created our super easy to navigate chapter website a couple of years ago and has been maintaining it as a zero-cost Webmaster ever since then; thus, we spend a mere \$100 per year to have this great media product available on the Internet. John is always eager to incorporate any of your ideas in terms of functionality and content for both the newsletter and website. Simply mention your ideas to him or send your inputs to moaacvcnews@hotmail.com.

There are now two separate bills in the NC General Assembly regarding state tax-free status for military retirees. HB-103 (a.k.a. Bailey Case) is “Equal Tax Treatment of Government Retirees,” including military. The other recently introduced bill covers only military retirees and was most likely born out of understandable frustration over the slow pace of the first bill. That said, the NC MOAA Council of Chapters and the 4th Branch have thrown their emphasis and lobbying efforts behind HB-103, which is more directly in line with the spirit and intent of the Bailey case. The full history of the Bailey case is given as an attachment (page six) to this newsletter, along with a draft “Take Action” letter for your use.

Finally, I would ask our chapter members to react very quickly to MOAA legislative alerts by sending e-mails or postcards in a more expedient manner than is usually expected of us. That acceleration of correspondence is needed because military related legislation is now moving significantly faster on Capitol Hill; thus, there’s much less time where the legislation is open to comment and inputs from any given legislator’s respective constituency. Go to www.moaa.org/takeaction/ to ensure your voice is heard regarding military related national legislation, and go to <http://engage.4thbranchnc.org> regarding military related state legislation. If you’re unable to go on-line to make your input via MOAA’s Take Action e-mail system, please be sure to promptly mail out the pre-addressed postcards that are included in monthly issues of MOAA’s *Military Officer* magazine.

MOAA CVC Supports Foothills Homeless Veterans Stand Down Day



A portion of the many agencies present to help



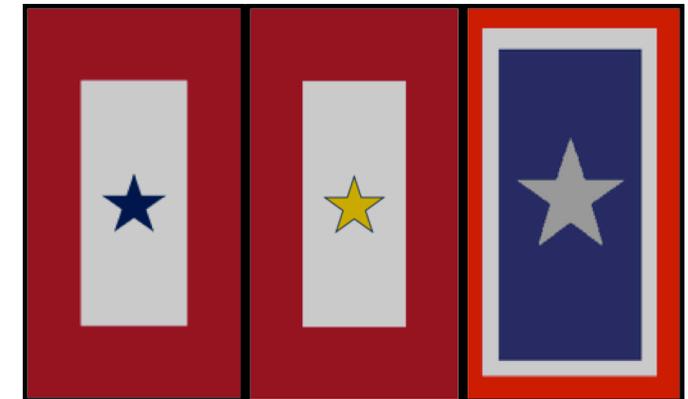
Veterans and Stand Down staff dine together

The sixth annual Foothills Homeless Veterans Stand Down Day was held at Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC), near Hickory Motor Speedway. This year, the event took place in CVCC’s modern and air conditioned Tarlton Complex. Our chapter—assisted by USAA—was a Gold level monetary sponsor, as indicated by our logo appearing on the top spot of the event T-shirt. Plus, four of our chapter members kindly helped out as on-site volunteers. Approximately 230 Veterans—many of them homeless—received a spectrum of services such as: medical, dental, barber, chaplain, employment, VA and legal support—even the IRS was present! Enthusiastic and courteous Army JROTC cadets of the Hickory HS “Tornado Battalion” escorted individual Veterans to support agencies. All Veterans and the assisting staff then enjoyed a nice catered lunch. Afterwards, issue of all NEW clothing items took place. Apart from the wonderful camaraderie shared amongst Veterans, dental care and footwear issue seemed to be the most appreciated features of the event. The event organizers—Veterans Transitional Advocacy Board—were very pleased with what the Catawba area community and support agencies did for Veterans, especially the homeless. It was gratifying to see that attendees were predominantly Vietnam Era Veterans. That said, organizers hope that word of the new Stand Down location will spread so that next year’s event will host even more Veterans of other wars and conflicts.



LTC Tucker fields questions about NCNG mission activity

Military Family Service Banners: A service banner is a banner that family members of those serving in the U.S. military can display. These banners were first used in WWI and were standardized during WWII. The banner is officially defined as a white field with a red border, with a **Blue Star** for each family member serving in the military during any period of war or hostilities in which the U.S. Armed Forces is engaged. A **Gold Star** (with a blue edge) represents a family member that died during service, regardless of cause of death. A **Silver Star** unofficially represents those discharged from service because of wounds or being cared for as an invalid at home. Congress is being lobbied to make the Silver Star Service Banner official for those wounded or injured in a war zone. Forty-nine states (including North Carolina), Guam, Saipan, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have issued proclamations in support of the Silver Star Banner and have designated May 1st as the annual Silver Star Day. Likewise, the last Sunday in September is Gold Star Mother’s Day.



Types of star banners displayed by military families

Training for Chapter Directors & Staff!

Our Chapter’s BOD & Staff are kindly requested to arrive one hour early (5:00 p.m.) for the May 25th General Membership meeting. MOAA National’s Deputy Director of Council & Chapter Affairs is conducting a special training event for us at that time.

Your Chapter website: www.moaa.cvc.org

MOAA Take Action: www.moaa.org/takeaction/



DISPLAY OLD GLORY!

May 8th – Victory in Europe Day

May 20th – Armed Forces Day

May 29th – Memorial Day

June 6th – D-Day Anniversary

June 14th – Flag Day

June 14th – U.S. Army Birthday

Farewells: Colonel Ray Anderson and wife Sally are moving to Peachtree City, GA. Ray spent 28 years as an Army Chemical Officer; he served in Vietnam and headed TRADOC's Nuclear & Chemical Directorate. After retiring, he was Senior Instructor for the Army JROTC program at North Iredell High School. Ray is also a Past President of our chapter. Sally moved her Army family 18 times; now there's a PCS move to Georgia where Ray's "0-6" staff car will be a golf cart. We hope the Anderson's enjoy good health and much happiness there.

Trendy Scam: One of the more "popular" scams of late is a phone call from fake police, insisting that the victim will go to jail unless he or she immediately pays a hefty fine via credit card for having missed a fake court appearance. Senior citizens in our area are primary targets of this recent rash of scams. FYI: The police never make such phone calls and one should never pay money over the phone to parties they don't know.

Recent VA Fix Actions: The VA has announced that the challenges with the Veterans Crisis Line have been resolved. Prior to the opening of the VA's new Atlanta call center, the call rollover rate often exceeded 30%. The current call rollover rate is less than one percent, with over 99% of all calls now being answered by the Veterans Crisis Line. Also, the VA has revamped its website, adding new mechanisms that greatly increase visibility and accountability for improved patient appointment wait times. Visit: www.accesstocare.va.gov

Military Truckers: Seymour Johnson AFB has been selected to test and evaluate a new certification program that turns government vehicle operator certifications into commercial driver's licenses (CDL). The new process allows airmen who are certified to operate government vehicles to receive civilian certification without further training. The purpose is twofold: Air Force drivers are trained to a higher standard and they earn a civilian credential that will lead to civilian employment upon separation or retirement from the military.

New Hire Vets Act: Approval of HR 244, the Hire Vets Act of 2017 is imminent in the U.S. Congress. This widely supported legislation promotes private sector recruiting, hiring, and retaining of men and women who served in the U.S. military through an official award program that recognizes fully verifiable efforts undertaken by employers – both large and small – to hire and retain veterans. Participating businesses will be allowed to display "HIRE Vets Medallions" on products and marketing materials. These medallions will be awarded via a two-tiered system – Gold and Platinum – associated with specific hiring and retention goals each year. Congressman Paul Cook (Col, USMC-Ret) is the bill's sponsor; he said, "The HIRE Vets Act is an opportunity for Americans to see which companies truly live up to the employment promises they make to veterans."

Cold War Medals: H.R. 1419 was introduced in Congress on March 7th. This would authorize issuance of a Cold War Service Medal to Veterans who served at least 24 consecutive months between 2 Sep 45 and 24 Dec 91, or deployed outside the U.S. for at least 30 days during that time frame, or were Reservists called to active duty for exercises related to the Cold War, or performed other Cold War duties per the DoD. FYI, the Alaska and Louisiana State National Guards already have official Cold War Victory Commemorative Medals that Guard members may wear on their military uniforms, but only while on state property not on federal property.

Hollywood Goes to War: Netflix is offering a three-part documentary about the on-scene WWII experiences of legendary Hollywood filmmakers. This exciting Netflix film is based on the 2014 Mark Harris book *Five Came Back*. Five wartime film directors put their Hollywood careers on hold and risked their lives in the heat of battle: Frank Capra, John Ford, John Huston, George Stevens and William Wyler. They filmed military battles and produced wartime propaganda films. Indeed, there's lots of wartime "footage" in the Netflix film itself.

GWOT Memorial Effort: Legislation to authorize construction of a Global War on Terrorism Memorial is bill H.R. 873 in Congress. The main driver behind this effort is the GWOT Memorial Foundation. Their stated goal is to provide the organizing, fundraising, and coordinating efforts to build a memorial on the National Mall in Washington DC to honor fallen warriors, U.S. service members, their families, and all those who supported our nation's longest war. This fairly new organization is not yet rated by Charity Navigator or Charity Watch, but full info about their mission and a "Take Action" opportunity are at: <https://www.gwotmemorialfoundation.org>

- NEWS FROM THE BLUE FORCE TRACKER -

ARMY: Personal fitness bracelets will soon be issued so that Army leaders can remotely track their Soldiers' physical location, activity level, and intake of fluids/food. They'll even detect caloric spikes from junk food!

NAVY: Except for cyber security training, sailors are no longer required to receive computer-based annual General Military Training. GMT will now be given via more traditional and effective leader-to-sailor methods.

MARINES: A "Fly Day" was recently conducted at Camp Lejeune. Marines flew the small un-manned Raven aircraft, used for force protection, reconnaissance, and scouting. Raven "pilots" must qualify 12 times per year!

AIR FORCE: AIM-9X Sidewinders are finally replacing old AIM-9M missiles on new F-22 "5th-Gen" fighter aircraft. Besides the AMRAAMs carried, AIM-9X is key in air-to-air combat and can also strike ground targets.

Schedule: General Membership Events: May 25th, July 22nd Picnic, September 28th, and the November 30th Christmas Party. Board Meetings: June 22nd, August 24th, October 26th, and Dec 21st.

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 26th Ave NE, Hickory, NC 28601.

Treasury: Even after operating expenses and donations, there are adequate funds to cover all planned activities.

Join Our Chapter: A one-page membership application form is posted on the Join Chapter button on our chapter website homepage: www.moaacvc.org. Mailing address for the application is shown on the form itself.

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

Chapter President: Colonel Joe Cansler	Director: Lt Col G. Jane Harmon
1 st Vice President: Captain Allen Stewart	Director: LTC James Cole
2 nd Vice President: Colonel Don Gemeinhardt	Director: LTC David Imschweiler
3 rd Vice President: LTC Cliff Davenport	Director: Colonel Bob Barton
Secretary: Major Dennis McClish	Legislative Liaison: LTC (Dr.) Dana Tucker
Treasurer: Commander Dave Olson	Membership Chair: Vacant
Chaplain: Reverend (WO3) Robert Herron	JROTC Coordinator: Lt Col G. Jane Harmon
Programs Chairman: Vacant	Newsletter/Website: Colonel John Liburdi

Note: *The Catawba Valley Chapter is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). MOAA and its affiliated chapters and councils are nonpartisan, without any political party affiliation, bias, or designation.*

RESERVATION FOR CHAPTER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

This is my reservation for the MOAA Catawba Valley Chapter meeting/dinner on **May 25th** at Lake Hickory Country Club. Cocktails/social time starts at 6:00 p.m. and dinner will be served at 7:00 p.m. Guest Speaker: LTC Clarence Counts (USA-Ret); he was a Military Public Affairs Officer and is now MOAA's Deputy Director of Council & Chapter Affairs.

Name of Attendee(s): _____ & _____ & _____

Dinner Entrée Choices: _____ Beef Stroganoff & _____ Grilled Slamon & _____ Veggie Plate

Please send this slip and your check (**\$25.00 per attendee**) to arrive no later than May 22nd, a Monday, to:

Find us on 
"MOAA Catawba Valley

CDR Dave Olson, 471 B 26th Ave NE, Hickory, NC 28601

NC HB 103 NEEDS OUR HELP!

(Extracted from MOAA New River Current Newsletter)

In 1989, the US Supreme Court decided in *Davis v. Michigan Department of Treasury* (489 U.S. 803) that Federal retirees could not be taxed differently than were State retirees. At the time, North Carolina exempted state retirees from being taxed on their retirement benefits, but taxed all other retirement benefits including those of Federal and military retirees. In order to comply with *Davis*, on August 12, 1989, the NC legislature passed Session Law 729 repealing the state employees' exception – which had been written into the state's contracts with its employee unions. In 1998, the NC Supreme Court ruled in *Bailey v. State of North Carolina* (348 N.C. 130) that the state could not tax the retirement benefits of NC state or local government employees who were vested in the retirement plan as of August 12, 1989 – and by the *Davis* decision, could not tax the retirement benefits of Federal government or military retirees who met the same requirements as the state retirees.

As a result of *Bailey* and *Davis*, any Federal, military, or NC state or local government retiree, or beneficiary of such a retiree, who is receiving retirement benefits from the corresponding government plan, and who had at least five years of credited service as of August 12, 1989, is exempt from North Carolina state tax on those retirement benefits. The "Bailey exclusion" also applies to retirement benefits received from NC state 401(k) or 457 plans if the retiree had contributed to the plan, or contracted to contribute to the plan, prior to August 12, 1989. The exclusion does not apply to local government 457 plans, nor does it apply to 403 (b) annuity plans, nor does it apply to privately contracted retirement plans such as IRAs.

Although most of our current chapter members are grandfathered and do not pay taxes on their retirement income, an inequity exists in that most of the military personnel who are retiring now are not covered. This means if they wish to retire to NC, their retirement income will be taxed by the state. While the unfairness of this is one issue, the fact is that some will choose not to come to NC to retire based on this issue alone.

House Bill 103 is a measure to extend the provisions of the *Bailey, Emory, Patton* settlement to military and civilian retirees who were not grandfathered. The measure is currently in the House Finance committee. We need the prompt support of every MOAA member to encourage the General Assembly to enact this measure into law and eliminate the current unfair "two-tiered" retirement system here in North Carolina. You can research more on this issue at <http://engage.4thbranchnc.org/> - you can also find the names of your state officials at this site, and can sign up for automatic updates. Please use the below **boilerplate letter** and write the NC legislature to pass the *Bailey Patten* extension, HB 103!

Representative [name]
16 West Jones Street, Room [#]
Raleigh, NC



Dear Representative [name]:

RE: House Bill 103, Equal Tax Treatment of Gov't Retirees was filed on Feb 14th and referred to the Committee on Finance on Feb 16th. This measure eliminates the inequitable treatment of military and civilians, state and federal who were not grandfathered under the original *Bailey, Emory, Patton* agreement (*Bailey*).

In short, the *Bailey* agreement exempted from state income tax those military and civilian persons who had five years of creditable service as of August 2, 1989. Employees and service members who do not meet this criteria have their full retirement pay or pension subject to tax.

I believe it is inequitable to treat our retirees differently and urge you to discuss this matter with your colleagues in the legislature. Please recommend to your fellow legislators that they end this inequity and pass into law House Bill 103. Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully, Name and address