

THE CATAWBA VALLEY OFFICERS DISPATCH



MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER

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President: Colonel Don Gemeinhardt

President's Comments: Our nation will be celebrating Independence Day on July 4th. Citizens will mainly reflect on parchment documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights. That's where our forefathers laid out the enduring architecture and processes of the federal government, and articulated the rights of all individual citizens! "The Fourth" is a joyous time of celebration and relaxation, with fireworks in every village, town and city. Hopefully, all of us Americans will also pause to remember the American Patriots—many of whom were Citizen Soldiers—who fought to secure our independence. Admittedly, lots has changed since they fought the Revolutionary War that began in 1775.

- The soldier's flintlock musket was cumbersome, difficult to load, and had a range of 750 feet. Today's soldier has a family of high tech weapons, including the M107 sniper rifle that has an effective range of 6,500 feet.
- Artillery consisted of muzzle-loaded cannons and fixed elevation mortars. Today's military has laser-guided munitions and smart bombs that surgically take out targets, frequently with minimal collateral damage.
- Communications occurred via visual signals and messenger pouches. Today, there's tactical and satellite radio equipment all over the battlefield, and soldiers on the ground talk directly with their Close Air Support aircraft.
- Cryptography consisted of letter substitution in printed matter, and even the use of invisible ink on paper. Now, soldiers carry secure voice and data equipment for instant communications and full situational awareness.
- Soldiers wore bright uniforms and fought in a highly vulnerable three-rank formation. Today's highly agile troops wear camouflage that makes them nearly invisible to the enemy, and many aircraft and ships are stealthy.
- The dollar cost of the Revolutionary war was \$151 million, which is about five billion dollars in today's money. The overall monetary cost of the Iraq War was over two trillion dollars.
- The important statistic is that 200,000 Patriots fought in the Revolutionary War and 25,000 died, including soldiers killed on the battlefield, those who died of war wounds and those who died of disease. Imagine the motivation and bravery of the Patriots as they fought and achieved victory in the face of unfavorable odds!

It's obvious that the bravery of American Patriots who fought in that war is in the DNA of today's soldiers, sailor, airmen and marines. Indeed, the courage and fortitude of American fighting men and women have remained constant over the years. Centuries later, these heroes are still carrying the torch to continually protect our nation's independence and our individual freedoms. So, the 4th of July is much more than parchment documents, brilliant fireworks and family cookouts. For those of us who are serving in uniform or have served in uniform, it's more a time to reflect on the incredible legacy of the first generation of American Patriots.

Duke Power's Big Picture: Ms. Robin Nicholson was the guest speaker at our recent general membership meeting/dinner. She is Duke Power's District Manager for Community Relations. She explained how Duke Power was founded, which is a fascinating story about how tobacco money was used to create power generation facilities that benefited the textile industry in the Carolinas. After the Great Flood of 1916, Duke Power facilities also served as a means to control the Catawba River Basin so as to minimize flooding. Ms. Nicholson then went through the family of power sources (hydro, nuclear, coal-fire, gas and solar) utilized by Duke to provide energy at the most cost-effective rate. She also addressed Duke's ongoing actions in regard to disposal of coal ash; plus, she addressed the causes of power outages. Surprisingly, the number one cause of outages is fallen trees and limbs; next is, pesky critters getting into power grid facilities and equipment. Ms. Nicholson concluded her presentation with a lively Q&A session. She then received a memento in appreciation for her extremely relevant and interesting briefing.



LTC Davenport presents a memento to Ms. Nicholson

Predator



Puma



Global Hawk



Perdix



Military Drone Aircraft: Each one of the four types of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) shown above has a unique mission. The Global Hawk is a long-endurance, high-altitude aircraft used for Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance missions. It has a range of 12,300 nautical miles, and now both officer and enlisted airmen remotely pilot these huge aircraft. The Predator is a medium-altitude aircraft with a range of 675 nautical miles. It's primarily an intelligence-collection asset and also a weapons platform, carrying precision guided missiles such as the Hellfire. The Puma is a small battery powered, hand-launched UAV used for tactical Surveillance and Intelligence. It has a nine-foot wingspan, and its ultra-thin solar panels help propel it to its maximum eight nautical mile range. The Perdix is a newly emerged 6.5-inch micro-drone. Each aircraft is autonomous; hundreds and even thousands of these aircraft self-organize in flight and are controlled as one collective swarm. The already proven concept is flying the swarm to overwhelm and confuse the enemy's air defense systems.

Agent Orange Act for Blue Water Vets: The U.S. House of Representatives just passed HR-299: “Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2018.” This long-overdue legislation would extend the presumption of exposure to Agent Orange to veterans who served in the Blue Water Navy during the 1962 to 1975 time period. This bill is critical to our nations Blue Water Navy veterans. Once the Senate passes it and the President signs it, the bill will ensure Veterans receive benefits under the Agent Orange Act of 1991 for any condition they may have developed as a result of exposure to Agent Orange. HR-299 was passed to the Senate for action on June 26th.

Important Dental & Eye Care Reminder: The current TRICARE Retiree Dental Program will end on Dec 31st, 2018. During the 2018 Open Season (Nov 12th to Dec 10th), you can enroll in the Office of Personnel Management’s (OPM) Federal Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP) for dental benefits in 2019. Also, for the first time, most military retirees and their family members who are enrolled in a TRICARE health plan will have the option to enroll in vision benefits through FEDVIP. There are ten dental and four vision plans being offered. You should find out if your care provider has preferences amongst those plans. Discuss this with your doctor because, in some cases, there may be disadvantages if your doctor is not a member of the network you choose. Learn more and sign up for alerts at: www.tricare.benefeds.com **or** www.tricare.mil/fedvip

Anywhere to Anywhere VA Care: The VA recently announced a new federal rule that allows VA doctors, nurses and other health-care providers to administer care to Veterans via Telehealth technology, regardless of where in the U.S. the provider or Veteran is located, including when care will occur across state lines or outside a VA facility. This new rule exercises federal preemption to override state restrictions, paving the way for VA to expand care to Veterans using Telehealth so that providers and patients can start enjoying the full benefits of VA’s telehealth services, including mental health and suicide prevention. The VA also unveiled “VA Video Connect, a video conferencing app for Veterans and VA providers. More info at: www.conectedcare.va.gov

Pizza, Pizza: Army scientists have just developed pizza Meals Ready-to-Eat (MREs), and the pizza is now available to soldiers in the field. The scientists in the Army’s Combat Feeding Directorate (CFD) overcame some big obstacles inherent in creating and producing a shelf-stable pizza to be included in MREs. MREs must stay shelf-stable for three years in temperatures up to 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Moreover, achieving this extended shelf life using traditional pizza ingredients was particularly difficult. CFD scientists are longtime experts in developing foods for the military and NASA, and now they’ve given shelf-stable pizza to deployed soldiers!

It’s Greek to Me: Some mentors recommend that young military officers become fully proficient in at least one foreign language. A few officers learn a foreign language growing up in immigrant households; others study a language in college. But, officers in need of foreign language training normally attend the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center in Monterey, California. Known as the DLI, they teach 17 foreign languages, including five Arabic dialects! They also have another facility in Washington, DC for teaching low-density languages—Uzbek, Thai, etc. DLI also has Internet distance-learning resources, including a Swahili language Gateway and a Cultural Orientation feature for 30 different cultures—there are four separate Chinese cultures! The training is fully culminated when the officer serves as an Attaché, Exchange Officer, Foreign Area Officer, or a Security Assistance Officer, fully immersed in the language and culture of the respective nation.

DoD & USPHS Partnership: To address behavioral health issues related to combat deployments, the DoD and the U.S. Public Health Service have a formal agreement that established the "DoD-USPHS Partnership for Psychological Health" initiative. This ensures that service members, their families, and veterans receive the resources they need by increasing the availability of behavioral health services. Behavioral health officers in the Commissioned Corps of the USPHS are detailed to military medical treatment facilities across the Nation to treat service members who are returning from deployment with conditions such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). That’s why you’ll occasionally see a USPHS officer in uniform at Fort Bragg and other military bases.

Help Wanted: We’re still in dire need of two volunteers to serve as Membership Chair and Programs Chair.

- NEWS FROM THE BLUE FORCE TRACKER -

ARMY: Army Research Lab has developed a prototype wearable exoskeleton “Third Arm” that takes the weapons load off of a soldier’s arm; the prototype arm eliminates weight of a 27-pound M240B machine gun.

NAVY: The Naval Research Lab has developed a new way to make nanocrystalline materials; they hope this will lead to the design of nanocrystalline ceramic material as the fabric of extremely lightweight body armor.

MARINES: A pilot program at one Correctional Custody facility replaces useless rock-breaking activity with basic training and fitness activity that re-instill high values and standards so as to fully rehabilitate the Marine.

AIR FORCE: Retired 0-3/0-4/0-5 officers under the age of 50 who were pilots, combat systems officers or air battle managers are encouraged to apply for return to activity duty in order to help alleviate manning shortages.

2018 Calendar: *General Membership Events:* 27 Sep and 29 Nov - Christmas Party. **NO JULY EVENT!**
Board Meetings: 23 Aug, 25 Oct and 27 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 your charity-specific (any or all three) annotated check to our Treasurer: CDR Dave Olson, 471 B 26th Ave NE, Hickory, NC 28601. The Cansler’s won the charity raffle at our last event; they kindly donated all winnings to the Benevolent Fund!

Treasury: Our chapter has adequate operating and reserve funds to cover anticipated expenses for the year.

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

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| Chapter President: Colonel (Dr.) Don Gemeinhardt | Director: Colonel Bob Barton |
| 1 st Vice President: LTC Cliff Davenport | Director: Captain Allen Stewart |
| 2 nd Vice President: LTC James Cole | Director: LTC David Imschweiler |
| Treasurer: Commander Dave Olson | Legislative Liaison: LTC (Dr.) Dana Tucker |
| Secretary & Deputy Treasurer: Major Dennis McClish | Membership Chair: Vacant |
| Chaplain: Reverend (WO3) Robert Herron | JROTC Coordinator: Lt Col G. Jane Harmon |
| Programs Chairman: Vacant | Personal Affairs & TOPS: Lt Col Ted Hayes |
| 1 st Past President & Director: Colonel Joe Cansler | 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

Find us on 
“MOAA Catawba Valley”

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

THERE WILL NOT BE A CHAPTER MEETING/DINNER IN JULY