

WNC MOAA

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA CHAPTER OF THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Membership Meetings

May 17: State-wide MOAA
Council Meeting - Evening
Banquet

Chicken Marsala and Flounder
Almandine

Next Meetings

August 17

November 16

Speaker for May 17

COL "DUKE" WOODHULL, USAF (RET.)

"FLYING HIGH"

2019 CASH FLOW

BOY \$14,644.50

INCOME \$ 3,729.50

EXPENSES \$3,498.11

EOQ 14,992.54

President's Remarks

by Mike Covell

We have maintained a steady pace of service through the winter and the chapter continues to add new members. At our last member's meeting in February, our speaker LTC Walter Smiley Jr., USA representing National MOAA presented the Chapter the Five Star Level of Excellence award earned in 2017 and a Fiftieth Anniversary Affiliate Award. Both awards reflect the years of excellent service this Chapter has provided.

Member News

COFFEE NEEDED!

If attending the banquet, please bring a 1 pound can of ground coffee for the VA Hospital visitors.

If you forgot to pay your 2019 dues, it's not too late,

Three Important Holidays

Memorial Day

Normandy 75th Anniversary

Independence Day

Coming up is our opportunity to host the North Carolina Council of Chapters, an event we look forward to every three years. Spring is in the air, the flowers are blooming and the white squirrels are rearing new families. It looks like it will be a great time of the year to show off Western North Carolina to our fellow officers and their spouses from across the state. The banquet will be on Friday evening, May 17 at the Hendersonville Country Club. The program will be a story you haven't heard before, unless you have read "Duke" Woodhull's book, "Flying High". You are in for a treat. Our 1st Vice-President, Rod Nunnelee has been working hard to put this event together.

Unfortunately, Rod has moved with his wife back to Michigan for personal reasons and won't be with us to take a bow for what he has accomplished. He has been a steadfast supporter of me and the Chapter and we will miss him. On the positive side, Donna Culp, one of our newer members who has taken a leadership role in the Smoky Mountain satellite, has stepped forward to relieve Rod. She has received the unanimous endorsement of the Board and we look forward to the membership's approval at our banquet.

Mike

Legislative Update

With deep regret our Legislative Affairs Officer was recently hospitalized and is unable to write this article.

The following concerns were discussed with legislators in Raleigh on April 10:

1. Recognition of Gold/Blue Star Mothers – HB64

Provide veterans that are permanently and totally disabled as designated by the Department of Veterans Affairs with greater property tax exclusions.

Veterans that are permanently and totally disabled as designated by the Department of Veterans Affairs have served this country and our state with honor and have given all but the last measure to protect our freedom. Many have returned home to find themselves in a state of physical and financial disaster and need of assistance. Passage of legislation to further assist these veterans would relieve some of the stress they endure daily.

2. Approval of the budget for NC Department of Veterans Affairs – three items highlighted by Martin Falls, Assistant Secretary.
 - a. NC Vets Cemetery staff 17 employees need to be put on one state payroll, urgently paid from receipts from the operation. Additionally, establish a trust fund for long term maintenance of the cemetery when full and there is no cash flow from receipts.
 - b. Increase funding for DVA in addition to the DMVA which was never included when formed in 2015.
 - c. Increase the budget for NC Scholarships for Children of Wartime vets.
3. Equal Tax Treatment of Government Retirees (Extend Bailey) HB213
4. Property tax relief for certain veterans with service related disabilities.

2017 LOE Award



What's Happening Out West?

From Smoky Mountain Satellite (SMS) – MOAA

- **On Monday 25 March 2019 – Guest Speaker - Dr. Scott Nixon, Medical Director of the Veterans Administration Community Based Outpatient Clinic (VA CBOC), Franklin, NC.**

In addition to his administrative responsibilities as Director, Dr. Nixon is one of 4 primary care physicians who triage and treat veterans at the Franklin VA CBOC. Dr. Nixon reflected on the early beginnings of the Franklin VA satellite clinic 10 years ago when veterans in and around Franklin appealed to the VA for an outpatient clinic. Seeing the need, the VA answered the call and today the existing clinic provides patient services that include, mental health, clinical labs, surgery, optometrist, neurologist, and administrative support to name a few. The average wait time to be seen once eligible is 20 days. Dr. Nixon provided an overview of the “Mission Act” to be implemented June 2019. To name a few aspects of the Mission Act:

- Streamline VA’s Community Care Programs into one streamlined program.
- Removing arbitrary 30-day/40-mile barriers to veteran’s care in the community.
- Improve VA Healthcare Delivery removing barriers for VA healthcare professionals to practice telemedicine.
- Authorizes access to walk-in community clinics for enrolled veterans who have previously used VA healthcare services in the last two years.
- Authorizes local provider agreements to remove bureaucratic red tape and to meet veterans’ needs for care in the community.
- Creates standards for timely payment to community care providers.
- Requires the VA to monitor the program and report to Congress on the care provided to veterans.

For more information on the Mission Act:

https://www.veterans.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/One%20Pager_The%20VA%20MISSION%20Act%20of%202018.pdf

- **The next VET SMILES event is scheduled for:**
 - 23 May 2019 at Eastern Carolina University School of Dental Medicine’s Community Service Learning Center (ECU-CSLC)
- **Supporting JROTC:**
 - SMS MOAA through the Smoky Mountains Outreach Foundation (SMOF), a 501c(3) non-profit, is donating \$500 to Pisgah JROTC to help offset the \$14K cost of sending their team to the Nationals.
 - Additional donations earmarked to further assist Pisgah JROTC with this effort can be sent to: **Smoky Mountains Outreach Foundation, PO Box 676, Lake Junaluska, NC 28745**
 - Preparations are underway to proudly present “MOAA Leadership Awards” to deserving cadets at six high schools in the SMS MOAA area:
 - Cherokee; Enka; Madison; Pisgah; Swain; Tuscola
- SMS MOAA will be presenting their report at the Haywood County Veterans Council 17 April 2019.

GET INVOLVED

There are many opportunities for you to serve the Western North Carolina community through WNC-MOAA. Below is a list of some of those projects:

1. Prepare and serve lunch to homeless veterans once a quarter at the Veterans Restoration Quarters (near the Asheville VA Hospital) on the 3rd Wednesday of the month from 0930 to 1230. Contact Col Jeff Snyder, jsnyder243@aol.com, 828-684-2359
2. Participate in “We Honor Veterans” pinning ceremonies as partners with Four Seasons Hospice. These events are unscheduled, performed on your availability. For more information contact CAPT John Knapp, j.knapp4@att.net, 828-702-3317
3. Present MOAA award to JROTC cadet at annual award ceremony. Dates and location as determined by the high school. You can select the school(s) of your choice. For more information contact Col Jeff Snyder, jsnyder243@aol.com, 828-684-2359
4. Provide support for family members of veterans using the Asheville VA Hospital. The duties vary depending on your time of availability. For more information contact Marleen Varner, marnvarner@gmail.com, 828-274-4267.
5. Join the Smoky Mountain Outreach Foundation which meets seven times a year at various locations in the western most counties of North Carolina. Their outreach efforts are described in this newsletter. For more information contact COL David McCracken, dem32415@aol.com, 828-550-5980.
6. Support Blue Ridge Honor Flight. The Blue Ridge Honor Flight chapter is preparing to send another group of veterans to Washington, DC on **Saturday, May 4th, 2019**. The local chapter, led by Jeff Miller, who co-founded the national Honor Flight network, has flown thousands of WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam War veterans to visit their memorials in Washington. The upcoming May flight, consisting mostly of Vietnam veterans, will fly out of **Asheville airport** and into Baltimore Washington airport on Allegiant Air. The flight will be a single-day trip, **returning on the the evening of May 4th**. Interested MOAAA members can help in five ways. First, by finding and encouraging war veterans to apply for the flight—there is no cost for the veteran. Second, by volunteering to serve as one of the “guardians” who will escort the veterans on this or future flights. Third, by volunteering to be part of the “ground crew” to that launches and recovers the honor flight. Fourth, by **attending the welcome home arrival ceremony at Asheville airport on the evening of May 4th**. And fifth, and most important of all, by making a financial contribution to Blue Ridge Honor Flight to allow this great work to continue. All the details are on the website at www.blueridgehonorflight.com or contact Rick Devereaux at rickdevereaux1@gmail.com.



The Truth About Your Tricare Cost

Congress has long accepted an obligation to provide [health care](#) to military retirees who earned this care through their decades of service and sacrifice. However, rising budget tensions seem to magnetically draw this earned [benefit](#) onto the chopping block repeatedly, bolstered by a misleading narrative that DoD personnel and health care costs are spiraling out of control. Adding to the confusion is another false narrative that military retirees pay little to nothing for their health care.

MOAA has done the research and provided context to the increases in personnel and health care costs (which, combined, remain approximately 33 percent of the DoD budget) as well as a deeper look into what military retirees pay for their health care. Further complicating these current discussions, MOAA research contends, are the immeasurable health care uncertainties awaiting our post-9/11 servicemembers and their families.

After over 17 years of deployments and war, there are retiree health care needs for which we must [account](#), and for which we must not subject to further premium costs or expose to the [erosion of this benefit](#).

Reviewing the [history](#) of TRICARE program changes - DoD underwent its first major change in 1956 when it began including dependent coverage - one might sense the federal government intends to deter beneficiaries from fully using their earned benefit. Any such impediments or challenges to the benefit tarnish a once ironclad recruiting and retention tool.

Read the [full white paper](#). On the MOAA web site.

Rules Change for Arlington Cemetery Burial

Arlington National Cemetery released new rules for funeral escorts for 2019, a change proposed by the ANC's advisory committee to address lengthy wait times for burials.

The new rules allow officers at O-4 or higher, warrant officers in the two highest warrant grades (CW4 and CW5), and E-9 enlisted members to receive full honors with an escort. Servicemembers who are killed in action or who have received the Medal of Honor, regardless of rank, are also eligible.

The change went into effect in mid-January after several months of careful consideration and input from the service chiefs, service secretaries, and the secretary of defense. Previously, any servicemember who attained the rank of E-9 and above could request this [benefit](#).

According to the commission, the concept behind this change was to “align the most resource intensive level of honors with those who demonstrated a higher level of commitment to service and sacrifice.”

(MOAA Premium and Life Members can receive [Your Guide to Military Burials](#), which includes updated ANC rules and much more information. [Download](#) the guide [here](#).)

Delivering honors with an [escort](#) involves more than 70 personnel, including a casket team, firing party, bugler, flag handlers, escort element (which varies by rank), and a military band. The logistical challenges limit ANC to carrying out eight such services per day.

Servicemembers who are ineligible for an escort (officers O-1 to O-3, warrant officers WO1 to CW-3, and enlisted members below E-9) still can request military honors, which include a casket team, firing party, bugler, and flag handlers. This service requires 17 personnel and is performed up to 22 times per day, Monday to Friday, at Arlington.

For more information on Arlington funeral honors, the cemetery has released this [fact sheet](#).

While officials at the cemetery predict this change eventually will alleviate some of the wait times, the increasing demand for burial in recent months still presents a challenge. Last month, ANC received over 55 burial requests in a single day. The total for February was more than 700.

While ANC holds status as a historic part of our national heritage, burial at any of the other national cemeteries around the U.S. is no less distinguished, and is available to every eligible veteran. According to Public Law 106-65, honors consist of two or more uniformed military persons presenting the U.S. burial flag along with the playing of Taps. To learn more about military funeral honors, visit this [website](#).

GENERAL CHAPTER MEETING REGISTRATION AND RENEWAL FORM

Membership Renewal

The easiest and fastest way to renew your membership is online. You may accomplish this in the few easy steps listed below. You may also complete the form on the following page.

1. Go to www.MOAA.org
2. Select Chapters & Councils (top of the page)
3. Click "Chapter Dues"
4. Click the blue button titled, "Join or Renew your chapter dues"
5. Complete the form and your dues are paid.

Annual Dues are Due and Payable Jan 1; past due March 1

Chapter Membership RENEWAL: \$30 Regular member and spouse; \$10 Surviving Spouse

Name: _____ National MOAA#: _____

Rank: _____ Service: _____ Spouse: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ ST: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Donation: _____ (All donations are to the chapter general fund)

Enclosed are my dues for the year(s) _____

Meeting/Banquet REGISTRATION:

Friday May 17, Hendersonville Country Club

5 PM Check-in/Social; 6 PM Banquet/Program

DEADLINE: Payment must be received NLT: Tuesday, **May 14, 2019**

Make Checks payable to: WNC MOAA; Enclosed is my check for _____ meal (s) At \$30 per person.

I/We plan on attending the WNC MOAA General Chapter Meeting on Friday May 17, 2019

NAME: _____ Guest: _____

Phone #: _____ E-mail: _____

This is the 1st WNC MOAA event attended: Y/N

Checks payable to WNC MOAA. Mail this form with payment to:

WNC MOAA
 PO Box 1984
 Hendersonville NC 28793