

An Affiliate Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America

## Save the Dates 2023

<u>BOD Mtgs.</u>	<u>Chapter Mtgs.</u>
<u>2023</u>	<u>2023</u>
April 15	May 13
July 8	August 19
October 14	November 18

The Western North Carolina Military Officers Association (WNC MOAA) is an affiliate chapter of National MOAA, is nonprofit and politically nonpartisan.

The mission of WNC MOAA is stated in the bylaws and referenced in the newsletter, and website.

Board of Directors and Chapter Meetings will be held on Saturdays.

Kenmure Country Club  
100 Clubhouse Drive  
Flat Rock, NC 28731

Dress Code: Country Club Casual

Registration information for the May 13th chapter meeting is included in this newsletter.

Spouses and guests are welcomed to all chapter meetings!

### President's Remarks

Recently I was engaged in a conversation with one of WNC MOAA's past presidents about Memorial Day, and what it means to remember our country's fallen brothers and sisters in arms. He read to me something he likes to share about Memorial Day and what it means to him, and perhaps many others. Touched by these words, and the story behind it, I now share this beautiful remembrance with you.

*Memorial Day is the day that we remember and honor the over three million, five hundred thousand Americans who have given their lives in the defense of our Nation. Many are memorialized on monuments in the towns across our Nation. Those who gave lives in my war, Vietnam, their names appear on a memorial in our Nation's Capital simply referred to as "The Wall".*

*Many years ago I and five other combat veterans of the Vietnam War visited the World War II North African battlefield at El Alamein, Egypt. Located in the Commonwealth Military Cemetery there is a headstone dedicated to a British soldier. The caption on the headstone reads **"TO THE WORLD A SOLDIER, TO ME THE WORLD."** Six middle-aged men stood there with tears running down their cheeks. I do not know if the memorial came from a mother, father, sibling, wife, or child. It does not matter for the sentiment stands alone.*

*I would ask you when you remember those who died for our country to also remember those who gave their WORLD.*

*Author Harvey L. Wilson LTC, USA Ret.*

Thank you for your service, and NEVER STOP SERVING!



Donna Culp, Capt , USAF (Fmr)  
President, WNC MOAA

## WNC MOAA Member Inspiration for Gold Star Spouses Day



“Over 13 years ago, I submitted a proposal to Senator Burr (R-NC) asking him to present a resolution to Congress to proclaim April 5 as Gold Star Wives Day, better known today as Gold Star Spouses day. Every year since 2009, I submitted the necessary paperwork to Senator Burr’s office and worked with his staff to make this resolution possible.

Today, Gold Star Spouses Day is a bipartisan effort with Senator Manchin (D- WV) as the lead member with Senator Budd (and Senator Boozman (R -AK)) supporting as cosponsors. “ - Dr. Wersel

Dr. Vivianne Cisneros Wersel with Senator Richard Burr (R-NC) the original sponsor of the resolution beginning in 2009.

### Manchin, Budd, Boozman Reintroduce Bipartisan Resolution to Honor Gold Star Spouses

Washington, DC—U.S. Senators Joe Manchin, (D-WV), Ted Budd (R-NC) and John Boozman (R-AR) reintroduced a bipartisan resolution to designate April 5th, 2023 as Gold Star Wives Day. The resolution honors the sacrifices made by the spouses and families of fallen members of the United States Armed Forces.

“I cannot imagine the pain of losing a loved one in the line of duty, and West Virginians and Americans are forever grateful to the brave patriots and their families who have sacrificed so much for the country we all love. We will never be able to repay our brave servicemen and women and their families who have paid the ultimate price to protect their fellow Americans. I’m proud to re-introduce this bipartisan resolution to designate April 5th, 2023 as Gold Star Wives Day to honor their dedication and sacrifice to our nation. I extend my deepest condolences and sincere gratitude to every Gold Star family and spouse,” said Senator Manchin, member of the Senate Armed Services and Veterans’ Affairs Committees.

“The men and women who have laid down their lives protecting our nation and defending freedom aren’t just heroes - they are parts of families that can never truly be made whole from the loss of their loved one. When Americans make this incredible sacrifice, we owe it to them not just to carry on their legacies but also to remember and support those they were closest to - their

spouses, children, and parents - with each new day they face without them. I’m honored to join Senators Manchin and Budd in ensuring these Gold Star families are not forgotten and our country expresses the eternal gratitude they so richly deserve.” said Senator Boozman.

On April 5th, 1945, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt convened the first meeting of the Gold Star Wives of America, a congressionally-chartered non-profit to acknowledge the incredible sacrifices of the families of those who died in service during World War II.

Senator Manchin introduced the Gold Star Wives Day Resolution in the 117th Congress on April 5th, 2021.

**To learn more about the organization and access the link to read the full text of the resolution go to:**  
<https://www.manchin.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/manchin-budd-boozman-reintroduce-bipartisan-resolution-to-honor-gold-star-spouses>



**To read more about Gold Star Spouses Day :**

<https://veteran.com/gold-star-spouses-day/>

- [What Is The Gold Star?](#)
- [A Brief History Of Gold Star Spouses Day](#)
- [How Gold Star Spouses Day Is Observed](#)
- [Gold Star Spouses Day: Raising Awareness](#)
- [Gold Star Survivor Resources](#)

## MOAA's Legislative Priorities for the 118th Congress



**MOAA's Mission?** Often when asked by non-members "Why would I join MOAA or What does MOAA do?" I respond with a quick and clear

delivery "...MOAA and their members improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our nation's capital for more than 90 years..." (moaa.org). This April MOAA once again will walk the halls of congress to help improve the lives of military members, retirees, family members as well as survivors.

### Advocacy in Action April 2023

On April 26, 2023, hundreds of MOAA members will be "walking the halls of Congress" as part of MOAA's Advocacy in Action. North Carolina is well represented with three members, Donna Culp, Mark Sandvigen, and Dr. Vivianne Wersel, who will divide and conquer and visit all NC representatives and Senators in DC. Their goal is to interact with the elected member or their staffer to discuss MOAA's top three legislative issues.

### Top three Legislative Priorities

- Restore the TRICARE Pharmacy Network
- Support the All-Volunteer Force
- Pay Full Housing Cost for Servicemembers

#### Restore the TRICARE Pharmacy Network

"The pharmacy network reduction is just the latest in a series of cuts that have eroded the TRICARE benefit, including an unprecedented enrollment fee, a higher catastrophic cap, and copays that have doubled in many instances. At the same time, TRICARE has failed to keep up with evolving technologies, treatment protocols, and commercial benchmarks, resulting in parity gaps such as a lack of coverage for chiropractic care, diagnostic genetic



testing, and young adult dependents. Put simply, TRICARE beneficiaries are paying more and getting less." MOAA.org

Decrease in Tricare Pharmacies creates access challenges for rural residents as well as the elderly and those with serious medical conditions Many rely on unique services and niche locations (e.g. hospital lobbies, oncology offices) offered by many community pharmacies to obtain their pharmaceuticals.

TRICARE's pharmacy falls short of a key benchmark. The Blue Cross/Blue Shield Federal Employee Program (FEP Blue), has a national network of more than 55,000 retail pharmacies – 25% larger than TRICARE's narrowed pharmacy network.

**Please urge DoD to reverse retail pharmacy network cuts to ensure TRICARE provides the health care protections servicemembers and retirees have earned. Please see MOAA.org for more information.**

#### Support the All-Volunteer Force BACKGROUND:

**A SHRINKING CANDIDATE POOL** – There is a decreased interest in – and eligibility for – military service

#### **MOAA'S POSITION – Support the All-Volunteer Force**

"The all-volunteer force is our national strategic advantage. Maintaining such a capability requires protecting the quality of life for our uniformed community. Deliberate steps, like improving physical fitness and health programs in our education system, will help increase the pool of eligible over time while investing in uniformed community housing, health care, child care, food insecurity prevention, and improved facilities and services will make a meaningful difference to those already in service (moaa.org)."

**MOAA: Western NC MOAA Chapter – Legislative Corner - Federal (Cont. on the next page.)**

## MOAA: Western NC MOAA Chapter – Legislative Corner - Federal (Cont.)

### What can Congress do?

- Use all available tools to combat the growing crises facing the All-Volunteer Force.
- Create long-term programs to widen the recruiting pool.
- Pass meaningful legislation to improve the quality of life of those in uniform and their families, including the Military Spouse Hiring.

### Pay Full Housing Cost for Servicemembers:



MOAA seeks to restore the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) to 100%.

### BACKGROUND

The availability of affordable rental housing is a national problem — one made worse for servicemembers thanks to frequent moves and the unique needs of their profession. Servicemembers don't choose where they are stationed, and they are always on call. The challenges mount further for families, with spouses of those in uniform more likely to be unemployed or

underemployed.

**What do I say?** Share with your friends, neighbors, and especially your elected official.

**“Our nation expects 100% from servicemembers. Ensure they get 100% of their housing allowance by supporting BAH restoration”**

### Regarding Legislation pertaining to military survivors:

Besides MOAA's top three priorities, “Caring for Survivor Act S 414” (Tester D-MT) and HR 1083 Johana Hayes (D-CT) will be discussed as the Military Coalition's #1 Legislative priority:

How will this legislation help survivors? This legislation will change the computation of the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, (DIC), from 43% to 55 % of disability payments to eligible recipients. This will create parity with other federal programs and a financial increase in survivors' DIC.

MOAA is also involved in many other legislative issues pertaining to the military, retirees, family members, and survivors. Connect online [MOAA Advocacy](#).

For more information on Federal legislation please contact Dr. Vivianne Wersel [viwersel@yahoo.com](mailto:viwersel@yahoo.com) or call (252) 646-2678.



Dr. Vivianne Cisneros Wersel  
WNC MOAA Federal Legislative Affairs  
National MOAA Surviving Spouses Advisory Board

**Take action to protect  
your pay and benefits!**

MOAA  
Military Officers' Association of America

Action Center Tutorial Return to MOAA.org Sign Up

Key Advocacy Issues  
Learn about our advocacy!

Engage with Lawmakers  
Tell us about your meetings!

MOAA-Supported Legislation  
See what bills MOAA supports!

Find your Elected Officials  
Learn about your legislators!

### What to Do!

- 1) Go to <https://moaa.quorum.us/>
- 2) Click on **“Action Center Tutorial.”** - takes 11.25 min to watch
- 3) After completing the tutorial, now Click on **Sign Up**. Even if you have used the previous Take Action, that dashboard is no longer supported. **You need to Sign Up to use the new dashboard.**

## **MOAA GUIDANCE ON PARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

<https://www.moaa.org/content/about-moaa/moaa-guidance-on-partisan-political-activities/>

### **PARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES**

As organizations exempt from federal taxation per Sec 501 (C) (19) of the Internal Revenue Code, MOAA and its affiliates must take care to avoid engaging in partisan political activities. Under IRS rules, we are prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

### **CANDIDATES FOR PUBLIC OFFICE**

A candidate for public office is an individual who offers himself or herself, or is proposed by others, as a contestant for an elective public office, whether such office is national, state, or local, and includes incumbent candidates. The prohibition also extends beyond declared candidates and may apply to efforts to recruit and individual to run for office or advance exploratory activities. The prohibition also applies to advocating for the platform of one political party over another.

### **PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES**

Activities which constitute participation or intervention in a political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate include, but are not limited to, the publication or distribution of written or printed statements or the making of oral statements on behalf of or in opposition to such a candidate.

It is clear that the prohibition on partisan political activity prohibits such outright actions such as posting a “Vote for Biden” or “Vote for Trump” on the organization’s website, or “Support Republican Candidates” or “Vote Democratic.”

In addition to these obvious examples, the prohibition goes well beyond direct expressions of support. In determining whether an organization is engaged in unlawful partisan political activities, the IRS applies a “facts and circumstances” test. The IRS looks not only to the expressed language, but to external factors, such as the communication’s timing, its targeted audience, and how the message relates to public policy positions that distinguish a candidate in a campaign.

### **CONSEQUENCES FOR VIOLATIONS**

The consequences to an organization that violates the prohibition on partisan political activity can be severe, including the loss of its tax exempt status and the imposition of certain excise taxes. For public charities, like The MOAA Foundation and the MOAA Scholarship Fund, the IRS can disallow tax deductions for charitable contributions. In addition, for an organization whose mission involves advocacy on key military community issues, MOAA must seek support from elected representatives from both parties.

Engaging in partisan political activities on behalf of one party or candidate would seriously undermine MOAA’s ability to achieve the bipartisan consensus on key issues essential to achieving its legislative objectives.

### **PERSONAL OPINIONS**

As individuals, members and leaders of MOAA and MOAA’s affiliates are not prohibited from engaging in partisan political activities so long as they do so in a way that makes it clear they are acting for themselves and do not appear to be speaking on behalf of MOAA or its affiliates. For example, it is permissible for an individual to express his or her personal preference in support of or in opposition to a candidate or political party. And they may do so publicly.

**MOAA GUIDANCE ON PARTISAN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES continued on next page.**



### **PERSONAL OPINIONS (Cont.)**

However, when expressing their personal opinions or preferences, they may not make reference to their MOAA position, use MOAA communications channels, use MOAA letterhead or newsletters, identify themselves as MOAA leaders, or imply that MOAA or its members share their beliefs.

### **LEADERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES**

Those in leadership positions have a special responsibility to separate their personal opinions from statements that are or can be attributed to MOAA or its affiliates. For example, it is improper for a chapter leader to use the chapter's newsletter to advance the leader's personal political beliefs.

This goes beyond statements expressly advocating for specific candidate or party by name. Statements that incorporate campaign messaging, campaign slogans, and political positions identified with a particular candidate or party are also prohibited. No MOAA leader is authorized to use MOAA's or an affiliate's resources to communicate their personal political beliefs. This is an outright violation of the leader's fiduciary duty to the organization and a serious leadership and ethical failure.

### **DIVISIVE SOCIAL ISSUES**

We are all aware of the divisive nature of the debate over today's leading social issues — protesting during the national anthem at sporting events, racial justice, public protests, and the conduct of law enforcement officers. These are issues over which many Americans have deeply held, but differing, personal beliefs. This is also true within the military community among the ranks of the active duty and retired officers and within MOAA itself.

MOAA leaders have an obligation to keep this in mind when communicating on behalf of MOAA or its affiliates. Suggesting that MOAA only supports one side of a deeply divisive issue sends a message to those with a different belief that MOAA is not for them.

Officers today have grown up in a military culture that is very different than the past. Many are accepting of attitudes and views that were not mainstream when many of us were in uniform. If MOAA is going to connect with the newest generation of uniformed officers, it needs to be clear that those with strong views on racial and social justice imperatives are just as welcome as those who adhere to more traditional expressions of patriotism and officership.

### **MOAA IN ACTION: MAJOR LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

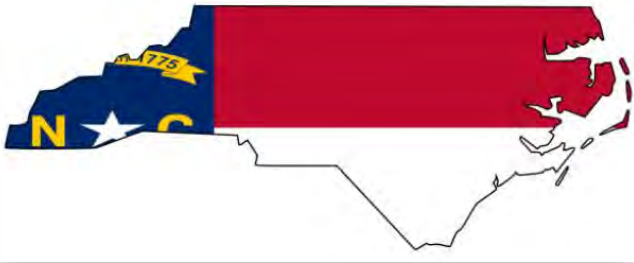
MOAA engages with Congress on all manner of issues related to the uniformed services community. These efforts can include collaboration with other like-minded organizations and with The Military Coalition. We also rely heavily on our members who make their voices heard by contacting lawmakers via [MOAA's Legislative Action Center](#), by participating in our annual signature advocacy event, and through local efforts at the [chapter and council level](#).

For [more than 90 years](#), this work has led to real results – pay and benefits protected from budget-driven threats, continued access to quality medical care, and countless other areas of concern to our members, our military, and the wider uniformed services community.

No list could encompass everything MOAA's achieved since 1929, but below, you'll find some of the highlights, broken into six categories. Click the links for details on each of the items (or scroll below the boxes to see the full list), and reach out to MOAA's legislative team at [legis@moaa.org](mailto:legis@moaa.org) to discuss your concerns on these or other topics. Note: Items with an asterisk (\*) are regularly under attack or under-resourced.

**For the full article go to: <https://www.moaa.org/content/topic-and-landing-pages/moaa-in-action/>**

## NORTH CAROLINA



Welcome to Spring! Your state legislature team has been tracking what is happening in the NC State Legislative General Assembly. This is the start of a new two-year cycle (a long, then short session with the currently elected Representatives and Senators). All the previous bills are basically archived, and the bill sponsors resubmit, submit new or rewrite and submit issues/bills, etc. for consideration and potential voting. As each bill is introduced, it is considered by the legislative body in which the bill was originally read (House or Senate). If the bill has enough support, it is approved and sent to a committee to be reviewed, updated, revised, and approved/forwarded for full legislature approval. Consequently, many bills are reviewed and updated by multiple committees before they can be considered by the full legislative body.

Some bills that impact veterans are sent to the Military and Veteran Affairs Committee, some to the Pensions & Retirement Committee, and some to Budget or similar committees. Once a committee agrees with a bill, it goes to the next and when ready for a full House/Senate vote, it is sent to the Rules, Calendar & Operations Committee, more or less as a holding area until the legislative leadership determines its priority for consideration. It's a long process and a bill can be stopped, modified, or approved at any stage. To our knowledge, no decisions or general assembly votes have happened up to this point that impact veterans.

Your WNC MOAA Chapter State Legislative Team keeps track and communicates our chapter priorities, advocating for our priorities with our elected WNC legislators. We respond to questions and let them know our approved top three issues with the hope they will either sponsor, co-sponsor or support the bills that improve NC veteran support.

There are three bills presently being considered within the state legislature on our list of three priorities. One is House Bill 105, that deals with Elderly Property Tax Exclusion; a second is House Bill 37 that updates or expands the Disabled Veteran Property Tax Exclusion

Senate Bill version is Senate Bill 148). The third bill is House Bill 178 which supports the maintenance of State Veteran Cemeteries.

If you want to read the contents of any bill, you can look up the bill at the State Legislative Website [NCLEG.gov](http://NCLEG.gov). Additional bills that include or support veterans are associated with Teacher Licenses (HB 280/SB 187) and two different bills that deal with veteran license plates/Honor Women Veterans plates (HB 319 & HB 427). There is a House bill (HB 296) that would adopt or recognize the Veteran's History Museum as the official Veteran Museum of NC. Two additional Senate bills include a Veteran Appreciation Act (SB 149) and toll road exemptions for disabled veterans (SB 334). Each of the above bills has been read, accepted, and sent to various committees for consideration, revision if needed, and hopefully committee approval.

Your state legislative team will continue to work with our WNC legislators to support veteran state benefits, as well as our State MOAA & our North Carolina Veteran's Council (NCVC) Legislative team to further our advocacy into goal successes.



**Submitted by: Michael Padgett, COL USA (Ret.), and Tricia Vinson, LTC USA (Ret.)  
WNC MOAA State Legislative Affairs Team**



As a North Carolina constituent, you are encouraged to reach out to your state legislators (Ref. Spring 2023 Newsletter) to convey support, personal testimonies, and opinions regarding any and all of these bills.



### **Widow's Tax on Survivors Completely Gone as of February 1st**

Feb. 1 benefits checks won't have the so-called "widow's tax" reducing income for the surviving [spouses](#) of military retirees who participate in two programs.

Until 2020, survivors couldn't receive the full amount of two survivor benefits at the same time. Under the rule known as the [Survivor Benefit Plan](#) (SBP) "offset," the government reduced payments that were part of that program by the amount of [Dependency and Indemnity Compensation](#) (DIC) that beneficiaries received from the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#).

DIC is generally for the families of veterans who died in the line of duty or as the result of a service-connected injury or illness. With the Defense Department's SBP, by contrast, veterans elect whether to pay premiums that will guarantee their spouses or other beneficiaries a percentage of their retirement pay after they die. That choice is typically made upon retirement.

The monthly DIC payment for a veteran who died on or after Jan. 1, 1993, is \$1,562.74 for 2023. Without the change in law, the government would have reduced SBP beneficiaries' payments by that much.

The decision to eliminate the "widow's tax" was a "huge win" and "the right thing to do," Mark Belinsky, director of currently serving/retired affairs for the Military Officers Association of America and an [Army](#) retiree, said in a phone interview. The SBP is a "very good plan," he added.

Congress came around to the idea that the reduction was unfair and laid out a process in the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act to gradually close the gap.

Rather than just changing the reductions to SBPs, the law began giving affected survivors an additional allowance to make up the difference, and as of the upcoming payments, the offset will no longer exist.

The reduction required when veterans participated in both programs deterred some from choosing to contribute to the SBP. Coinciding with the change to the deductions, the VA will give veterans a rare second chance to enroll this year.

The SBP is much more financially supportive than most forms of private life insurance. After a retiree dies, the SBP pays a beneficiary up to 55% of the retiree's monthly retirement pay, adjusted for inflation, for the rest of the surviving spouse's life or until a child reaches an age cap.

Those who enroll during the open season, which lasts until Jan. 1, 2024, will have to catch up on paying the premiums they missed since retiring, plus pay interest and "any additional amount" deemed necessary to maintain the "soundness" of the Defense Department's retirement fund, according to the new law.

Current enrollees can also opt out during the open season but won't receive a refund on the premiums they've already paid.

The new chance to enroll became law when President Joe Biden signed the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act on Dec. 23, 2022. Until the forms and processes for enrollment become available, the Defense Department recommends that retirees update their information in the [myPay system](#). Forms are in development and will be available by February at <https://www.dfas.mil/sbpopenseason23>, according to the Office of the Secretary of Defense.



# DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE

PROVIDING PAYMENT SERVICES FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

## Spouse or Former Spouse SBP Coverage RAS

### How to Identify the Status of Spouse/Former Spouse SBP Coverage on your Retiree Account Statement

Have you divorced since retiring? If so, please take a moment and carefully check your Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) participation status. Under the law, SBP coverage for a spouse ends with a divorce. Coverage for a former spouse does not continue after the divorce unless certain actions are taken.

To continue SBP coverage for a former spouse, either (a) the retiree must voluntarily request coverage be continued for the former spouse, or, (b) the former spouse must request the coverage (but she/he may do so only if a court order requires the coverage). Certain time limits and other conditions apply.

If those actions were not taken, the coverage for the former spouse has ended. This could have important consequences for your survivors.

To check your SBP coverage status, review your Retiree Account Statement (RAS) carefully. Make sure the "SBP Coverage Type" properly reflects "former spouse" or "spouse" (as applicable to your individual circumstances).

We have seen multiple instances of spouse SBP premium deductions that were continued after a divorce but because required actions were not taken, the former spouse was not properly covered, preventing payment of an SBP annuity.

If your RAS looks like this, coverage for a former spouse **is in place**:

SURVIVOR BENEFIT PLAN (SBP) COVERAGE			
SBP COVERAGE TYPE: SPOUSE ONLY COST:	FORMER SPOUSE 342.12	ANNUITY BASE AMOUNT: SPOUSE DOB:	5,263.36 JUL 18, 1961

If your RAS looks like this, your former spouse is **NOT** being covered by the SBP *even if her/his DOB is listed*:

SBP COVERAGE TYPE: SPOUSE ONLY COST:	SPOUSE ONLY 342.12	ANNUITY BASE AMOUNT: SPOUSE DOB:	5,263.36 JUL 18, 1961
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There is more information on our website on the SBP Changing or Stopping Coverage webpage: <https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/provide/sbp/change>

Or, if you have questions about your SBP coverage, you may call our Customer Care Center: <https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/about/aboutus/customer-service>

# Apply for VA Survivor Benefits



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

Choose **VA**

This guide will help you identify VA Survivor benefits and services you may be eligible for after your Veteran loved one has passed. It provides information about the different survivor benefits and programs available, contact information, required forms, application process, and where to find assistance.

## A checklist to help Veteran spouses and/or dependents apply for survivor benefits:

1

### PREPARATION

- Learn about different **types of survivor benefits and services** you and/or family members may be eligible for (see back for list)
- Collect the documents necessary to apply for survivor benefits:
  - Veteran's Discharge paperwork (DD214 or other separation documents)
  - Veteran's death certificate (copy)
  - Proof of your relationship to Veteran (marriage certificate, birth certificates)

2

### APPLICATION

- Apply by submitting all required documents, to include the applicable VA Form and the Veteran's death certificate, to the required servicing location (see back for more information) in one of these ways:
  - Mail to the appropriate VA office that serves your state.  
You can find the VA mailing addresses at <https://www.benefits.va.gov/compensation/maillingaddresses.asp> OR
  - Work with an accredited Veterans Service Organization (VSO).  
You can find a VSO at [www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search) OR
  - Go directly to a VA Regional Benefit Office (RO) for assistance.  
You can find your local RO at [www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp).
- For Life Insurance claims, call (800) 669-8477

3

### NEXT STEPS

- Visit us online at [www.eBenefits.va.gov](http://www.eBenefits.va.gov) to track the status of your claim
- Provide more information/documentation if requested by VA
- If approved, take steps to access your awarded benefits

### WHERE CAN I FIND A VETERAN'S SEPARATION DOCUMENTS?

To find the separations documents of the Veteran, you can visit [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov) or [www.eBenefits.va.gov](http://www.eBenefits.va.gov) to request copy of the DD214 or other separation documents of your loved one.

Surviving family members should make duplicate copies of all documents and retain them for their personal files before mailing them to a processing center.

Survivors can also receive free, in-person help preparing the claim from a Veterans Service Organization (VSO). Find an accredited VSO online by visiting: [www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/vso-search)

Survivors can also receive free, in-person help applying for benefits at the local Regional Office (RO). Find your local RO by visiting: [www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/benefits/offices.asp)

Find additional information about Beneficiary Financial Counseling Service and Online Will Preparation: [www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/bfcs.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/insurance/bfcs.asp)

CONTACT US:

VISIT US ONLINE [va.gov](http://va.gov)

VISIT US IN PERSON at your local VA Medical Center

Apply for VA Survivor Benefits Cont. on Next Page

Apply for VA Survivor Benefits Continued from the previous page.

## Information a spouse or dependent(s) will need to know to file a claim and receive the survivor benefits they may be eligible for:

### How would a spouse or dependent(s) know if they are eligible for VA survivor benefits?

Surviving family members can access detailed information to determine if they are eligible for survivor benefits that may be available by:

- Visiting [www.va.gov/survivors](http://www.va.gov/survivors) or [www.va.gov/family-member-benefits](http://www.va.gov/family-member-benefits)
- Contacting VBA directly at (800) 827-1000
- Contacting the Office of Survivors Assistance at (202) 461-1077

### What benefits and services are available for surviving family members?

These are the benefits and services that may be available to eligible spouses and dependent family members:

#### BENEFITS

- Interment in a National Cemetery
- Memorialization and Legacy Programs ([https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Planning\\_Legacy\\_Booklet.pdf](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Planning_Legacy_Booklet.pdf))
- Burial Benefits (VA Form 21P-530)
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA Form 21P-534EZ)
- Parents' Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (VA Form 21P-535)
- Survivor's Pension (VA Form 21P-534EZ)
- Dependent's Educational Assistance Program (VA Form 22-5490)
- Fry Education Scholarship
- Home Loan Guaranty
- Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)

#### SERVICES

- Bereavement Counseling is available at Vet Centers and VA Medical Center Clergy Services (visit: <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>) or call the White House VA Call Center (<https://www.va.gov/ve/whvahotline.asp>) at 1-855-948-2311. You can also call, text, or chat for help at the VA Crisis line (800) 273-8255.
- Educational and Vocational Counseling (VA Form 28-8832)
- Beneficiary Financial Counseling
- Financial Trust Services
- Online Will Preparation

Visit [www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits](http://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits) for more information or call (800) 827-1000.

Last updated: 9/17/2019

#### OTHER QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE

### As a surviving spouse am I eligible for healthcare?

The Department of Veterans Affairs offers Civilian Health and Medical Program of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA) healthcare coverage to family members who meet specific eligibility criteria. CHAMPVA is a comprehensive health care program managed by the Veterans Health Administration Office of Community Care (VHA OCC). The VA shares the cost of covered health care services and supplies with eligible beneficiaries similar to Medicaid and TriCare. For more information, call (844) 698-2311 or visit [www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/dependents/champva/index.asp](http://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/programs/dependents/champva/index.asp)

### What is the difference between DIC and SBP?

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is an entitlement benefit paid to eligible survivors (spouse, unmarried child or possibly parent) of certain deceased Servicemembers and Veterans that meet specific criteria. DIC is managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs. To learn more about DIC, please visit [www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/types-dependency\\_and\\_indemnity.asp](http://www.benefits.va.gov/COMPENSATION/types-dependency_and_indemnity.asp).

The Survivor Benefit Program (SBP) is a voluntary annuity program offered for purchase to Servicemembers as a retirement benefit for family members and is managed by the Department of Defense (DoD). Servicemembers who die on active duty and who have never contributed to SBP are automatically covered. Participation in this program is voluntary and not all Servicemembers opt to participate. To learn more about SBP, please visit [www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary.html](http://www.dfas.mil/retiredmilitary.html)

### Where can I find information about Burial Benefits?

Planning Your Legacy:  
VA Survivors and Burial Benefits Kit ([https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Planning\\_Legacy\\_Booklet.pdf](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/docs/factsheets/Planning_Legacy_Booklet.pdf)) and at [https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial\\_benefits/index.asp](https://www.cem.va.gov/cem/burial_benefits/index.asp)

## Veterans History Project

### What Veterans Say About the VHP

*"I am profoundly proud and honored that my story will be permanently archived in the Veterans History Project with the stories of tens of thousands of fellow American Veterans who, as a matter of honor and duty, served their country in time of war."*

--Warren Tsuneishi, WWII

*"I felt it was my duty to share my personal oral history with the Veterans History Project so that it could be added to the growing research collection at the Library of Congress and made available to current and future generations."*

--Wendy Taines, Persian Gulf War

*"I would encourage every Veteran to participate in the Veterans History Project. I know personally that I'd never discussed my experiences with my wife and children. They were very surprised when they viewed my video, and it led us to communicate more."*

--Jacob Younginer, Vietnam War

*"It's important to get every Veteran's story so future generations can learn about military life from firsthand accounts. Our individual experiences may have been different, but when compiled they form a powerful snapshot of history."*

--Teresa Pazio, Op. Iraqi Freedom

### The Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress

The United States Congress created the Veterans History Project (VHP) in 2000 as part of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. VHP's mission is to collect, preserve and make accessible the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may better understand the realities of war.

#### Participate

**Share your story** if you're a wartime Veteran. Make an appointment to sit down with a volunteer at the office of Voluntary Services, Charles George Veterans Administration Medical Center (VAMC) in Asheville, NC, and **record** a conversation about your military experiences for 30 minutes or longer at no cost to you.

**Provide** photographs of yourself in uniform and/or other relevant shots illustrating your wartime experience. Once the audio interview is recorded, the VAMC will provide you with a copy for yourself and submit the original and the required forms to the VHP.

### Participation is Simple:

Call the VAMC Voluntary Services at 828-299-2514 to arrange for an interview with a Dr. Mary Mac Ogden. She will have you complete the required forms, conduct the interview and collect materials that you wish to submit to the VHP archive.

#### Contact:

**Mary Mac Ogden, PhD**  
Email: [marymotley1@gmail.com](mailto:marymotley1@gmail.com)  
828-273-0227

The VAMC Voluntary Service Office is located in Building 47 on the fourth floor. To contact voluntary services call **828-299-2514**

Email: [VHAASHVoluntary@va.gov](mailto:VHAASHVoluntary@va.gov)

**Add:** A video- or audio-recorded interview of a wartime Veteran, 30 minutes or longer, 10 or more original photographs, letters, two-dimensional artwork and original military documents, 20 pages or more of original unpublished memoirs, diaries or journals.

*\*Please note that the VHP only accepts original materials; it cannot accept scans, photocopies or reproductions of any kind.*

#### Deceased Veterans

Next of kin may donate photographs, letters, diaries and memoirs of deceased veterans. The biographical data form and a release form on behalf of the deceased veteran must be completed and accompany submitted materials. VHP cannot accept proxy interviews recorded for a deceased Veteran.

#### What Happens to Interviews and Other Donated Items?

Donated items are housed in a preservation environment within the permanent collections of the Library of Congress. Within a six-month processing period, all donated materials are available to the public.



### Search and View Collections Online

The VHP website, [www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets), contains an **individualized web page for each veteran** who contributes. This page includes service history and other information about the veteran. Click on **Search the Veterans Collection** to access the database.

#### Visit VHP in Person

The **general public** may visit the VHP Information Center at the Library of Congress between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday-Friday. No appointment is necessary.

\*VHP Collections are not intended as a substitute for an official record of the federal government or of military service. These histories are personal recollections and perspectives of participating individuals, as they were voluntarily submitted to the Project.

The Library of Congress does not verify the accuracy of the accounts.

#### Learn More

Visit the VHP website at [www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets) and click on

**Frequently Asked Questions**



# PAWS

**Puppies  
Assisting  
Wounded  
Service members  
for Veterans Therapy Act**

This program may benefit Veterans by providing altruism of helping others, with possibly feeling an increased sense of purpose and self-worth.

*The Puppies Assisting Wounded Service Members (PAWS) for Veterans Therapy Act was signed in 2021 by President Biden with the goal of completing a pilot program to provide canine training to eligible Veterans diagnosed with PTSD.*

## Who Can Participate?

- Veterans with PTSD
- Enrolled in a VA Medical Center pilot site
- Have had an appointment with Primary Care, Mental Health, Whole Health, Recreation Therapy or Social work within the last 3 months
- Have been screened and approved by VA evaluating provider



### The Referral Process

After you are referred to the PAWS pilot, you will meet with a licensed VA psychologist for a screening appointment to ensure eligibility for the PAWS pilot. Once eligibility criteria is confirmed you will be referred to the first available canine training cohort.

### The Canine Training

The canine training sessions will be conducted by Warrior Canine Connection, a service dog organization that has partnered with the Charles George VA for the purpose of the pilot. This is an outpatient program. Participating Veterans will attend training sessions at the Charles George VA Medical Center, Veterans Drive Building 4.

### At the End of the Training, Will I Receive a Service Dog?

Veterans will not receive a service dog at the completion of this canine training program. More information on service dogs can be obtained at:  
• Service Dog Veterinary Health Benefit Rehabilitation and Prosthetic Services (va.gov)

### Will I Train My Own Service Dog?

No. This training does not involve training your own service dog. You will be assisting in the training of candidate service dogs that in most cases will be for another Veteran.

### Who Will Be In The Group?

A small group, not to exceed 6 Veterans, will begin and finish the entire eight-week program together. The group may include Veterans of all genders, with both combat and non-combat trauma histories and Veterans from different service eras.

### Will This Impact My Service-Connection?

No. Your participation in this pilot program should not impact your service connection status.

### At the End of the Training, Will I Be a Certified Service Dog Trainer?

No. This is not a job training program. Veterans will assist in training candidate service dogs for others by helping the dogs learn several basic commands: social interaction, physical connection, retrieve, and mobility. The VA is eager to assess potential benefits for Veterans with a diagnosis of PTSD participating in the training of candidate service dogs.

### How Many Sessions?

This is an eight-week program with one canine training session per week. Sessions will be held weekly and will be 60 minutes.

## Join Us to Help Veterans



- The PAWS Pilot program at the Charles George VA Medical Center is one of 5 pilot programs providing the opportunity for Veterans with PTSD to be involved in training candidates for future service dog placements.
- Veterans will participate in a group cohort that meets at the Charles George VA Medical Center to conduct 8 training sessions.
- Each cohort will consist of 6 Veterans.
- Training sessions will be weekly for 8 weeks.



# PAWS

**Puppies  
Assisting  
Wounded  
Service Members  
for Veterans Therapy Act  
June 2022**



**Ask your VA provider or the Charles George VA Medical Center point of contact to learn more or to be referred for the PAWS program**

Charles George VA Medical Center  
Building 4, Veterans Drive  
Asheville, NC 28805

Charles George VA Medical Center  
Point of Contact:  
Stacie Litsenberger, MPH, OTR/L  
Phone: 828-298-7911 x3547  
Email: Stacie.Litsenberger@va.gov

# PAWS Puppy Love at Charles George Medical Center on Valentines Day 2023



(L-R) Joanna Weber (CGVAMC) Volunteer Services, Slick, Michele Tate and Amy Guidash , Warrior Canine Connection trainers.

Thank you for your support of the CGVAMC PAWS Pilot Program!



Contact:  
Stacie Litzenberger  
828-298-7911  
Ext: 3547



Donations helps with uncovered costs:

Provides greater access to treats  
To include high value treats

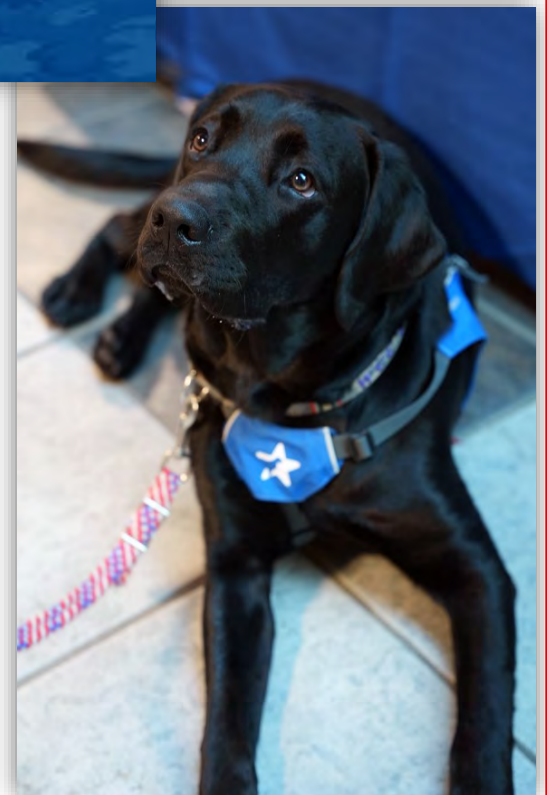
Funds toys and items which  
Better provide for the puppies  
puppy trainers, and Veterans  
involved with PAWS

Keeps puppy parents from  
purchasing all  
Supplies for the PAWS  
Puppies on their own

Left Photo: Pups in training, Bryce, Tina, and Slick.


Bottom Left: Ms. Weber, Slick, and Donna Culp, Pres. WNC MOAA presenting \$1,000 WNC MOAA donation to CGVAMC PAWS pilot program, an extension of Warrior Canine Connection.

Bottom Right: Super Star guest of the day, Slick.





## Program of General Caregiver Support Services

 *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)*

### What is the Program of General Caregiver Support Services (PGCSS)?

The Caregiver Support Program's (CSP) PGCSS provides services to caregivers of Veterans of all eras enrolled in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) healthcare.

PGCSS offers a wide array of services to family and friends who care for Veterans, including peer support mentoring, skills training, coaching, telephone support and online programs.

### Who is a General Caregiver?

- A General Caregiver is a person who provides personal care services to a Veteran enrolled in VA healthcare who:
  - Needs assistance with one or more activities of daily living or
  - Needs supervision or protection based on symptoms or residuals of neurological care or other impairment or injury.
- General Caregivers do not need to be a relative or live with the Veteran.

**“ I have very much enjoyed the VA Caregiver Support Program. I have learned a great deal...if I have any questions or concerns, I feel like I can contact our Caregiver Support Team without hesitation”**


– Caregiver in PGCSS

### What services does PGCSS provide for a caregiver?

- Training and support through in-person, online and telehealth sessions.
- Skills training focused on caregiving for a Veteran's unique needs.
- Individual counseling related to the care of the Veteran.
- Respite care, which offers medically and age-appropriate short-term services to eligible Veterans, allows caregivers to take time for themselves while the Veteran is cared for in a safe and caring environment.

Every VA Facility has a CSP Team who assists with information and referrals. To learn more about PGCSS and caregiver services offered, visit us online:

[www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov)

VA Caregiver Support Line  
 1-855-260-3274 toll-free



### How do I enroll in PGCSS as a caregiver?

- Reach out to the Facility CSP Team or request a referral from the Veteran's provider. No application is required.
- Complete an intake with the Facility CSP Team. The Veteran will need to agree to receive care from you as their caregiver, as you will be listed in their healthcare record.
- Enroll and begin to utilize the supports and services offered.
- VA will establish a healthcare record specifically for you.
- To establish a healthcare record, a member of the Facility CSP Team will request specific information to open this record, including your full name, gender, address, Social Security Number, and date of birth.
- This healthcare record will be used by the Facility

CSP Team and VA clinicians who provide services and support to you.

- PGCSS services are provided free of charge.

### How can engaging in PGCSS help me as a caregiver?

- PGCSS can:
  - Provide clinical support based on your needs and requests. This support may include coaching, supportive counseling, support groups, skills training or peer support mentoring.
  - Assist in identifying ways to decrease your burden and anxiety to better manage your frustrations and stress.
  - Help you best manage challenging behaviors or concerns by enhancing problem solving skills.
  - Connect you with VA and community benefits and services.



Every VA Facility has a CSP Team who assists with information and referrals. To learn more about PGCSS and caregiver services offered, visit us online:

[www.caregiver.va.gov](http://www.caregiver.va.gov)

VA Caregiver Support Line  
☎ 1-855-260-3274 toll-free



## Madison County Introduces New Veteran Services Officer

MARSHALL - Dan Jackson has been involved with the Mars Hill Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 5483 for the past four years, but now Jackson's responsibilities will expand, as the county introduced him as the new veteran services officer. Jackson, a U.S. Air Force veteran, was named the new veteran services officer earlier this month, replacing Edwina Craig.

Jackson said his main goal as the county's veteran services officer is to expand access to the county's veterans.



"I would like to increase the percentage of veterans that have been serviced in our county," Jackson said. "We're kind of new at having a VSO, as Edwina Craig was in this position before me. She had done an excellent job. I'm striving to see if I can get as close to 100% of veterans taken care of in Madison County. That's my goal - I want to contact all of them, whatever is available to them, and make sure they get that and are taken care of in their health and their disabilities."

Jackson said Craig has assisted him in the transition to the new role.

"She will continue to help me, and we've discussed that," Jackson said. "This is not one of those positions you just walk into and become effective right away. It takes quite a bit of training."

The Madison County Veterans Service Office offers a personalized service to veterans and their dependents in applying for VA benefits such as total disability pension, service-connected compensation, educational and scholarship benefits, hospitalization and medical care, burial benefits and discharge upgrades.

Service officers file compensation and pension claims for veterans and widows of veterans. They can also fill out most paperwork for the VA Hospital, the Department of Defense, the State of North Carolina (license plate tags and hunting/fishing license forms, property tax), and Department of Veterans Affairs. All services are provided without charge.

Jackson said Craig's mentorship is important, as the work the county is doing to provide assistance to local veterans is critical and "life changing."

"What this position does for veterans is life changing," he said. "There are veterans who are suffering financially, health-wise and emotionally. This is a way that we help them cope and live well in our society. We work hard to help them do that. But to do that, it takes a lot of training. We need to know a lot of things about medical conditions, financial situations and psychological aspects to help the different veterans and their needs.

"We're here to help them, and it's a somewhat large group that we're servicing. It takes a lot to make sure they're healthy and taken good care of."

According to the census bureau, the county had 1,462 veterans from 2017- 2021.

But with the county's population increasing, the number of veterans in the county is growing at a similar pace, the new veteran services officer said.

"We have a flood of people coming into our county, and our population is growing. There are about 2,500 veterans in our county," Jackson said. "Our percentage in servicing them, so far, is quite good in relationship to some locations. We still have a long road ahead of us to take care of all of them."

Jackson enjoys blacksmithing, woodworking and fly fishing in his spare time.

Jackson and his wife, Linda Rice Jackson, live in Mars Hill. Jackson's first day will be March 22. The Veterans Services Offices are located at 462 Long Branch Road in Marshall. For more information on Madison County Veterans Services contact Jackson at 828-649-2722.

Submitted by Jeff Snyder

## Join/Renew Your Local Chapter

Thank you for visiting MOAA's online chapter membership dues site. Whether you are considering chapter membership or renewing, now is the time to add your voice to the thousands of other MOAA members making a difference on the legislative front and in their communities.

MOAA's chapters are critical in helping us do this by building grass roots support for MOAA's legislative goals in their congressional districts. Chapter members let their legislators know what's on their minds and open doors for MOAA's legislative team here in Washington.

Learn more about reasons to join a chapter.

NOTE: National MOAA and local affiliate membership are two distinct memberships. Submitting your dues payment through this online application is for chapter dues (joins/renewals) only. If you are attempting to join/renew for National MOAA, please go to [www.moaa.org/join](http://www.moaa.org/join).

Please use the Chapter Locator to verify your chapter name.

### Getting Started

Do you want to join, renew, or make a donation? *	Donate Only	—
State: *	North Carolina	▼
Chapter: *	Western North Carolina Chapter, MOAA	▼

NEXT

## MOAA Website Offers

### Way to Join A Chapter - Pay Chapter Dues Make Donations

If you like paying for things electronically and don't like writing checks, you can now pay for your WNC-MOAA Chapter items online.

You can do the following all online: make a DONATION to the Chapter's Operating Expenses; you can PAY your Annual Membership Dues; and you can even PAY for Chapter Activities (i.e. Quarterly General Membership Meetings).

Go to <https://chapterdues.moaa.org/Membership.aspx>

Select "**Renew**" if you are renewing your dues or "**Donate**" if you would like to pay for Chapter Activities, such as our Quarterly Membership Meeting, or if you would like to donate to the Chapter's Operating Expenses.

For the State select "**North Carolina**".

For the Chapter select "**Western North Carolina Chapter, MOAA**".

Click "**Next**".

On the next page complete all of your information and then Click "**Next**".

If you are paying for Chapter Activities enter the cost of the activity in Donation Amount field.

Enter your Payment Information and Billing Information.

Click "**Finish**".

Submitted by Steve Watkins  
WNC MOAA Chair of Programs



## WNC MOAA Board of Directors and Officers

**President** Donna Culp, Capt. USAF (Fmr)

**2021—2023**

**Immediate Past President** Deceased

**1st Vice President** Steve Watkins, COL, USA (Ret)

**2nd Vice President** Kevin Ritter, CDR, USN (Ret)

**Secretary** Robert "Bob" Rebscher, Capt. USMC (Ret)

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**Chair** Steve Watkins, COL, USA (Ret)

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**Senior Advisor** Rick Deveraux, Maj Gen, USAF, (Ret.)

**Newsletter Editor** Donna Culp, Capt. USAF (Fmr)

**JROTC Liaison** Jeffrey "Jeff" Snyder, Col. USAF (Ret)

**Legislative Affairs - Federal** Dr. Vivianne Wersel, Au.D.

**Legislative Affairs - State** Michael Padgett, COL, USA (Ret)  
Patricia Vinson, LTC, USA (Ret)

**VA Liaisons** Ed Couser, LTCol, USAFR (Ret)  
Dr. Vivianne Wersel, Au.D.

**Surviving Spouse Liaison** Ramona Ritter

**Webmasters** John Culp, LTC, USA (Ret)

Steve Watkins, COL, USA (Ret)

**Spouses Activity Group (SAG)** Ginny Cisneros

**Purpose of the Western North Carolina Chapter, Military Officers Association of America, Inc.**

The purposes of the Chapter shall be to promote the purposes of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA); foster fraternal relations among retired, active duty, and former officers of the uniformed services and their reserve components; protect the rights and interests of active duty, retired, and reserve component personnel of the uniformed services and their dependents and survivors; provide useful services for members and their dependents and survivors; and serve the community and the nation.

**Ref: WNC MOAA bylaws updated, amended, and approved November 20th, 2021.**



**Treasurer's Report submitted by Mike Pomponio:**

**WNC MOAA — March Cash Flow 2023**

2023 WNC Chapter of MOAA Cash Flow 3/1/2023 to 3/31/2023		
<b>INCOME</b>		
Membersip Dues		
Miscellaneous Income & Donations	\$	505
Feb 18, Chapter Meeting	\$	72
May 13, Chapter meeting		300
Badges		30
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>\$ 907</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>NCCOC</b>		
NCCOC MOAA Dues		
BCVC		
Chapter President Travel		
Haywood Veterans Council		
<b>Recruiting &amp; Retention</b>		
<b>Administration</b>		
Bank Fees		
Liability Insurance		
Postage & Printing		
Post Office Box		
Web Hosting		
Virtual Meetings - ZOOM	\$	160
ROTC Awards		
Legislative Affairs Travel Exp		
WNC Meeting Flag Portability		
Speaker Gift 11/19/2022		
Aprons		
ZOOM		
Badges		
<b>Chapter Meetings</b>		
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$ 160</b>
<b>Total Income (Loss)</b>		<b>\$ 747</b>
<b>3/31/2023 Bank Balance</b>		<b>\$ 11,734</b>

**Hails and Farewells**

**Hails**

Lt Col Edwin B. Cottrell, USAF (Ret)  
 CPT Harvey Everett Corn, USA (FMR), Spouse - Sylvia  
 1LT Willard "Bill" Fishburne, USA (FMR), Spouse - Barbara

**Farewells**

LTC JW Hillhouse, USA (Ret)

**TAPS**

None Reported



**Mike Pomponio  
WNC MOAA Treasurer**



## NEVER STOP SERVING ... CHAPTER INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



**We Honor Veterans** - Since November 2014, WNC MOAA, in partnership with Four Seasons Hospice, has honored **over 905** veterans with special pinning ceremonies to salute veterans in hospice care and thank them for their service. Although the pinning ceremonies have been modified so as to be conducted remotely, the program continues. To learn more and get involved, contact **John Knapp, 828-702-3317 [j.knapp4@att.net](mailto:j.knapp4@att.net)**



### Veterans Restoration Quarters (VRQ)

**VRQ** - The chapter continues to serve our area's homeless veterans by providing a lunch prep/serve crew on the 4th Wednesday of every month at the Veterans Restoration Quarters (VRQ). We also provide the 5th Wednesday lunch crew in applicable months. The VRQ is a converted motel that provides shelter, counseling, and vocational training for the area's homeless veterans. Chapter members arrive at 9:30 to prepare for the lunch meal then, at 12:00, serve the meal to the residents of the Veteran's Restoration Quarters. The VRQ staff has been very diligent in implementing COVID safety protocols to ensure all volunteers work in a safe environment. The chapter is very proud to have been serving our area's veterans with this effort since 2015. If you would be interested in joining our crew, please contact the chapter's VRQ volunteer coordinator, **Jeff Snyder, at [jsnyder243@aol.com](mailto:jsnyder243@aol.com)**.



**Blue Ridge Honor Flight** transports American veterans to Washington, DC 2-3 times each year to "visit memorials dedicated honor their service and sacrifices of themselves and their friends." Returning to the skies after 2 1/2 years of being grounded due to the pandemic, BRF is back in full swing. There are opportunities to donate, as well as learn more about applying as an honoree, guardian, or volunteer. For more information, contact **Rick Devereaux, 828-772-6023 [rickdevereaux1@gmail.com](mailto:rickdevereaux1@gmail.com) or [www.blueridgehonorflight.com](http://www.blueridgehonorflight.com)**.

**Next flight: April 29th, 2023 -- If you or someone you know is interested in serving as a guardian on one of the upcoming flights, go to [www.blueridgehonorflight.com](http://www.blueridgehonorflight.com).**



**JROTC** - Active in 17 high schools throughout WNC, JROTC is supported by WNC MOAA with annual MOAA Leadership awards for rising Seniors. When group gatherings can resume, volunteers will be needed to present the awards. Until then, stand-by-to-stand-by. For more information, contact **Jeff Snyder, 828-684-2359**



**Veteran Smiles Foundation (VSF)** is dedicated to helping veterans find their dental home all across North Carolina. Continuing the relationship with ECU Dental School of Medicine as established with the Sylva Community Service Learning Center (CSLC), the plan is to systematically establish Vet Smiles programs with the other CSLCs in Brunswick County, Robeson County, Lillington, Ahoskie, Elizabeth City, Davidson County, and Spruce Pine.

WNC MOAA will continue its partnership with the Sylva clinic and coordinate efforts with VSF and NC Serves to continue to help identify veterans in need of dental care and a dental home for continuity of care. The Chapter will continue to contribute to the financial sponsorship of veterans enrolled in the program. For more information, contact, **David McCracken, 984-233-3350, [davide@vetsmiles.org](mailto:davide@vetsmiles.org)**



**Helping with State Level Legislative Affairs** is an opportunity to reconnect with your civic side and connect with North Carolina lawmakers on issues that are key talking points by MOAA NC Council of Chapters. If you already have a relationship established with individual legislators or the 4 Senators and 10 Representatives, please contact WNC MOAA State Legislative Affairs Chair, **Michael Padgett at [sopadgett@aol.com](mailto:sopadgett@aol.com)**



The mission of the **Veterans History Museum of the Carolinas** is to honor our nation's veterans, to educate the public about our country's military history and the contribution of our servicemen and women, and to preserve important and unique historic artifacts. The Museum reflects a love of country and gratitude to those who serve it by remembering and celebrating their service. A world-class museum and great destination for visitors. For more information: **WNC MOAA Museum POC: Duke Woodhull [dukewoodhull@gmail.com](mailto:dukewoodhull@gmail.com) or go to: <https://theveteransmuseum.org/>**



## New number. Same support. Dial 988 then Press 1

Please Share The New Phone Option For The  
Veterans Crisis Line: Dial 988 & Press 1

<https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/>

### TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS



<https://www.taps.org/mission>

[TAPS 24/7 National Military Survivor Helpline](#) is always available toll-free with loving support and resources at 800-959-TAPS (8277)

### MOAA:

Change address, update contact information, join, renew, or upgrade membership:

Call the **Member Service Center** at:  
(800) 234-6622 or (703) 549-2311

OR

e-mail [msc@moaa.org](mailto:msc@moaa.org)

OR

[update your membership information online](#) AND pay chapter dues by credit card while you're at it.

### WNC MOAA:

Use the Join Form included in this newsletter to change address, update contact information, join, or renew. If **paying by check** please mail to:

**PO Box 1984, Hendersonville, NC 28793**

OR

"contact us" via the web <https://www.wnc-moaa.org/>



### The Latest on COVID In WNC

Stay up to date regarding COVID, vaccines, boosters, and how we're doing in WNC .

**Dr. Mark Jaben, Medical Director for Haywood County** provides weekly updates, which are found on the WNC MOAA website.

<https://www.wnc-moaa.org/covid-19information/>

*Thank you Dr. Jaben!*



# THE LARGER OUR NUMBERS, THE GREATER YOUR VOICE.

Why WNC-MOAA chapter membership matters.



## WNC-MOAA CHAPTER & MOAA MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Branch of Service \_\_\_\_\_

Active Retired Former Reserve National Guard Surviving Spouse

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Date of birth \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

(To ensure deliverability of MOAA communications, please provide a personal email address.)

Are you a MOAA member? Yes No Unknown

MOAA Member Number (if known) \_\_\_\_\_

### Spouse's information

Spouse's name \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse's email \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's phone \_\_\_\_\_

Is your spouse a MOAA member or eligible to be a MOAA member? Yes No

**Not a MOAA national member yet? Check here to receive a  BASIC Membership at no cost to you.**

And, for only \$4 a month, you can upgrade to **PREMIUM** membership, giving you immediate access to a full spectrum of career and financial resources, exclusive publications, college scholarships for dependents, and countless discounts on products and travel. Visit [moaa.org/join](http://moaa.org/join) to learn more.

How did you hear about MOAA Chapter involvement? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a member of any other MOAA Chapter(s)? Yes No

If yes, which one(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

### To complete enrollment:

- Fill in this form on your computer, save it, and e-mail it to [vp1@wnc-moaa.org](mailto:vp1@wnc-moaa.org) as an attachment **or**
- Print it and fill it and mail it to:  
WNC-MOAA, P.O. Box 1984, Hendersonville, NC 28793 **or**  
Scan it and e-mail it to [vp1@wnc-moaa.org](mailto:vp1@wnc-moaa.org)
- Go to [wnc-moaa.org](http://wnc-moaa.org) for more information about our Chapter.

You will be opted in to receive e-communications from MOAA and your local chapter. You will be able to opt out of any further e-communications at any time. MOAA will not sell or share personal information.

### Western North Carolina Chapter membership of MOAA

Chapter Dues are due  
January 1  
(No Later Than March 1)

#### Member

\$45 - New Member  
(includes Spouse)

\$30 - Renew

#### Surviving Spouse

\$25 - New

\$10 - Renew

#### Name Badges

(Badges are Magnet type only)

One name badge is included  
with new memberships

5XX]hcbU#FYd`UW`a Ybh  
Badges !`%) each

Badge BameftjL

If you have any questions,  
please contact Steve Watkins  
at: [vp1@wnc-moaa.org](mailto:vp1@wnc-moaa.org) or call  
or text 608-225-0594

# Join us for a Luncheon!



**Saturday, May 13, 2023**

**Location: Kenmure Country Club  
100 Clubhouse Dr.  
Flat Rock, NC 28731**

**Meeting / Lunch Registration: 11:15 AM Check-in / Social - 12:00 PM Lunch / Program  
RSVP DEADLINE: to Steve Watkins, [vp1@wnc-moaa.org](mailto:vp1@wnc-moaa.org) NLT Monday, May 8, 2023**

***Payment must be received NLT Wednesday, May 10, 2023***

**Pay Online using Donation to the North Carolina - Western North Carolina Chapter at  
<https://chapterdues.moaa.org/Membership.aspx>**

or

**Mail Checks and registration to:  
WNC MOAA  
P.O. Box 1984  
Hendersonville, NC 28793**

**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 Saturday, May 13th, 2023

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Guest: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Dress code:** Country Club Casual – *Relaxed attire. Collared shirts required for gentlemen but not jackets. Men in collared shirts, polo tops, and slacks and women in simple blouses, fitted trousers, skirts, and dresses.*

**PARKING INSTRUCTIONS:** Once through the gate, follow signs to Clubhouse, turn right at the Welcome sign to park in either of the parking lots, a shuttle will take you to the Clubhouse. **If passenger drop off is required, DO NOT turn at the Welcome sign, proceed to the next right to cross the bridge, and proceed to the front of the Clubhouse. You may drop passenger at the ramp or proceed to the portico and drop them at the main entrance.**

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## **Guest Speaker: Ivan Sarabia**

Ivan Sarabia, an Army Veteran, was a Veteran Service Officer in the Raleigh area before relocating to a VSO position here in Western North Carolina.

### **Topics**

***What a Veteran Service Office can do for Veterans & their families***

***The role of a Veteran Service Officer***