

An Affiliate Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America

**Save the Dates**

**2024**

**BOD Mtgs.**

**Chapter Mtgs.**

**October 22**

**August 17**

**November 16**

**2025**

**January 14**

**February 22**

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.

**Chapter Meetings are held on Saturdays.**

Kenmure Country Club  
100 Clubhouse Drive  
Flat Rock, NC 28731

Dress Code: Country Club Casual

**Registration information for the August 17th Chapter picnic/meeting (Fletcher Park) is included in this newsletter.**

**Spouses and guests are welcomed to all Chapter meetings!**



**President's Message**

Dear WNC-MOAA Members,

I hope you've had an enjoyable and fun-filled summer as it winds down. Our chapter has been active and engaged in numerous meaningful events, and I want to take this opportunity to share some highlights and upcoming activities.

First, I'm excited about our upcoming Chapter Picnic on August 17th at Fletcher Park. This event is a wonderful opportunity for fellowship and fun, and all Chapter members, spouses, Surviving Spouses, potential chapter members, and guests are welcome. You can find the flyer for the picnic on page 20 of this newsletter. I look forward to seeing you all there!

In the past few months, we've participated in several fantastic veteran events in our local communities, including the Veterans Healing Farm Resource Fair, the Haywood Veterans Community Gathering, the Henderson County Veterans Stand-down, numerous We Honor Veterans Pinning Ceremonies, and a Veterans Honor Ceremony with Veterans Last Patrol. These events are a testament to our commitment to supporting and honoring our veterans in Western North Carolina.

I'd like to extend a warm welcome to the four new members who have recently joined our Chapter. We are thrilled to have you with us. It's crucial for each of us to talk about WNC-MOAA and MOAA to our friends and bring them to our Chapter events. Recruiting new members is fundamental for the vitality of our chapter. We must maintain and increase our new member recruiting efforts and boost our attendance at the November meeting so that more members can stay informed and engaged.

As summer comes to an end, I hope you all enjoy it safely. I'm looking forward to several upcoming events, including the chapter picnic on August 17th, a rafting trip on August 22nd guided by the Nantahala Outdoor Center, and attending an Asheville Tourist game on August 29th. Jen and I are also excited about the fall trip to the Chocolate Factory that Stacie Litsenberger is organizing—Yum and a fall colors zipline tour!

For those who have been part of MOAA and WNC-MOAA for many years, I'd like to remind you of our mission. MOAA is a professional association of United States military officers with over 355,000 members. We advocate for a strong national defense and support policies that benefit uniform service members and their families. Our mission is to preserve and protect the earned benefits of our uniformed services, veterans, their families, and surviving spouses through advocacy, leadership, education, and service. WNC-MOAA works closely with MOAA National and partners with other North Carolina MOAA Chapters and Veteran Service Organizations to protect and improve state benefits for our community. Membership is open to active duty, National Guard, Reserve, retired, and former commissioned officers and warrant officers and their surviving spouses from all uniformed services.

We are currently looking to fill a couple WNC-MOAA Board member

*(Continued on page 2)*

## **President's Message** *(Continued from page 1)*

positions, specifically a Marine Corps Representative and a Chaplain. The workload is manageable, and your involvement would be greatly appreciated. If you are interested, please reach out to me.

I also have a **CHALLENGE** for our chapter: **I challenge WNC-MOAA to sponsor 1,000 wreaths for the Western North Carolina cemeteries as part of Wreaths Across America.** Last year, only about 1/3 of the graves in the State Cemetery in Black Mountain received a wreath. Here are the current statistics:

- Forest Lawn Cemetery in Hendersonville: 275 Wreaths Sponsored (44.3% to Goal) - 345 To Go!
- Greenhill Cemetery in Waynesville: 498 Wreaths Sponsored (49.8% to Goal) - 501 To Go!
- Highlands Cemetery in Highlands: 213 Wreaths Sponsored (37.0% to Goal) - 362 To Go!
- Rutherford County Memorial Cemetery: 60 Wreaths Sponsored (7.5% to Goal) - 740 To Go!
- Western Carolina State Veterans Cemetery in Black Mountain: 488 Wreaths Sponsored (7.9% to Goal) - 5,712 To Go!



With our challenge you can sponsor 1, 5, or 10 wreaths on our WNC-MOAA payment website: <https://wnc-moaa-wreath-challenge.cheddarup.com>. Wreaths are \$17.00 each. Our goal is to sponsor 1,000 wreaths for the five cemeteries in Western North Carolina. This initiative aims to REMEMBER the fallen, HONOR those who served, and TEACH all generations the value of freedom. It embodies our commitment to ensuring that the sacrifices of our veterans are never forgotten and that their legacies continue to inspire future generations.

Please feel free to contact me with any comments or suggestions on how to improve our Chapter, not only for our members but also for our communities. Thank you all for your work and support. I look forward to seeing you at the picnic or one of our other upcoming events!

***'Never Stop Serving'***

**Steve Watkins**  
President, WNC-MOAA Chapter



## **DoD Report Shows Higher Cancer Rates for Aviators, Ground Crew Member**

*By: Karen Ruedisueli, National MOAA*

Military fixed-wing aviators and aviation support personnel face higher rates of certain cancers than the general population and were diagnosed with the disease at least dozen years earlier on average, according to a DoD report to Congress filed last month.

The results trigger a Phase 2 report to identify risk factors for the cancer diagnoses. That study, set to start in early 2025, also will determine the appropriate age to begin screening aircrew and ground crew for cancer based on a variety of factors including flying hours, length of service, and mission.

The report examined data for 138,505 aircrew and 659,985 ground crew. It included both active and reserve components, representing all military branches, and identified cancers diagnosed

between 1992 and 2017.

Compared to a demographically similar U.S. population, aircrew had a 75% higher rate of melanoma, 31% higher rate of thyroid cancer, 20% higher rate of prostate cancer, and 15% higher rate of cancer for all sites combined. Ground crew members had a 12% higher rate of kidney and renal pelvis cancer but a 5% lower rate of all sites combined.

Data for the general population comparison was obtained from the Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) program of the National Cancer Institute, as directed by Congress.

The report noted a younger age at diagnosis for both aircrew and ground crew relative to the general population. The median age at diagnosis for malignant cancer of all sites was 55 years in aircrew and 54

years in ground crew. In contrast, the median age at diagnosis for malignant cancer of all sites was 67 years in the SEER reference population. An interim DoD report from February 2023 included only data for active component aircrew and ground crew. It was released while DoD collected additional data from the VA and state cancer registries for reserve component servicemembers.

DoD cancer registry and TRICARE claims data was used to assess cancer incidence among current and former (retired) aircrew and ground crew. The earlier report indicated active component aircrew and ground crew had a respective 24% and 3% higher incidence of cancer for all sites compared to a demographically similar general U.S. population



## Navigating the Heat: How the "Dog Days of Summer" Align with the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) Legislative Push

**2024**

"Dog Days of Summer" describes the hottest summer period, typically from early July to mid-August. This expression originates from ancient Greek and Roman beliefs, associating this time with the rising of Sirius, the Dog Star, which was believed to bring heat, drought, sluggishness, and fever. The intense heat was thought to impact humans and dogs (Boeckman, 2024.) This phrase is commonly used to indicate the peak of summer heat and has no connection to legislative matters.

However, during the Dog Days of Summer, the House of Representatives and Senate finalize their versions of the NDAA (National et al. Act). This timing follows tradition, as these legislative processes coincide with the warm days of summer. Both chambers must complete their version of the NDAA during the Dog Days of Summer because the final version is a timely process (see process below) for the following year's budget. The NDAA is essential legislation that approves annual funding for the Department of Defense (DoD).

Some individuals may feel uncomfortable during scorching summer days due to hot and humid afternoons, unruly hair days, and increased electricity bills. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge the significant role

played by both the House and the Senate in formulating their respective bills for the NDAA, even amidst extreme heat during these Dog Days of Summer.

### What exactly is the NDAA?

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is a federal law that details the Department of Defense's policies, budgets, and expenditures (Wikipedia 2024). This legislation is an annual event approved by the House of Representatives and the Senate before the President's signing into law. The NDAA determines the following year's defense budget and provides guidance for policy changes, influencing sectors like active-duty, veterans, National Guard and Reserves members, survivors, and families connected to the military.

### Key Dates

House of Representatives HR 8070 Signed their version of the NDAA on June 18, 2024.

Senate Bill 4638, Signed their version of the NDAA on July 8, 2024.

### Process Overview

- Each chamber drafts its version of the bill (H.R. 8070 & S. 4638) outlining what should be included in the NDAA.
- A Conference Committee composed of members from

both chambers merges the two bills to create a definitive version.

- Differences between the bills are reconciled and reviewed by the committee.
- The Conference Committee produces a final bill (conference report) agreed upon by both chambers and explains any discrepancies.
- The bill is then submitted to the president for approval. The President holds the power to veto, though Congress can overturn it with a two-thirds majority vote in such a case.
- Once the process is finished and the President signs the document (not vetoed), it guarantees funding for the military in the next fiscal year.

Reference:

Boeckman, C. (2024). Dog Days: What are the Dog Days of Summer? Almanac 2024. Retrieved July 18, 2024, from [www.almanac.com/content/what-are-dog-days-summer](http://www.almanac.com/content/what-are-dog-days-summer).

National Defense Authorization Act. (2024, July 18). In Wikipedia. Retrieved July 18, 2024, from [National Defense Authorization Act - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Defense_Authorization_Act).



**Submitted by**

**Dr. Vivianne C. Wersel, Au.D., WNC  
-MOAA Legislative Team (Federal)**



## WNC CREATIVE ARTS FESTIVAL SHOWCASE

SEPTEMBER 5TH  
10AM-2PM

ALL WNC VA VETERANS MAY PARTICIPATE

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: 8/30

CONTACT FOR MORE INFO OR TO REGISTER:  
REBEKAH WIGGINS  
CALL/TEXT (828)450-1626  
EMAIL: SUSAN.WIGGINS@VA.GOV

## Have You Visited Our Website and 'Liked' Our Facebook Page?

[www.wnc-moaa.org](http://www.wnc-moaa.org) & Facebook: [WNC- MOAA](#)

The WNC-MOAA website is a comprehensive and valuable tool that you can use to make the most of your MOAA Membership. Some of the things you can find on our website include:

**Events Calendar:** We have an "Events" page where you will find an updated calendar, displaying our upcoming MOAA events. Click on our Events Page to check it out

**Newsletters:** Here you will find the latest issue of the Western North Carolina Chapter of MOAA award winning Chapter Newsletter. You can also access archived versions of the newsletter for reference and research.

**Photo Gallery of Events:** This is our photo gallery, where you will see all of the photos during our luncheons, special meetings, conventions and more! If you've had your picture taken at our events, you can likely find it by scrolling through our Photo Gallery!

**Facebook:** Visit us on Facebook at "[WNC- MOAA](#)" where you can scroll through our photo albums, like and share our posts, and stay up to date on Western North Carolina Chapter news and events.



## VA is Reaching Out to Veterans Who Served at K-2



VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs



On July 11, 2024, the VA began contacting Veterans who served at the [Karshi-Khanabad \(K-2\) Air Base in Uzbekistan](#) to let them know about benefits they may be entitled to as a result of toxic exposures while serving at that location.

Potential exposures include:

- Jet fuel
- Volatile organic compounds
- Particulate matter and dust
- Depleted uranium
- Asbestos
- Lead-based paint

[The Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics \(PACT\) Act of 2022](#) expanded benefits for Veterans who served at K-2 and have health conditions that may be related to their exposure to toxins while there. Expanded benefits include access to VA Disability Compensation and VA Health Care.

VA will continue calls to Veterans who served at K-2 in an attempt to connect all eligible Veterans with their earned benefits. But, you don't have to wait to be contacted.

If you have health conditions you believe were caused by toxic exposures at K-2, we encourage you to visit [va.gov](http://va.gov) and apply for your benefits today.

**Need assistance with VA benefits? The Winston-Salem Regional Office is here to help.**



Visit our website to see our office location, make an appointment, and see our upcoming outreach events, [Winston-Salem Regional Office Home \(va.gov\)](#).



## **DFAS - Retiree Pay Account Check-Up**

Keeping your account current will ensure that DFAS can get in touch with you if there is information you need to know about your retired pay and help make sure that outdated information doesn't cause difficulties for you or your loved ones down the road.

Use this retired pay account checklist at least once a year. Keep in mind that it is usually good to do this around the time of preparing your taxes because the documents you need will be readily available. Or you can do it any time that is convenient for you by using myPay.

### **1. Is your mailing address current?**

You might be surprised to learn DFAS receives a lot of returned mail. If you moved and haven't told us, we won't know how to reach you. Thus, let's keep the lines of communication open! You can easily log in to your myPay account and check "Correspondence Address" under "Pay Changes" on the side menu as part of the annual account checkup: <https://mypay.dfas.mil>. You can also check your mailing address on your Retiree Account Statement to ensure that it is up-to-date.

### **2. Is your email address in myPay current?**

Make sure you have an email address in myPay that is current. Email is the easiest and fastest way to communicate with us. If we have an email address, you will hear news faster. Plus, now you can get email status notifications when you submit certain requests for your account if you have a valid email address in myPay.

It only takes a minute to check your email address in myPay. At the top of the myPay account menu, select "Personal Settings" and then in the side menu on the left, select "Email Address" to view the email address(es) on file with DFAS. Make sure you indicate the primary email address you want us to use and check the box to indicate if the address is still valid. Delete any old email addresses you no longer use.

If you have a valid email address in myPay, you can receive notifications

about the DFAS Retiree Newsletter, your Branch of Service's retiree newsletter, and information about your pay account.

### **3. Are your allotments correct?**

Look under "Pay Changes" for "Allotments" in the menu on the left side of the myPay account. Check each allotment and the allotment amounts. Make sure each allotment is current and the amount is correct.

You might also consider moving allotments for bill payments to your online bank account where you would have more control and flexibility in the timing and changes to your payments. If you do not monitor your allotment amounts and your pay changes for any reason, it is possible that your pay could be suspended if your allotments exceed your net retired pay - so please monitor these closely!

Please keep in mind that some allotments cannot be changed using myPay. These include allotments that are paid via paper check, those for your federal benefits, such as FEDVIP, TRICARE and NSGLI, and those that are not voluntary allotments.

If you have a question about allotments for your federal benefits, please contact that organization directly. DFAS cannot answer questions about or make changes to your federal benefit allotments. If you have a question about an allotment that cannot be changed in myPay, please contact our Customer Care Center.

### **4. Is your income tax withholding correct?**

If your income changes, you move to another state, or there are changes in the tax laws, you should look at the federal or state income tax withholding information in your account.

You can verify and update your tax withholding information yourself in myPay. Click on "Federal Withholding" or "State Withholding" under "Pay Changes" in the menu on the left to see if your withholding meets your current need. You may also mail or fax us a new

IRS Form W-4 to request a change to your federal withholding.

DFAS is unable to provide tax advice. If you have tax or withholding questions, we recommend you consult a tax professional or the IRS website at: <https://www.irs.gov>. You can also use the IRS estimator at: <https://www.irs.gov/individuals/tax-withholding-estimator>

### **5. Have you had any major life changes?**

If you get married, lose a spouse, or have a child, that change can affect your account. Changes may need to be made to your Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) information or your Arrears of Pay (AOP) beneficiary.

To make changes to your Survivor Benefit Plan coverage, please send DFAS a copy of the official documentation (marriage license, divorce decree, death certificate or birth certificate), along with the request to update your account.

DFAS also now has a Form Wizard for the DD Form 2656-6 (Survivor Benefit Plan Election Change Certificate) to help take the "form" out of the form. You can use the Form Wizard to provide updated beneficiary information and even conveniently submit your document using askDFAS. You can find more information here: <https://www.dfas.mil/askdfas>. On that page, click on Retirees and Annuitants.

Retirees should always notify DFAS as soon as possible about a major life change.

### **6. Is your Arrears of Pay beneficiary correct?**

Retirees should choose a beneficiary for any arrears of retired pay that may be due when they pass away. Make sure the designation is current and confirm that the beneficiary's address is up to date.

You can check this information by clicking on the "Beneficiary for Arrears" link under "Pay Changes" in the menu on the left side of your account in myPay. Beneficiary designation changes can be made through myPay, as well as updating the beneficiary's address information.

DFAS also now has a Form Wizard for

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## DFAS - Retiree Pay Account Check-Up (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

the DD Form 2894 (Designation of Beneficiary Information) to help take the “form” out of the form. You can use the Form Wizard to provide updated beneficiary information and even conveniently submit your document using askDFAS. You can find more information here: <https://www.dfas.mil/askdfas>. On that page, click on Retirees and Annuitants.

### **7. Is your Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) coverage and beneficiary correct?**

Your Retiree Account Statement (RAS),

available in myPay, has a lot of information on it about pay, deductions, taxes, and SBP. The SBP section has five lines for members who participate in SBP. The most important information for you to check is the type of coverage and date of birth of your spouse beneficiary (if applicable).

If you divorced since retiring, 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 former spouse will not have SBP coverage. This could have important consequences for your survivors.

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

## Early Bird Save the Date Invitation for a Cruise to Bermuda in 2025

6-Day Bermuda Cruise from Norfolk - Carnival Cruise Line Dates: October 12-18, 2025

Round trip from: Norfolk, VA - Open to MOAA members from anywhere, their adult family members and guests. MOAA membership is not required. **Please open the link below for details:**



### 6-Day Bermuda Cruise from Norfolk - Carnival Cruise Line

Cruise Line: Carnival on Sunshine! Special group rates apply and bookings are managed through our tour agent. Her contact details are listed below. 50 cabins have been reserved for our group and more can be added as needed.

Prices for double occupancy in each cabin are approximately \$800 for inside, \$900 for ocean view or \$1100 for balcony staterooms per person depending on selection. Suites and cabins for more than 2 people can be arranged. Minimal deposit is required to reserve cabins with final payments not due until July 14, 2025.

Call the agent below to discuss and reserve if interested.

**Lorna Tiller,**  
**AAA ITA**  
**910-343-1978(O)**  
**910-540-3390(M)**  
**1823 Hawthorne Rd. Wilmington, NC 28403**

Thanks,  
Ken Klassen  
NC Council of Chapter



## Honoring a Hero: Lt. Col. Ed Cottrell Receives French Legion of Honor



On July 9, 2024, the serene surroundings of Grace Brevard Church in Brevard, NC, witnessed a profound moment of recognition and honor. Lt. Col. Ed Cottrell, USAF (Ret), a distinguished WWII P-47 pilot, was awarded the French Legion de l'Honneur Medal by French Consul General Anne-Laure Desjonquères. This prestigious award, France's highest order of merit for military and civil merits, is a testament to Ed's remarkable service and bravery during one of history's most turbulent times.

Lt. Col. Cottrell served with valor in the 48th Fighter Group, 493rd Fighter Squadron, where he flew an impressive 65 combat

missions, including pivotal engagements such as the Battle of the Bulge. Among his numerous harrowing experiences, one stands out for its extraordinary blend of peril and humanity.

On December 17, during a critical mission to locate Tiger tanks and bomb bridges, Lt. Col. Cottrell and his flight encountered a formidable group of German ME 109 Luftwaffe planes. Amid the ensuing aerial battle, Ed's aircraft was struck by a 20mm cannon, severely damaging its Pratt & Whitney engine. With eight of the engine's 18 cylinders rendered inoperable, Cottrell faced a dire situation.

In a feat of extraordinary skill and determination, he managed to nurse his crippled plane back to an airfield in Belgium, executing a dead stick landing. In a remarkable twist of fate, two German Me 109 pilots, having the opportunity to finish him off, instead chose to escort him back, allowing him to land safely and live to tell his tale.

This act of chivalry amidst the brutal realities of war underscores the complex tapestry of human conflict, where moments of mercy can shine through the darkness of battle. Lt. Col. Cottrell's story is not only one of personal courage and resilience but also a poignant reminder of the shared humanity that can transcend even the fiercest of conflicts.

The presentation of the French Legion de l'Honneur Medal to Lt. Col. Cottrell is a fitting tribute to his heroism and the sacrifices he made in the pursuit of freedom.

Our WNC-MOAA chapter is immensely proud to count such an illustrious individual among its members. As we honor his service, we are reminded of the enduring values of bravery, honor, and compassion that define our military heritage.



Ed presents a picture of a P-47 to Consul General Anne-Laure Desjonquères

Congratulations, Lt. Col. Ed Cottrell, on this well-deserved recognition. Your legacy, along with so many other veterans and service members inspires us all.



French Consul General Anne-Laure Desjonquères and Ed Cottrell



## Celebrating a New Chapter: Ribbon Cutting of the Henderson County Veterans Center

On July 3, 2024, the Henderson County community gathered to celebrate a significant milestone: the ribbon cutting of the newly remodeled Henderson County Veterans Center. This event marked the beginning of a new era for the facility, which will provide essential support and services to veterans and their families, as well as serve as a valuable event space for the broader community.



The renovations and upgrades, funded by the American Rescue Plan Act, have transformed the former Hedrick-Rhodes Post 5206 building into a modern, multi-functional facility now known as the Henderson County Veterans Services Building. The improvements ensure that the center can better meet the needs of local veterans while also offering a welcoming space for community events and gatherings.

Henderson County Manager John Mitchell led the ribbon-cutting ceremony, highlighting the collaborative effort that made this transformation possible. His remarks underscored the importance of providing robust support systems for veterans, acknowledging their sacrifices and contributions.

The upgraded building will continue to serve the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) for meetings and events, maintaining its historical significance and ongoing role within the veterans' community. Additionally, it will house the Henderson County Veteran Service Offices, further consolidating vital services and support under one roof.

The newly remodeled Henderson County Veterans Center stands as a testament to the community's

commitment to honoring and supporting its veterans. By offering a dedicated space for services, meetings, and events, the center will play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life for veterans and their families.

As we celebrate the opening of this facility, we look forward to the positive impact it will have on our community. The WNC-MOAA chapter extends its gratitude to all who contributed to this project and to those who continue to support our veterans.

We encourage everyone to visit the Henderson County Veterans Center and explore the new amenities and services it offers. Together, we can ensure that our veterans receive the recognition, support, and resources they deserve.

Congratulations to Henderson County on this remarkable achievement. Here's to a future filled with continued support and community collaboration.



Raising the flag for the first time at the newly remodeled Hendrick-Rhodes Veteran Center

## Honoring Our Veterans: WNC-MOAA and the We Honor Veterans Program

The Western North Carolina Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (WNC-MOAA) is proud to be a part of the We Honor Veterans (WHV) program, offering end-of-life care that honors and appreciates our veterans for their service. In partnership with Four Seasons Hospice, we provide Veteran Pinning Ceremonies, recognizing the military service and sacrifices made by veterans and their families. These ceremonies are a final expression of gratitude and appreciation, providing veterans with a sense of meaning and purpose in their last days while offering comfort and closure to their loved ones.

Since 2014, WNC-MOAA has collaborated with Four Seasons Hospice to establish the We Honor Veterans program and pinning ceremonies in the Western North Carolina region. We recently completed our 1,025th pinning ceremony, a milestone that highlights the profound impact of this program. During these ceremonies, a current military officer salutes the veteran, presenting them with a certificate, blanket, and pin. Family and friends often share significant stories, music therapists play specially requested music, and sometimes prayers are offered. Each ceremony is customized to honor the individual veteran's desires.

continued success of this program. The pinning ceremonies can be spontaneous or planned, and we need a roster of available volunteers, particularly in the Franklin, Sylva, and Waynesville areas. The time commitment is minimal, as ceremonies typically last under 30 minutes. While wearing your military uniform is welcome, it is not a requirement.

If you are interested in joining our team of WNC-MOAA WHV volunteers, please contact John Knapp at [j.knapp4@att.net](mailto:j.knapp4@att.net) or (828) 702-3317. Your participation can make a significant difference in the lives of these veterans and their families.

Together, let's continue to serve those who have served us, honoring their sacrifices and providing them with the recognition and appreciation they deserve. Thank you to all our volunteers for your unwavering dedication and service.



Family & friends gathering for a pinning ceremony early this summer

At any given time, over 25% of the patients served by Four Seasons are veterans. This underscores the importance of our continued support and dedication to this program. The National MOAA motto, "Never Stop Serving," is exemplified through our commitment to honoring these veterans.

However, we need more chapter member volunteers to ensure the



## Heartfelt Thanks to Doug Vinson for His Generous Donation to WNC-MOAA

Our WNC-MOAA chapter is deeply grateful to Tricia Vinson (WNC-MOAA Board Member) and her brother Doug Vinson for their generous donation of Bigelow Tea. This thoughtful contribution has significantly supported our efforts to give back to the veteran community.



Tricia Vinson and the donation

Doug Vinson, a passionate advocate for Stop Soldier Suicide, originally secured the donation of Bigelow Tea for an event in Charlotte. Demonstrating exceptional generosity and community spirit, Doug graciously passed on the extra tea to our chapter, enabling us to extend our outreach and support even further.

In collaboration with Tricia Vinson, Doug's donation allowed us to make a meaningful contribution to the Veterans Restoration Quarters in Asheville. The Veterans Restoration Quarters (VRQ) is dedicated to providing a safe and supportive environment for veterans in need, offering essential services and resources to help them rebuild

their lives.

The donated Bigelow Tea has not only provided comfort and warmth to the veterans at the VRQ but also symbolizes the caring and solidarity of our community. Acts of kindness like this remind us of the power of unity and the impact we can have when we come together to support those who have served our country.

WNC-MOAA extends our heartfelt thanks to Doug Vinson for his support and generosity. His actions exemplify the spirit of giving and compassion that strengthens our chapter and community.

As we continue our mission to support veterans, we are inspired by the dedication and kindness of individuals like Doug and Tricia. Their contribution has made a significant difference, and we are honored to recognize their efforts.



Chef Eric thanking WNC-MOAA



Chef Eric, Kevin & Ramona Ritter, Ernie Reynolds, Jen Watkins, Jeff Snyder, Linda Reynolds, Steve Watkins



**Summer 2024**

## **State Legislature Update**

The State General Assembly is in its short session since this is an election year, although we have not identified any specific session end date. Generally, there is minimal legislative action in a brief session; primarily, the session is focused on budget-related adjustments.

Per legislative process rules, if a bill has been passed by either the House or the Senate during their 2023 long session, it is put on a 'crossover' list and can be considered during the short session. As mentioned in the last newsletter, over 250 bills made that list, with 6 having a veteran/military focus. There has been no movement on those six bills so far. Eligibility doesn't guarantee progression, although leadership can make an exception and consider other bills. So far, the session has dealt with budget and appropriations-type issues, such as allocations for flood mitigation efforts/strategies and some scholarship funding discussions. One exception is an interstate compact occupational licensing bill that was introduced with similar vocabulary in both the House and the Senate (HB 1056 & SB 879) at the beginning of May and seems to be getting prepped for a general assembly vote. Senator Hise, one of our WNC senators and the Senate's Deputy President Pro Tempore, introduced it as the bill's primary sponsor (SB 879). On the

House side, the Primary Sponsor is Representative White, who comes from the medical profession, for HB1056. This is not a 'veteran or military focused' but for the good of all North Carolinians bill that also benefits the military. The compact hit the magic seven-state activation requirement in May, probably why the legislature brought it up so quickly. If they approve it, the compact goes active immediately. The compact supports Physician Assistant licensing in all participating states and, therefore, helps support military licensing portability in NC if it does get passed. For that reason, an exception was made to consider it this year.

One bill that has been passed officially goes into effect on 1 October 2024 for sections 8.1(a)-(c), (e), (f)&17. It was ratified and known as 2023-129 & HB125, the NC Health & Human Services Workforce Act, which includes statute changes to allow 'Military Relocation licenses for Physicians and Physician Assistants Servicemembers and Spouses' that meet specific stipulations to practice in NC. This significant change in the law is designed to make it easier for military members and their spouses to continue their medical careers when they move to North Carolina. A laundry list of requirements includes movement due to military orders, notification to the appropriate medical licensing board, paying specific application fees, currency, and equivalency licensing requirements. This section, in statute is 90-12.02, looks to have become effective on 1 February 2024. This is the first NC licensing change we've seen that has been adopted to support the federal Military Spouse Licensing Relief Act of 2021, signed on 6 Jan 2023, while maintaining NC state authorities'

licensing and certification standards. The NC bill update changes are, at best, confusing and seem to be included in a catch-all bill with lots of strike-through adjustments, but they are an improvement and support for our military members moving to NC under orders. We have been working towards a more generalized licensing portability goal. However, any step, whether an interstate compact or adjusting current law, shows promise and acknowledges the need to address our military members and their spouses' PCS certification/licensing needs.

Please let the board know if you have specific state military/veteran legislative issues you want prioritized for the next couple of years. We always appreciate your input. Your board is always looking at known and new issues and determining if we need to reprioritize our efforts when working with the DMVA and or the State legislature. We look for opportunities to support our chapter membership and to highlight what is important to you. Your input is crucial in this process, and we are committed to addressing your needs and concerns.



**Patricia Ann Vinson, LTC USA (Ret)  
State Legislative Affairs Team**

## North Carolina Department of Military & Veteran Affairs Update

BY LTC (R) TRICIA VINSON

Welcome to the dog days of summer! A quick reminder from the spring newsletter: Secretary Gaskin retired on 1 April, and Governor Cooper named Secretary Grier Martin his replacement for the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs (DMVA). Recognizing the vital importance of meeting in person with a new leader, there have been two scheduling efforts between the NC Veteran's Council (NCVC) and Secretary Martin, each appointment getting overcome by unforeseen events and postponed. We understand the significance of this meeting and its role in our shared mission. No new date has been rescheduled, and elections for the council are pending. The NC DMVA and the NCVC are committed to establishing a good working relationship, and I look forward to that meeting and continued email exchanges in the interim.

Since Secretary Martin has taken over, he has been meeting with the leaders of the state legislature and various state committees, the VA Secretary, spent the day at Camp

Lejeune with Governor Cooper getting familiar with his new state responsibilities. He met in May with the House Military and Veteran Affairs Committee meeting and gave his update on the Fayetteville State Veteran's Home Closure. His position was that all the displaced veterans have been placed and are being taken care of, so an immediate decision on the facility is not specifically needed. Secretary Martin wants to make a deliberate review of what has been done, and what is possible and visit and walk the home in person and see the condition for himself before he makes any recommendations on whether the facility could be repaired or warrants replacement. This thorough and meticulous approach, which underscores the seriousness with which Secretary Martin is approaching this issue, provides reassurance to all stakeholders. So, Secretary Martin requested more research and a better understanding of the situation, possibilities, costs, risks, timelines, etc. The House committee concurred with his approach. The decision has the potential to cost between \$27-\$60M, so not one to be made lightly. Since the DMVA has a significant say in that decision as the overall manager of the program, a deliberate evaluation is appropriate for the new Secretary.



On 28 June, the NC DMVA released its online 2024/2025 Resource Guide, which is supposed to be an updated, accessible resource available to veterans, military service members, and their families. The link is [DMVA Resource Guide-202425.pdf](#) | DMVA (nc.gov). A limited number of hard copies are also available in various offices. If you want a hard copy, I recommend you call your local county veteran service officer for where to find one.

### MOAA 2024 Election (August 1 – 31, 2024)

*There will be no paper ballots as in previous years.*

August 1 – 31, 2024 MOAA members can cast their votes by going to <https://www.moaa.org/> and following the voting instructions provided.

Online Only. To cast your vote, you will first need to log into your MOAA account. A valid email address is required. You may also need to reset your password if you have not logged into your MOAA account in a while.

We understand some members might not use email on a regular basis and may need to create an email address. Once you have established an email address, please contact MOAA at

[msc@moaa.org](mailto:msc@moaa.org) or (800) 234-6622 and a Member Services representative will connect your email address to your existing MOAA member account.

*Note that the August 2024 issue of Military Officer magazine has a detailed article addressing the 2024 election items for membership vote and members can review:*

- The next class of nominated Board members (Class of 2030) and short bio of each candidate.
- MOAA's 2024-2026 Biennial Resolutions that address key mission-related topics.
- A Bylaw amendment that impacts board size and quorum requirements.



## Smoky Mountain Satellite Happenings

On 15 June 2024, the Smoky Mountain Satellite held its quarterly meeting. This morning meeting was held at Crepe & Custard at Lake Junaluska. The meeting was followed by an optional walk around the lake.

The first-ever Haywood County Veterans Gathering was held on 22 June 2024. MOAA along with other local veteran service organizations (American Legion, VFW, DAV, Combat Veterans

Motorcycle, etc.) sponsored this free, public event which was designed to thank the public for its support and introduce them to the various local agencies. As a result of this event, three new members to the Chapter and the Satellite joined. Please welcome Dan Biron, Mark Ward, and Bill Wilke to our group, We are honored to have you.



Our next meeting is tentatively scheduled for afternoon of 15 September.

John O'Donnell  
Chair, Smoky Mountain Satellite



Smoky Mountain Satellite breakfast meeting at Crepe & Custard, Lake Junaluska

# Join Us For A VETERAN EXPERIENCE

Wednesday August 7, 2024  
10 A.M. – 2 P.M.

Charles George VA Medical Center  
Main Entrance: Lower-Level Atrium  
Employees & Veterans Welcomed!

VA is transforming the way Veterans receive and access their health care through immersive technology. In this presentation, learn how the Veterans Health Administration is empowering staff who are utilizing extended reality technology to improve health outcomes for Veterans.

On **Wednesday August 7, 2024 from 10 am – 2 pm EST** the Office of Healthcare Innovation and Learning (OHIL)'s VA Immersive will host a VXR event in the lower level atrium at Charles George VA Medical Center in Asheville, NC

Veterans are invited to attend throughout the day to experience immersive technologies as they are being used to deliver care across the VA.

VA Immersive is transforming the way Veterans receive care through immersive technologies like virtual and augmented reality - collectively called extended reality (XR). VA Immersive works closely with VA employees, who are also leaders in XR and immersive technology, to host Veteran EXpeRience (VXR) events which provide Veterans firsthand experiences to learn about and engage with immersive technologies.



## WNC-MOAA Members: Serving Those Who Served

The Western North Carolina Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (WNC-MOAA) has a long-standing



Jeff Snyder on Bag Lunch duty!

tradition of giving back to the community, and nowhere is this more evident than in our ongoing commitment to the Veterans Restoration Quarters (VRQ) in Asheville. Since 2015, our dedicated members have embodied the National MOAA motto, "Never Stop Serving," by volunteering their time and effort to support homeless veterans in Buncombe County.

The VRQ is a 246-bed housing facility that provides a principle-based environment and comprehensive residential program designed to address every aspect of restoration in

the lives of homeless veterans. WNC-MOAA members volunteer in teams of 6 or 7, offering their services one to three times a month. While at the VRQ, our teams prepare and serve lunch meals to the residents and staff, fostering a sense of community and providing much-needed support to those who have served our nation.

Several chapter members have expressed that their volunteer days at the VRQ are among their most cherished experiences of the month. This sentiment underscores the profound impact that this service opportunity has, not only on the veterans but also on the volunteers themselves.

In the accompanying photos, you can see our volunteers in action - preparing meals, serving the VRQ residents with smiles. These images capture the essence of our mission and the joy that comes from giving



The VRQ residents and staff always love the brownies & treats we bring.

back.

If you are interested in joining our team of VRQ volunteers, we would love to have you. Your



Herb Mensch, Jen Watkins & Jeff Snyder

participation can make a significant difference in the lives of these veterans. Please reach out to Jeff Snyder at (757) 570-1472 or [jsnyder243@aol.com](mailto:jsnyder243@aol.com) to learn more about how you can get involved.

Together, we continue to serve those who have served with us, upholding the values and spirit of MOAA in every act of kindness and support. Thank you to all our volunteers for your unwavering dedication and service.



Jennifer & Steve Watkins, Paula Snyder, La Verne & Vic Marshall, Jeff Snyder and Joe Neubert all serving with a smile!

## The Blue Ridge Honor Flight: A Tribute to Our Veterans



The Western North Carolina Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (WNC-MOAA) is honored to support the Blue Ridge Honor Flight (BRHF) program, a heartfelt initiative that pays tribute to the brave Americans who secured our freedom. The Honor Flight Network, co-founded by Earl Morse, the son of a Korean and Vietnam War veteran, and Jeff Miller, an Honorary WNC-MOAA Chapter member, Hendersonville native, small business owner, and son of a WWII veteran, has been a beacon of gratitude and recognition for our veterans.

Honor Flights offer veterans the opportunity to visit the nation's capital and see the memorials that commemorate their service. This journey is a profound way to honor and thank them for their sacrifices. On November 4, 2006, HonorAir flew more than 300 WWII veterans from the Asheville airport to Washington, D.C., free of charge. Since 2005, the Honor Flight Network has made it possible for over 200,000 veterans from all services to visit Washington and other

memorial sites from more than 130 locations across the country.

On September 24, 2016, the former HonorAir took its maiden voyage as Blue Ridge Honor Flight. This



Steve Watkins talking with the WWII Vets

rebranding marked a new chapter in honoring our veterans.

Several WNC-MOAA Chapter members have participated in past Blue Ridge Honor Flights, including the

latest flight in April 2024. Our members have taken part as veterans, guardians, volunteers, Board members, and enthusiastic supporters at the unforgettable 'Welcome Home' ceremonies at the Asheville airport.

These welcome home ceremonies are deeply moving events, celebrating the returning veterans and providing a warm and heartfelt reception. The WNC-MOAA volunteers follow the National MOAA motto, "Never Stop Serving," exemplifying their commitment to honoring our heroes.

If you are interested in participating as a veteran, guardian, or BRHF volunteer, please visit [https://](https://www.blueridgehonorflight.com)



Vivianne Wersel, Ed Cottrell, Jen Watkins & friend waiting for the arrival

[www.blueridgehonorflight.com](http://www.blueridgehonorflight.com). Your involvement can make a significant impact on the lives of our veterans, providing them with the recognition and gratitude they deserve.

WNC-MOAA will have a group of chapter members at the Welcome Home ceremony on September 28. We encourage you to join us in welcoming the veterans home. The buses start running from the WNC Ag Center Gate 5 parking lot at 7:30 PM. If you haven't attended a welcome home ceremony, it is an incredibly moving event for both the arriving veterans and all who participate.



Joint Armed Forces Color Guard

Thank you to all our volunteers for your unwavering dedication and service. Together, we honor and celebrate the sacrifices made by our veterans, ensuring their legacy is remembered and cherished.



Maj Gen Greiner addressing the BRHF Veterans & Gold Star Families

## Congratulations to the Charles George VA Medical Center

### The Results Are In!

You kept ASHVAMC **BEST in the NATION!** Charles George VA Medical Center has placed on top of two lists of distinction and honor for FY24!

### #1 on Best Places to Work among VAMCs.

The Best Place To Work index is an indicator of overall job satisfaction.

### #1 on Organizational Health Index.

The Organizational Health Index score is the most comprehensive metric for the overall health and strength of the organization.



## Report Shows Spike in Scam Type That Frequently Targets Veterans, Servicemembers

By: Kevin Lilley, National MOAA

Scammers posing as government officials collected nearly twice the cash from victims in 2023 as they did the previous year, according to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), and stats for 2024 show the disturbing trend isn't letting up.

Government impersonation scams disproportionately target servicemembers, veterans, and others who regularly deal with federal entities – from TRICARE to the VA to any number of other departments and providers. TRICARE For Life beneficiaries [recently saw an uptick in fake text messages](#) from scammers posing as a health care provider, for example.

Scammers posing as government officials seeking cash payments have scored big in recent months, according to FTC data: Victims reported losing \$76 million in cash in 2023, up from \$40 million in 2022. Fraudsters collected another \$20 million in the first quarter of 2024.

The cash-payment portion of these scams is a small one – government impersonation fraud cost victims \$618 million in 2023, per the FTC – but cash-scam victims report losing more per incident than victims who use any other form of payment. The average cash-payment victim lost \$14,470 in the first quarter of 2024, the FTC reported.



Impostors seeking cash payment will gain the trust of their victim before presenting an urgent situation that requires immediate attention, often posing a threat to a loved one. The pitch is designed to make the victim act rashly – before considering that government agencies will not demand a cash payment, nor will they seek personal information via text, phone call, or social media post. If you've been targeted by this type of fraud, you can report it to the FTC [via its website](#) or by visiting the website of the relevant federal agency:

- **VA:** [Protecting Veterans From Fraud](#)
- **TRICARE:** [Report Fraud and Abuse](#)
- **Medicare:** [Reporting Medicare Fraud and Abuse](#)

MOAA Premium and Life members can access recorded webinars with tips to avoid fraud of all types: [An Overview of Scams and Frauds](#) | [Outsmart the Scammers: How to Spot and Avoid Financial Fraud](#) | [Protecting Yourself From Cybercrime and Scams](#)

MOAA also is a partner in the [Cybercrime Support Network's Military and Veteran Program](#), which aims to protect servicemembers, veterans, and military families from falling victim to fraud. Get more resources from that organization [at this link](#).

### Upcoming Events - Everyone is Welcome

15 August - Wall of Honor Dedication, Henderson County Veteran Center, 10:00am

17 August - **WNC-MOAA Chapter Picnic, Fletcher Park, 10:30am**

22 August - WNC-MOAA French Broad River rafting trip

15 Sept - Smoky Mountain Satellite meeting, Location/Time: TBD

28 Sept - Blue Ridge Honor Flight Welcome Home celebration, 8:30pm, Asheville Airport, Parking at WNC Ag Center

16 Oct - WNC-MOAA Board Meeting, 2pm, Location: TBD

16 Nov - WNC-MOAA Chapter Meeting, 11:15am, Kenmure Country Club

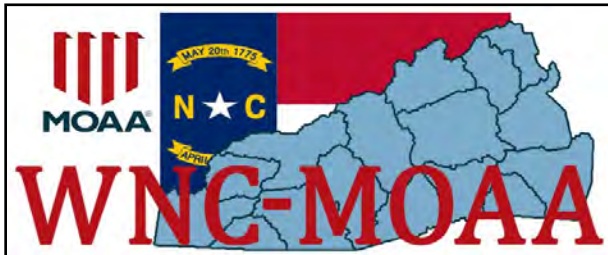


**Purpose of the Western North Carolina Chapter, Military Officers Association of America, Inc.**

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 can be found on our website at**

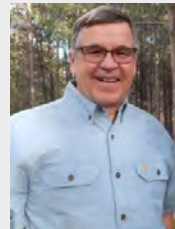
<https://wnc-moaa.org/chapterbylaws/>



**Treasurer’s Report submitted by Doug Abbotts:**

**FY 24 WNC MOAA CASH FLOW REPORT**

7/31/24							
	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	YTD	Budget	Diff
Membership Dues	1,810.00	285.00	30.00		2,125.00	4,200.00	2,075.00
Miscellaneous Income	16.32				16.32	0.00	16.32
Donations	211.00	25.00			236.00	0.00	236.00
VA Donations			45.00		45.00	0.00	45.00
Chapter Meetings	1,320.00				1,320.00	0.00	1,320.00
Badges	75.00		15.00		90.00	0.00	90.00
Surviving Spouse Dues	90.00				90.00	200.00	110.00
NCCOC					0.00	0.00	0.00
MOAA HQ	60.00				60.00	0.00	60.00
Meeting Raffles	65.00				65.00	0.00	65.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>3,647.32</b>	<b>310.00</b>	<b>90.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>4,047.32</b>	<b>4,400.00</b>	
<b>EXPENSES</b>							
NCCOC Dues	193.50				193.50	228.00	34.50
BCVC	50.00				50.00	50.00	0.00
Recruiting & Retention		54.00			54.00	1,000.00	946.00
Web/Digital Services	160.00				160.00	350.00	0.00
Liability Insurance						350.00	0.00
IRS tax filing	50.00				50.00	50.00	0.00
USPS/Shipping	224.20				224.20	350.00	125.80
Administrative Supplies	63.35	93.60			156.95	300.00	143.05
JROTC Awards	131.27	37.98			169.25	150.00	19.25
Speaker Gifts	78.01				78.01	200.00	200.00
Badges	140.32				140.32	250.00	109.68
Donations					0.00	1,306.00	1,306.00
Chapter Meetings Expenses	1,869.93	100.00			1,969.93		1,969.93
Smoky Mtn. Satellite Support					0.00		
Woodfin Satellite Support					0.00		
President's Travel	30.00				30.00	500.00	470.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>2,990.58</b>	<b>285.58</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>3,276.16</b>	<b>5,084.00</b>	<b>1,345.65</b>
<b>NET INCOME (Loss)</b>					<b>771.16</b>		
<b>(RESERVE) BANK BALANCE</b>					7/29/2014	12,300.87	



**Doug Abbotts**  
WNC-MOAA Treasurer  
2023—2025

**Hails and Farewells**

**Hails**

Mark Ward, USA, CPT (Ret)  
Dan Biron, USA, MAJ (Ret)  
Erich Then, USA, COL (Ret)  
Bill Wilke, USA, COL (Ret)

**Farewells**

None Reported

**TAPS**

None Reported



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at every stage.**

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## 'NEVER STOP SERVING' ... CHAPTER INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



**We Honor Veterans** - Since November 2014, WNC-MOAA, in partnership with Four Seasons Hospice, has honored **over 1,000** veterans with special pinning ceremonies to salute veterans in hospice care and thank them for their service. 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 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 to honor their service and the sacrifices of themselves and their friends." 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: September 28, 2024**



JROTC is active in 18 high schools throughout WNC. Our Chapter provides support to these units in a number of ways, to include presentation of the annual MOAA Leadership awards for a rising Senior in each unit. Chapter members present the awards on behalf of the Chapter at unit award ceremonies held in the spring. For more information about supporting the award presentations, and other information about supporting JROTC, contact Jeff Snyder at 757-570-1472 or [jsnyder243@aol.com](mailto:jsnyder243@aol.com)



Established in 2013, the Veterans Healing Farm's mission is "To enhance the mental, emotional, and physical well-being of our nation's Veterans and their families." This is accomplished through the creation of a safe, peaceful environment that fosters healing and camaraderie. Programs focus on brain health and includes Agri therapy (organic farming, beekeeping, medicinal herbs) as well as a variety of other therapies/ therapeutic activities, workshops, and live events. **To learn more: <https://www.veteranshealingfarm.org/about>**

**FARM UPDATE (Aug 2024)** - Operations at 38 Yale Road are effectively closed. Another family owns the Matthew Bolar Memorial Garden and have kindly allowed us to finish the harvest and distribution to area organizations in need of fresh produce. The Healing Farm is **NOT CLOSED** and still looking for a home and funding to pay for it. The Farm will still be conducting some classes in the 2024 Fall, Winter & 2025 Spring. Classes will be conducted at the Veteran Center in Hendersonville.



**Veteran Smiles Foundation** 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). Because of the success of the Sylva program Vet-Smiles programs are now partnering with the other CSLCs in Brunswick County, Robeson County, Lillington, Ahoskie, Elizabeth City, Davidson County, and Spruce Pine to reach more NC veterans. 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. For more information, contact, **David McCracken, 984-233-3350, <https://vetsmiles.org/>**



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) to: <https://theveteransmuseum.org/>**



**CAMARADERIE WITH A PURPOSE**



## WNC-MOAA offers

### Two Ways to Join the Chapter - Pay Chapter Dues or 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: you can PAY your Annual Membership Dues; make a DONATION to the Chapter's Operating Expenses; and you can even PAY for Chapter Activities (i.e. Quarterly General Membership Meetings).*

Go to <https://wnc-moaa-annual-dues.cheddarup.com>

- Select your '**Annual Dues Renewing**' option.
- Select if you need an optional '**Replacement Name Badge**'
- Select if you want to make an optional '**Donation**' if you would like to donate to the Chapter's Operating Expenses.

Or you use the MOAA website

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

- Select '**Join**' to join the Chapter, '**Renew**' if you are renewing your dues, or '**Donate**' 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**'.

#### 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? \*

State: \*

Chapter: \*

Next

## WNC-MOAA Board of Directors and Officers 2023 - 2025

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

**1st Vice President** Stacie Litsenberger, MAJ, USA (Ret)

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

**Secretary** Joe Neubert, CAPT, USN (Ret)

**Treasurer** Doug Abbotts, Maj. USAF (Ret)

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

**US Army Rep.** Rodney "Rod" Honeycutt, COL USA (Ret)

**US Navy Rep.** George "Herb" Mensch, CAPT USN (Ret)

**USMC Rep.** - VACANT

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

**At Large Rep.** Jim Steinbaugh, CAPT, USN (Ret)

**Smoky Mountain Satellite Chair** John O'Donnell, CDR, USN (Ret)

**Woodfin Satellite** Rod Honeycutt, COL, USA (Ret)

**Black Mountain Satellite** Kevin Ritter, CDR, USN (Ret)

**Membership Chair** Kevin Ritter, CDR, USN (Ret)

**Programs Chair** Stacie Litsenberger, MAJ, USA (Ret)

**Chaplain** - VACANT

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

**Newsletter Editor** Steve Watkins, COL, USA (Ret)

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

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

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

**VA Liaisons** - VACANT

Dr. Vivianne Wersel, Au.D.

**Surviving Spouse Liaison** Sharon Woodcock, Donna Culp (Support)

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

Steve Watkins, COL, USA (Ret)

**Spouses Activity Group (SAG)** VACANT



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)



The Western North Carolina Chapter of MOAA is a 5-Star Levels of Excellence Chapter. The Levels of Excellence (LOE) Awards is one of MOAA's most prestigious awards earned by state councils and chapters.

The Western North Carolina Chapter of MOAA is a MOAA 5-Star the Harris Communications Award in both the "Print" and "Digital" categories!!



**Federal Benefits**

for Veterans, Dependents, Survivors, and Caregivers  
2023 Edition



Choose VA

To download your copy go to:

<https://www.va.gov/opa/publications/benefits-book/2023-federal-benefits-for-veterans-dependents-and-survivors.pdf>

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**New Email address?**

**New Phone Number?**

**Upgrade Your Membership?**

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Call the **Member Service Center** at:  
(800) 234-6622 or (703) 549-2311  
e-mail [msc@moaa.org](mailto:msc@moaa.org)

**WNC-MOAA:**

Use the Join Form in this newsletter to change address, update contact information, join, or renew.

Mail checks to:

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

**or go to**

<https://www.wnc-moaa.org/>

For an electronic version of this newsletter go to the WNC-MOAA website

# COME CELEBRATE WNC-MOAA'S FIRST ANNUAL PIC-NIC!

PLEASE RSVP  BY WEDNESDAY AUG 14<sup>TH</sup>

NO DOGS UNLESS SERVICE DOGS

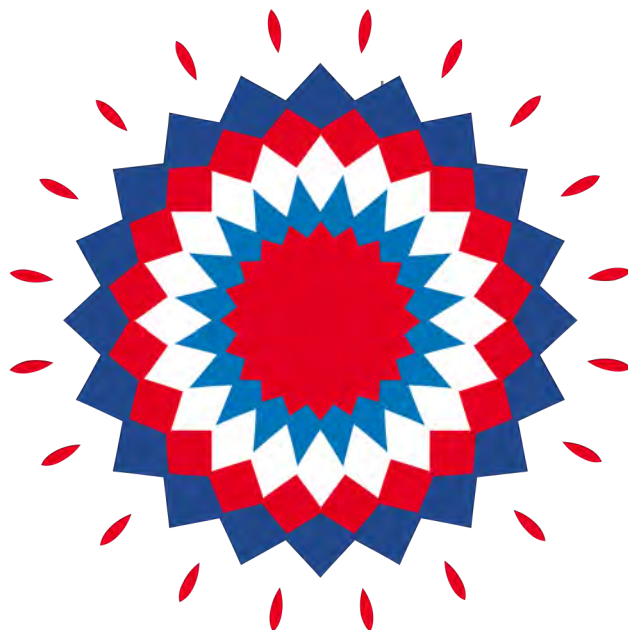
FOOD BY BEARS SMOKEHOUSE  
MEAL IS FREE FOR WNC-MOAA CHAPTER MEMBERS


\$20 FOR ALL GUESTS  
WATER AVAILABLE - NO ALCOHOL ALLOWED

## 17 August 2024

## 10:30 to 1:30

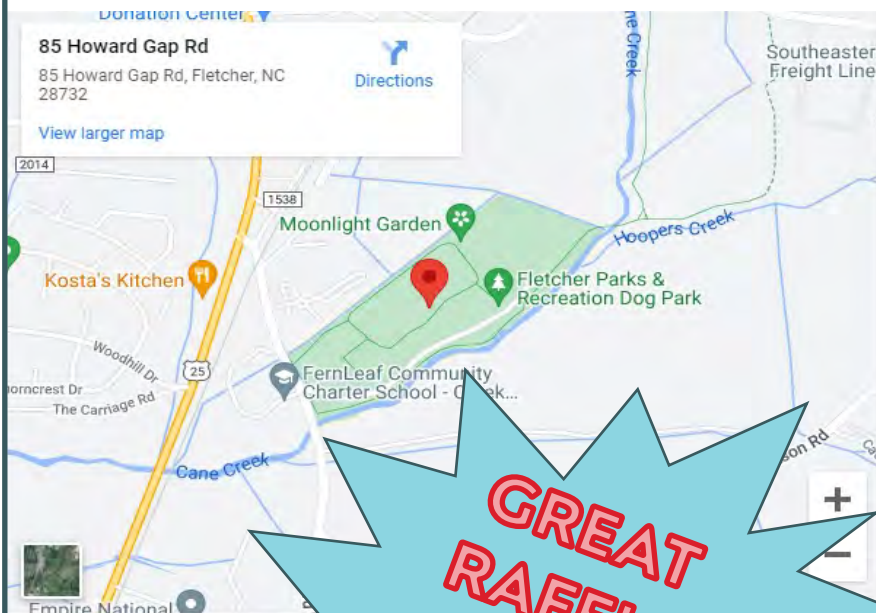
## 85 Howard Gap, Fletcher, NC



 RSVP using the QR code or at  
<https://wnc-moaa-2024-picnic.cheddarup.com>



1. Point your camera at the code.
2. When your camera scans the QR code, you'll see an icon or web address on your screen near the code. Tap it.
3. You'll go to the associated website.



**GREAT  
RAFFLE  
PRIZES**

# 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

Your Chapter interest: Attending Social Events Board of Directors Member Recruiting

Legislative Affairs Newsletter Editing Public Affairs Spouse's Programs

**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 and email it to [membership@wnc-moaa.org](mailto:membership@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 [membership@wnc-moaa.org](mailto:membership@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 (for member)  
is included with new  
memberships

5XX[h]cbU`#FYd`UW`a Ybh  
Badges!`%` each

Badge Bameftk

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