

An Affiliate Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America

Save the Dates
2022

BOD Mtgs.

October 15

Chapter Mtgs.

August 27

November 19

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

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 August 27th chapter meeting on page 18 of this newsletter.

Spouses and guests are welcomed to all chapter meetings!



President's Remarks

Being able to meet in person and enjoy gathering at Kenmure Country Club for our chapter and BOD meetings has been a welcome change. For our members who find making regular chapter meetings too far of a drive, our Smoky Mountain Satellite bridges that gap with rotating meetings to give as many of us as possible the opportunity to reconnect in places West of Buncombe County.

Whether we're able to get together in person, or stay in touch through our chapter newsletter, emails, or by phone, we're all part of the WNC MOAA community.

The past few weeks I had the opportunity to meet my husband, John, in Poland and then travel on to Ukraine where I pitched in to help Bomb Techs Without Borders (BTWOB) wherever I could. However, it was the experience of traveling by train where things began to get really real. Standing in line going through customs to get from Poland to Ukraine, we moved right along with refugees returning to *their* homes and communities. First stop, Lviv, we met with the commander of National Police of Ukraine Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit (NPUEOD) for that region and members of his team for a couple of days. Then back on the train and on to Kyiv where the first order of business was presenting an award on behalf of the Alexandria, VA VFW to Patron, Ukraine's famous bomb sniffing dog. Complementing the award were dog treats and a toy from WNC MOAA, which was a hit with Patron. Next was meeting the NPUEOD overall national commander and his team in Kyiv. He facilitated my visit, along with a member of the press, to towns and villages where evidence of Putin's carnage was visible everywhere you looked, areas where John had been working. The experience was a lot to take in, and affected me greatly. Hearing the stories of those who lived through it all absolutely broke my heart. Although they were victims of horrific crimes, I also saw evidence of individual and community resolve to carry on. You either choose to be a victim, or to be victorious. The greatest act of defiance toward Putin has been, and will continue to be the latter.

Slava Ukraini! (Glory to Ukraine!)



Thank you for your service, and NEVER STOP SERVING!

Donna Culp, Capt , USAF (Frm)

President, WNC MOAA



Surviving Spouse Corner: Get Involved in MOAA's Advocacy Efforts

By: Dr. Vivianne Wersel

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2022-news-articles/surviving-spouse-corner-get-involved-in-moaas-advocacy-efforts/>



This spring, MOAA members contacted all 535 members of Congress during the association's annual Advocacy in Action event, conducting more than 235 meetings and sending over 7,500 letters. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the challenges of security on Capitol Hill, MOAA members met with their elected officials in both face-to-face and virtual meetings.

MOAA's three legislative priorities were supporting the Major Richard Star Act, supporting the Stop Copay Overpay Act; and ensuring a competitive military pay raise.

Why get involved with Advocacy in Action? Volunteers receive training to understand the process of setting up meetings and communicating with elected officials as well as having a better understanding of legislation. In addition, participation cultivates relationships with staffers and members of Congress from your district and state. The experience you gain is beneficial to help support other legislation as a constituent or with a group to help improve survivor benefits.

Military survivors are the stakeholders to the legislation at large. Congress continuously adjusts military survivor benefits. It is important that surviving spouse members exercise their rights to educate staffers and members of Congress and remain vigilant to protect and improve survivor benefits. MOAA headquarters' staff does an outstanding job educating members so they can participate in grassroots advocacy efforts.

Here are some ways to contribute and keep MOAA's priorities on Congress' radar:

Send pre-written letters to Capitol Hill using MOAA's [Legislative Action Center](#).

- Call elected officials using MOAA's direct line to the U.S. Capitol Switchboard at 1-866-272-6622.
- Engage with congressional members via social media, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Stay current with MOAA's legislative efforts and subscribe to *The MOAA Newsletter*. Check your MOAA's newsletter subscription preferences [at this link](#).

- Customize your letters and conversations with elected officials; embed a personal story.

Congress will act only if they are inspired by their voters. Join MOAA's effort to help improve benefits for military, veterans, retirees, family, and survivors.

Dr. Wersel was born and raised in a Marine Corps family. She has a long career in military medicine as an audiologist serving military, veterans, and their families and she has been a stalwart advocate for military families, testifying 20 times before Congress.

Take Action to protect your pay and benefits!

Legislative Action Center — <https://moaa.quorum.us/>

To Get started:

- 1) Click on "Action Center Tutorial." - Takes 11.25 Min
- 2) 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.**



**WNC MOAA
State
Legislature
Update
Summer
2022**



Welcome to the dog days of summer! This 2022 legislative year was a very short NC General Assembly (GS) session as

expected. To refresh your memories, NC runs on a two-year legislative calendar with a long (non-election-year) and short (election-year) schedule. Although legislative work continues throughout the year, bill voting, GS debate, etc. are condensed into this cycle. For 2022, the official session ran from May 18th – 1 July. Due to the short 2022 session (2021's long session lasted into February 2022), very limited topics, bills, etc. are allowed, within the rules of the legislature 'gameplan.' A basic rule of thumb for this short session includes fixes to current budget (technical adjustments) and bills that have already been passed by either the House or Senate, and are officially placed on a legislative 'crossover' list. We adapted our WNC MOAA priorities to comply with those constraints.

Even though we are in the slower, shorter session of the legislature, your state legislative team has kept our steam up following our once-in-a-lifetime victory in the passage of NC tax exemption for both NC Veterans and Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) beneficiaries.

The most critical first step was to relook at our top three legislative priorities and replace the top one since we accomplished that one in last year's long session. Tricia worked diligently with the other state Veteran's organizations as well as the NC MOAA Council of Councils folks to determine a third top priority as well as updating our remaining two priorities. Our working plan was to adapt our already-approved chapter top-three list of issues to support the GS short session constraints and provide these updated priority efforts to both our state MOAA and NC Veteran's Council (NCVC) state legislative leads. The goal is to consolidate veteran efforts, hopefully leading to a successful legislative conclusion. Our state MOAA leadership accepted our priorities as theirs and we got positive feedback from the NCVC. The WNC chapter is leading the way on state legislative efforts!

The next step was to send our top three priorities, along with justification/briefs of all three, to our 14 legislators; the 4 State Senators and 10 State Representatives that comprise the WNC MOAA area. Tricia and Michael accom-

plished this just as the short session convened.

More great news! As a subset of the larger military spouses' professional license portability issue, our legislators supported our updated top priority, HB 791, an interstate compact for health care professionals focused on the practice of professional counselling. The State House, in the 2021 long session, voted 108 for and zero against with 13 excused absences. The Senate voted 47 yes, zero against and 3 excused and the general assembly passed the bill on 2 July. A definite bi-partisan effort to support our military and their families! The Governor signed the bill into law on 7 July! This makes a total of six state occupational licensure interstate compacts in which NC has joined other states. Your state legislative team continues to work with the Defense State Liaison Office as well as the NC Department of Veteran Affairs to better support these efforts both within NC and across state lines. Due to the national licensing variation (between states and for different professional specialties), interstate compacts are considered the best choice to enable professional licensing portability. These compacts help both veterans as well as active-duty military and their families as professional careers take families across state lines.

Our second and third issues are still open (supporting license portability by minimizing initial license application paperwork and fixing a veteran cemetery budget language glitch that is preventing access to already approved maintenance funding). We expect to continue working those issues and updating our legislative issues list for this upcoming 2023 long session. In the coming months, we will provide our WNC MOAA board our recommended state legislative priority list for their decision, so if you have a hot button state legislative issue, make sure you have passed that information onto our chapter leadership. It is our goal to be your advocate voice in support of the veteran WNC community.



Submitted by: Michael Padgett, COL USA (Ret.), and Tricia Vinson, LTC USA (Ret.)

WNC MOAA State Legislative Affairs Team



WNC MOAA Receives the 5 Star Harris Communication Award for 2021

Each year, National MOAA holds the Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Award Contest to identify councils and chapters that do an outstanding job communicating with their members and community. MOAA affiliates competed in two categories of competition: print and e-newsletters and websites. A panel of judges scored the submissions based on a set of subjective criteria, looking at both design and content. We are pleased to announce MOAA councils and chapters received 179 five-star awards and 44 four-star awards for their outstanding efforts.



North Carolina

- North Carolina Council of Chapters (print newsletter and website)
- Cape Fear Chapter (e-newsletter and website)
- Catawba Valley Chapter (print newsletter)
- Charlotte-Metrolina Chapter (print newsletter and website)
- Coastal Carolina Chapter (print newsletter and website)
- High Country Chapter (print newsletter)
- Southeastern NC Chapter (print newsletter and website)
- Tarheel Central Chapter (print newsletter)
- Western North Carolina Chapter (print newsletter and website)**

Thank you to our BOD, Legislative Affairs Team, Public Relations, VA Representatives, JROTC Liaison and JROTC units, Smoky Mountain Satellite, VRQ Prep & Serve Team, Spouses, Surviving Spouses, Four Seasons We Honor Veterans Team, Blue Ridge Honor Flight, Veterans History Museum of the Carolinas, Vet Smiles Foundation, ECU School of Dental Medicine CLC in Sylva, Buncombe County Veterans Council, Blue Ridge Veterans Community Partnership, Charles George VA Medical Center, Dr. Mark Jaben, all our chapter members who volunteer to place flags and wreaths on our Veteran's graves, and others I may have left out for making the job of Newsletter Editor, and Webmaster so easy to represent our chapter at the National, State, and Chapter level. ***This is your award.***

Sincerely,
Donna Culp, President, WNC MOAA

For the complete list of winners go to: <https://www.moaa.org/content/chapters-and-councils/moaa-awards/col-marvin-j-harris-communications-award-contest/col-marvin-j-harris-communications-awards-winners-2021/>

Honoring Memorial Day



Black Mountain

Pack Square



Lake Junaluska



Run For The Wall— Swannanoa





Jennifer Watkins

29m · 🌐

Once a month [Steve Watkins](#) and I volunteer with some of the local [Military Officers Association of America \(MOAA\) WNC- MOAA](#) chapter members at the local VRQ (Veterans Restoration Quarters) in Asheville. We spend our time prepping food in the kitchen followed by serving lunch 🍔 🍷 🥗 🍹 to those that live and work at the facility. The guys are extremely grateful and the staff is amazing! One of the staff members is an avid Dallas fan so I told him last month I would wear my Packers Cheese Head hat today! We didn't think we would be able to get him to wear it but he did.....for a brief minute!! 🤪 He introduced us to another employee, Tim McElyea, who we learned is an huge PACKER fan! How could I not leave my hat in good hands and know it would be truly loved?! Tim is now the proud owner of the Cheese Head cowboy hat! Tim was soooo grateful! Enjoy Tim McElyea! 🍷 🍹 See you all next month!



Hats Off to WNC MOAA VRQ Prep and Serve Team

The WNC MOAA Prep & Serve team continues providing steadfast lunch support at the Veterans Restoration Quarters in Asheville.

Throughout the pandemic, the number volunteer organizations who normally provide meal prep & serve support has dwindled. At the start of the pandemic, WNC MOAA provided financial support in lieu of our in-person presence that paid for VRQ staff to fill in. As COVID restrictions evolved, so did the guidance at the VRQ. Eventually the team was able to resume the in-person meal prep & serve teamwork, and remains as the only volunteer group to cover this much needed, and appreciated, support.

Although our prep & serve teams have been reduced to one team, that's changing. Jeff Snyder reports that two new husband/wife teams are in the volunteer rotation now, and welcomes Herb and Linda Mensch and Steve and Jen Watkins.

As our team regains volunteers, we're going to purchase more MOAA aprons that are issued to each of the regular volunteers. To volunteer, contact **Jeff Snyder**, at jsnyder243@aol.com.



WNC MOAA Prep & Serve volunteers sporting their new MOAA aprons November 2021.

WNC MOAA Board of Directors and Officers

2021—2023

President Donna Culp, Capt. USAF (Fmr)

Immediate Past Mike Covell, CAPT USN (Ret) (Deceased)

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

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

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

Treasurer Michael "Mike" Pomponio, LTC USAR (Ret)

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

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

USMC Rep. Robert "Bob" Rebscher, Capt. USMC (Ret)

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

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

Smoky Mountain Satellite Chair Craig Love, Capt USN (Ret)

Membership Chair Kevin Ritter, CDR USN (Ret)

Programs Chair Steve Watkins, COL USA (Ret)

Chaplain Jerry Beschta, CDR USN (Ret)

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 USAF (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



Webinar Recording: What You Need to Know About Estate Planning Webinar - Missed it? No Problem!



June 21 Update: The interest in MOAA's estate planning event pushed our webinar platform past its capacity, meaning some who attempted to register were locked out of the presentation.

But don't worry: If you missed the webinar, you can click the link at bottom to access the recording. After registering, you'll receive a link to the recording you can access for up to 30 days.

At the June 21 webinar, MOAA financial and benefits professionals Capt. Paul Frost, USN (Ret), AFC®, and Lila Quintiliani, ChFC®, AFC®, along with special guest Joseph Montanaro, CFP®, Relationship Director at USAA's Military Advocacy Group, covered important estate planning topics such as:

- Wills
- Trusts
- Advance Directives
- IRAs and Retirement Plans
- Probate
- Estate Taxes

The webinar is part of MOAA's ongoing Fundamentals of Building Wealth series; MOAA Premium and Life members have access to all recorded MOAA webinars at any time via [MOAA's Webinar Archive](#). Premium and Life members also can [download MOAA's Estate Planning guide](#) for more information on this topic -- it's one of a suite of [exclusive member publications](#).

Interested in joining MOAA or upgrading your membership? We're also happy to extend a special **10% discount** off your **PREMIUM** and **LIFE** membership today. Simply contact our Member Service Center at (800) 234-6622 and provide the promo code **LEGACY** to obtain your discount.

<https://www.moaa.org/content/events/finance/what-you-need-to-know-about-estate-planning/>

WNC MOAA's First Chapter Meeting At Kenmure Country Club A Welcome Event



Our first chapter meeting at Kenmure Country Club was not only well attended, but the hospitality, ambiance, and food was outstanding. Thank you West Hendersonville JROTC, Warrior Canine Connection, and pup in training, Slick, for making this event so special.





WNC MOAA Standing With Ukraine

WNC MOAA members volunteer with NGOs bringing aid to Ukrainian refugees, troops, and EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal) support to communities affected by the Russian invasion.



Moldova World Children’s Fund (MWCF)

WNC MOAA member Ray West, founder and President of MWCF, headed the procurement and delivery of food, and sleeping supplies for Ukrainian troops. Read the article featured in the July 28th, MOAA Newsletter for all the details.

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2022-news-articles/members-nonprofit-aiding-ukrainian-refugees,-troops/>



To learn more, and make a donation go to: <https://moldovawcf.org/2022/05/13/putins-war-may-2022/>

Capt. Ray West, USN (Ret), left, recently traveled to Ukraine to deliver needed supplies to troops graciously received by Col. Volodymyr Khomenko, head of National Police of Ukraine EOD . (Courtesy Photo)

Bomb Techs Without Borders (BTWOB)



To learn more go to: <https://www.bt wob.org/updates/understanding-explosive-contamination-in-ukraine>

To mail donations: BTWOB Headquarters
7933 27th Ave SW
Seattle, WA 98126

OUR WORK IN UKRAINE



(L to R) Lee “Dakota” and John Culp (and Lee again) removing UXOs and documenting details to share among the EOD community, and provide evidence to war crimes investigations.



(L Photo) Matt Howard conducting classroom EOD training; (R Photo) Tony Salvo conducting practical field training as part of the classroom training. (Courtesy Photos)

MOAA, WNC MOAA, NGOs, and VFW Working Together It Takes A Village To Save A Village

After reading the MOAA newsletter about John Culp in Ukraine with BTWOB, MOAA member LTC Brian D. Wieck, USA (Ret) reached out to Donna for John's mailing address to send a VFW award for Patron, the bomb-sniffing dog. Since there was no mailing address, Donna suggested mailing the award to her and she would make sure it got delivered when she met John in Poland. After adding treats and a toy for Patron (means Bullet), the award continued its journey to Kyiv. Coordination to present the award was made possible by BTWOB and the Ministry of Interior.



<https://www.facebook.com/FOBlueYellowUkraineUSAorg/>

Specializing in providing equipment for the front line support in Ukraine since 2014, BTWOB learned about Blue/Yellow, and reached out to them to see if they could help with finding a pickup truck. Luckily B/Y had just the truck on site. After all the arrangements were complete, John drove the new BTWOB addition from Lithuania to Kyiv, and everything is "rolling."

When supply chain issues caused ten HAL (Hook And Line EOD Kits) purchased for BTWOB by Moldova World Children's Fund (MWCF) to miss their delivery date, Ray West contacted Donna Culp from Romania to see if she could get an update from the company shipping them. Long story short, the kits were shipped to Donna. Packing them in her suitcase along with other items requested by John, the suitcase weighed in at 48 pounds. Just 2 pounds less than the 50 pound limit. Later in Poland, dog treats and a toy were added to the suitcase. Delivery complete, BTWOB added safety glasses and Leatherman tools to the kits. Now they are ready to distribute to designated EOD units.



Consensus: Absolutely no problem at all, and completely worth the effort.



November 11-16, 2023



5 nights Aboard Carnival's "Sunshine of the Seas" Departing from Charleston, SC Destination- Nassau, Half Moon Cay (Little Salvador Island), Bahamas Open to all MOAA Members, Family and Friends

Prices: \$1245 Interior Cabin \$1370 Ocean View Cabin \$1680 Balcony Cabin Prices are per couple including all taxes, fees, port charges, gratuities and food in Main Dining Room and the Lido Deck - No Surprises!

Accessible Cabins at no additional charge. Single rates, Suite rates and rates for up to 5 in a cabin available - Contact POC below. Covered secure parking available at Port \$15 per day.

MOAA VETERANS DAY CRUISE Nov. 11-16, 2023 Registration Form

Full Names (as on passports) _____

Mailing Address _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

Cabin Preference (circle) Interior Ocean View Balcony Other _____

Please email POC: jimjackson2224@gmail.com for rates on Singles, Suites, 3-5 persons sharing a room or any other questions or issues.

Travel insurance is highly recommended for international trips. Coverage includes cancellation for medical reasons, medical and dental issues emergencies, medical evacuation. Most of our U.S. issued insurance is not recognized in foreign destinations. Contact POC Jim Jackson for a quote. To confirm your reservation please send a \$50 deposit per person and the registration form by September 10, 2022 to the address below. A second deposit of \$100 per person is required by July 14, 2023. Final payment is due by August 28, 2023.

Ken Hillman Treasurer NCCOC 4425 Arendell St. Unit 509 Morehead City, NC 28557

MOAA NC Council of Chapters Invites all Chapters To Veterans Day Kickoff Cruise 2023

FUN ACTION ITEM:

Grab your 2023 calendars and mark November 11-16, 2023 for a cruise to the Bahamas!

The North Carolina Council of Chapters invites NC chapter members, families, and friends to hang out, explore the Bahamas, wine and dine together, and just have fun.

For your convenience, the actual registration form is included in this newsletter on the next page to complete, and mail in NLT September 10th, 2022.

Spouse Activity Group (SAG) Getting Out and About in Asheville

On July 20, a group of spouses and surviving spouses met for lunch at the Moose Café for lunch. Following lunch, the outing continued to the famous Asheville Farmers Market. Lunch was outstanding and the Farmers market held up to their reputation! The group agreed to start bringing an item to SAG lunches to donate to the VA in Asheville for veterans in the rehab center. The VA could utilize puzzles, Art/ model building projects, crossword puzzle word games etc.

Next Outing? Saturday in September (date TBD) The Cantina at Historic Biltmore Village. We are encouraging those to "bring a buddy" with them to our activity events. This will address those spouses/members who do not drive.

For more information regarding SAG please contact: Ginny Cisneros vacisneros1@gmail.com or Ramona Ritter kkritter@ix.netcom.net or Dr Vivianne Wersel viwersel@yahoo.com.



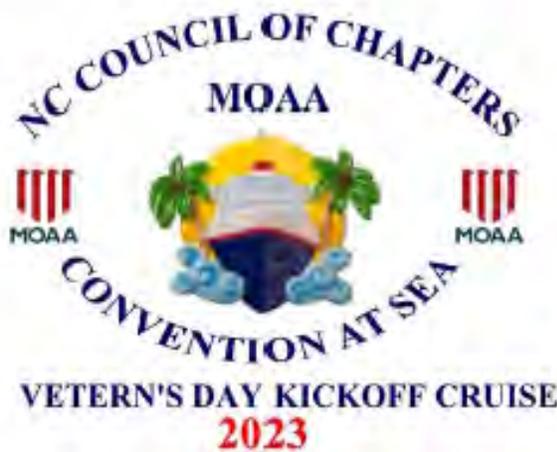
Ginny Cisneros and Sheila Padgett take in the sights, sounds, and smells of the Asheville Farmers Market with the .



Check out the Charles George VA Medical Center's Amazon Wish List for arts and crafts items: https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/CP5T06EXM20F?ref=cm_sw_em_r_wl_dp_MijFgBbu55aC6



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Prices are per couple including all taxes, fees, port charges, gratuities and food in Main Dining Room and the Lido Deck – No Surprises!
Accessible Cabins at no additional charge. Single rates, Suite rates and rates for up to 5 in a cabin available - Contact POC below. Covered secure parking available at Port \$15 per day.

MOAA VETERANS DAY CRUISE Nov. 11-16, 2023

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Mailing Address _____

Email _____ Telephone _____

Cabin Preference (circle) Interior Ocean View Balcony Other _____

Please email POC: jimjackson2224@gmail.com for rates on Singles, Suites, 3-5 persons sharing a room or any other questions or issues.

Travel insurance is highly recommended for international trips. Coverage includes cancellation for medical reasons, medical and dental issues emergencies, medical evacuation. Most of our U.S. issued insurance is not recognized in foreign destinations. Contact POC Jim Jackson for a quote. **To confirm your reservation please send a \$50 deposit per person and the registration form by September 10, 2022 to the address below. A second deposit of \$100 per person is required by July 14, 2023. Final payment is due by August 28, 2023.**

Ken Hillman Treasurer NCCOC
4425 Arendell St. Unit 509
Morehead City, NC 28557

Blue Ridge Honor Flight Returns To The Skies—October 2022



Blue Ridge Honor flight is back in full swing with two flights completed for this Spring. Our April 23rd and May 20th flights were a big success. We've got a long waiting list of war veterans who are cherishing the opportunity to fly to DC to visit their memorials.



The Spring flights consisted of about 100 veterans each, mostly from the Vietnam War, but also a handful from WWII and the Korean War. The health and safety of our veterans is paramount. To that end, Advent Health, the flight sponsor, required that everyone on the April flight be fully vaccinated for COVID-19.



Scheduled to return to the Asheville Airport at about 8:45 pm, where family members, veterans, and members of the public are always invited to come out and cheer their arrival home.

The Fall flight is scheduled to go on October 1, 2022.

If you are a WWII, Korea, or Vietnam War veteran we'd love to fly you to Washington on one of our upcoming flights. We're also seeking volunteer guardians, airport and orientation volunteers, and donations. Go to <https://www.blueridgehonorflight.com/> to learn more.



Submitted by Rick Devereaux,
BRHF POC for WNC MOAA



Upcoming Events

Check back on this page often for upcoming events that honor our Veterans and raise funds for our future Blue Ridge Honor Flights!

NEXT FLIGHT:

October 1, 2022

<https://www.blueridgehonorflight.com/events.html>

WELCOME HOME EVENT:

October 1, 2022 @ 7pm

VA News and Updates

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

The VA Health and Benefits mobile app has nearly 700,000 users since VA launched it a year ago. More than 36,000 users have reviewed the app since launch, giving it an average rating of 4.8 out of 5 stars in the apple App Store and the Google Play Store.

“Lovely format, very user friendly and updated regularly. Recommend using this app instead of the actual site. Keep up the good work developers :-)” - Feedback from one veteran reviewer in a Google Play Store review, 12/13/21

VA wants to raise awareness among Veterans. Here are six essential facts to know.

- 1. Proof of Veteran status** - At local stores and restaurants, Veterans when logged into the VA Health and Benefits mobile app can easily show status for Veteran discounts and services without any paperwork. It's easy and convenient.
- 2. Easy Login** - Log in with FaceID or fingerprint.
- 3. Manage health care on the go** — The app allows veterans:
 - * View and cancel your health care appointments
 - * Send and receive secure messages from providers
 - * Get your vaccine records anywhere, anytime
 - * Access the Veterans Crisis Line - right from your phone

The ability to send secure messaging is one feature Veterans have told us they really like. 267,000 Secure Messages have been sent by 69,000 Veterans as of May 2022.

- 4. Manage Disability Claims and Appeals** - Veterans can view the status of VA Disability Claims and Appeals, and upload documents easily to send to VA related to their claim.
- 5. View VA Payments** - A new feature—Payments—rolled out on April 12, 2022, in the app. It allows Veterans to view Disability Compensation, Pension, and Education payments.
- 6. Upcoming Features** - VA is continually adding more features to the app. Stay tuned for these new features already in the works:
 - * Prescription refill
 - * New lab and test results
 - * Travel pay reimbursement

How to download the app?

Visit VA Health and Benefits mobile app: <https://mobile.va.gov/app/va-health-and-benefits>



MOAA
INSURANCE
PLANS

Standing with you
at every stage.

1-800-247-2192 • www.moaainurance.com

Watch For Notices About:

- **The WNC MOAA “Holiday Drive-Thru for our Veterans in the care of the VA Hospital**
- **Wreaths Across America**



Western North Carolina Veterans: Companion/Caregiver Visiting Policy Update

UPDATE: COMPANION/CAREGIVER VISITING POLICY



Asheville, NC - The Western North Carolina VA Health Care system - comprised of Charles George VA Medical Center and Community Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOCs) in Rutherford County, Hickory, and Franklin, North Carolina - has updated its companion/caregiver visiting policy.

Face masks are required.

Children under the age of 16 are not permitted.

Veterans visiting the fa-

cility for outpatient appointments are allowed **one companion/caregiver.**



Veterans without COVID-19 who are admitted to acute care (this does not include Warrior's Recovery Unit and Community Living Center) are allowed one visitor per day between 12 and 8 p.m. Other restrictions remain in place. Visitors will be screened prior to entering the facility and will be required to remain masked for the duration of their visit. Those restrictions apply to all care locations, including health care facilities, ambulatory care centers, urgent care centers, and emergency rooms.

Fact Sheet 11-02

Caregiver Support Program – Stipend Benefit for the Primary Family Caregiver

What is a Primary Family Caregiver stipend?

A Primary Family Caregiver stipend is monetary compensation paid to a Primary Family Caregiver for providing personal care services to an eligible Veteran enrolled in the Caregiver Support Program. The stipend benefit is not intended to replace career earnings, and receipt of the stipend payments does not create an employment relationship between VA and the Primary Family Caregiver.

Can all Caregivers receive the stipend?

No. Only the designated Primary Family Caregiver of an eligible Veteran is entitled to receive a stipend. There can be only one Primary Family Caregiver designated at a time.

Will my stipend be taxable income?

No. The stipend is a VA enhanced service and is not considered taxable income.

Who determines the number of hours of personal care services a Veteran requires?

The Veteran's Patient Aligned Care Team (PACT) at your assigned VA Medical Center (VAMC) will make a determination after evaluating the eligible Veteran. The PACT provides a clinical evaluation of the Veteran's level of dependency, based on the degree to which the eligible Veteran is unable to perform one or more activities of daily living, or the degree to which the Veteran is in need of supervision or protection, based on symptoms or residuals of neurological or other impairment or injury. As a result of the clinical evaluation and score, the eligible Veteran will be rated as follows:

- **High Tier:** Equates to a maximum of 40 hours of care per week.
- **Medium Tier:** Equates to a maximum of 25 hours of care per week.
- **Low Tier:** Equates to a maximum of 10 hours of care per week.

What is the role of the VHA Office of Community Care in the stipend process?

The VHA Office of Community Care (VHA CC), located in Denver, Colo., performs administrative processing for the stipend payments using the PACT-determined tier level and the Veteran's geographic location. VHA CC makes recurring monthly payments, processes all updates related to the stipend and also administers CHAMPVA benefits for eligible Caregivers with no other health insurance.

How will my stipend amount be determined?

The stipend amount is based on the weekly number of hours of personal care services that an eligible Veteran requires during the month. It is calculated by multiplying the Bureau of Labor Statistics hourly wage for home health aides, Skill code 311011, for the geographic region in which the eligible Veteran resides by the Consumer Price Index Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), and then multiplying that total by the number of weekly hours of Caregiver assistance required (assigned tier level hours). This product is then multiplied by the average number of weeks in each month (4.35).

For example: If an eligible Veteran requires 10 hours of personal care services weekly (Tier 1) and the Caregiver's hourly wage (including COLA) is \$10 per hour, then the monthly stipend would be: (10 hours x \$10) x 4.35 = \$435.

How often will I receive a stipend payment when I am a Primary Family Caregiver?

The stipend is paid monthly for personal care services that a Primary Family Caregiver provided in the prior month. Once an application is approved, the stipend will be retroactive to the date the application was received at the VAMC.

How do I get more information?

The Caregiver support line can provide information on the Caregiver Support Program along with eligibility requirements:

- Phone: 1-855-260-3274, Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Eastern Standard Time
- Caregiver website at <http://www.caregiver.va.gov>

You may contact VHA CC for information on the processing activities for the stipend benefit via:

- Mail: VHA Office of Community Care
Caregiver Support Program
PO Box 460637, Denver CO 80246-0637
- Phone: 1-877-733-7927, Monday-Friday 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., Eastern Standard Time
- Email: Follow the directions for submitting email via IRIS at <https://iris.custhelp.com/app/ask>
- Website: <http://www.va.gov/purchasedcare/>

Confused about what to do before, and after a Veteran passes? Or about the Caregiver Support Program?



Stay tuned as WNC MOAA plans to host an in-person workshop (not at a chapter meeting) led by Dr. Vivianne Wersel to go over survivor and caregiver issues.

Dr. Wersel has over 20 years experience addressing these topics with Congress, as well as her own personal experience as the surviving daughter of a Marine, and Surviving Spouse of a Marine. She has walked the walk, and understands how to talk the talk.



Dr. Vivianne Cisneros Wersel, Au.D.

MOAA Surviving Spouses Advisory Board
NCCOC Surviving Spouses Liaison
WNC MOAA Legislative Affairs—Federal Issues

Chapter Presents MOAA Leadership Award to JROTC Students

Each spring, our chapter recognizes an outstanding rising senior cadet at each of the 19 JROTC units in western North Carolina with the MOAA Leadership Award. These cadets receive a medal and a certificate at their unit's spring awards ceremony. Often, a chapter member attends the ceremony and presents the award on behalf of our chapter. The pictures below show chapter members in action presenting this award at local JROTC awards ceremonies.



Col (Ret) Jeff Snyder with MOAA Leadership Award winner, Cadet Bailey Mount, and senior military instructor LTC (Ret) David Wise at AC Reynolds HS Army JROTC awards ceremony.



Our chapter president, Capt (former) Donna Culp with Cadet Aiden Murphy, MOAA Leadership Award winner from North Henderson High School's AF JROTC unit at their spring military ball at Kenmure Country Club.



CAPT (Ret) Craig Love presents MOAA Leadership Award to Cadet Simpkins at Pisgah High School's Navy JROTC spring award ceremony.

Chapter Donates to Local JROTC Unit

Earlier this year, our chapter's Board of Directors voted to donate \$250 to the North Henderson High School Air Force JROTC unit to support an upcoming base visit by the unit. Despite aggressive money raising efforts by local units to fund these type trips, not all cadets can afford to participate. This unit's leadership reached out to the chapter and other local agencies for financial assistance to ensure all eligible cadets could attend.

Earlier this month, we received the following feedback from the unit's senior instructor, Col Erik Rundquist, USAF (Ret) about their visit to Charleston AFB SC: "thanks for helping sponsor our students! Almost all of them had never travelled to a military base, nor had they seen an airshow. In fact several of them had never ventured from Western North Carolina. The trip was very rewarding—both from an educational and social perspective."

The cadets who participated in the visit put together the attached message thanking the organizations, such as ours, that helped make the trip possible for all eligible cadets.



KNIGHT STRONG



Thanks so much for sponsoring the North Henderson High School trip to Charleston, SC this Spring! You gave 40 students the chance to visit an Air Force base, participate in hands-on STEM activities, fly an F-35 simulator, pay homage to our veterans at the USS Yorktown living museum, and visit the city's world-famous aquarium. Moreover, this trip gave us the chance to be kids again. Thank you again and Go Knights!



Submitted by: Jeff Snyder, WNC MOAA JROTC Coordinator

**Veterans Coffee Shop
American Legion Post 70
103 Reddick Road
Asheville, NC**



Mission statement: Veterans Coffee Shop is a place of support, healing, and camaraderie for veterans who have served their Country. Vets helping vets!

Come on down, have a cup of free coffee. We are a listening post for veteran activities in Western North Carolina. Together then, together again.

Location: American Legion Post 70, 103 Reddick Road, Asheville, NC Below Charles George VA Medical Center on Tunnel Road, make a right (Animal Hospital Sign) on Reddick Road, go up the hill, take the second right.

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 AM-3:00 PM

Contact Information. Please call 828-299-8463



Hails and Farewells

Hails

Lt Col Ed Couser, USAF (Ret.)
Wife, Carol

CDR Bill Manofsky, USN (Ret) -
Wife, Tori

Farewells

None Reported

TAPS



CAPT Mike Covell, USN (Ret)
- Surviving Spouse, Joanie

Get free at-home COVID-19 tests



Every home in the U.S. is eligible to order 2 sets of 4 free at-home tests. If you already ordered your first set, order a second today.

Order Free At-Home Tests

Need help placing an order for at-home tests?

Call [1-800-232-0233](tel:1-800-232-0233) (TTY [1-888-720-7489](tel:1-888-720-7489)).

Treasurer's Report submitted by Mike Pomponio:

WNC MOAA—Cash Flow 2022 Monthly Receipts & Expenditures/Monthly Bank Statement

	Budget	MAY	JUNE
INCOME			
Membersip Dues	\$ 4,160	\$ 180	\$ 278
Miscellaneous Income & Donations		\$ 10	\$ 100
May 21 Qterly Meeting		\$ 1,440	\$ 273
Advertising			
Total Income	\$ 4,160	\$ 1,630	\$ 651
EXPENSES			
NCCOC			
NCCOC MOAA Dues	\$ 228		
BCVC	\$ 50		
Chapter President Travel	\$ 500		
USAA Mixer Grant	\$ 300		
May 21 Qtrly Meeting		\$ 1,160	
Administraive			
Bank Fees		\$ 6	
Liability Insurance	\$ 350		\$ 323
Postage & Printing	\$ 200		
Post Office Box	\$ 146		
Web Hosting	\$ 160		
Virtual Meetings - ZOOM	\$ 150		
ROTC Awards	\$ 150		
New WNCMOAA Portable Signs	\$ 150		
Contingincy Funds	\$ 1,776		
Chapter Meetings	0		
Donations	0		
Total Expenses	\$ 4,160	\$ 1,166	\$ 323
Beginning Balance	1/1/2022 \$ 14,116		
Monthly Balance		\$ 15,980	\$ 16,308



NEVER STOP SERVING ... CHAPTER INVOLVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES



We Honor Veterans - Since November 2014, WNC MOAA, in partnership with Four Seasons Hospice, has honored **over 800** 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



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. 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.



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 or www.blueridgehonorflight.com

The remaining 2022 flight is scheduled for October 1st.



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

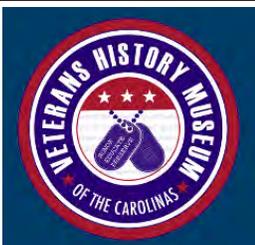


Veteran Smiles Foundation (VSF) dedicated to helping veterans find their dental home all across North Carolina. Continuing the relationship with ECU Dental School of Medicine as established with the Sylva Community Service Learning Center (CSLC), the plan is to systematically establish Vet Smiles programs 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



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



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 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/>



<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

OR



[update your membership information online](#) AND pay your 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 our website <https://www.wnc-moaa.org/>

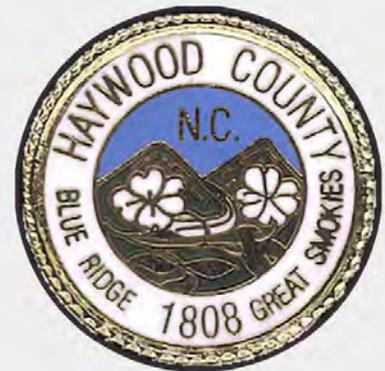


The Latest on COVID In WNC



Stay up to date regarding COVID 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!

Join us for a Luncheon!

Saturday, August 27, 2022



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

Meeting / Lunch Registration: 11:00 AM Check-in / Social - 12:00 PM Lunch / Program

RSVP DEADLINE: to Steve Watkins, steve_watkins@me.com NLT Wednesday, August 17, 2022

Payment must be received NLT Wednesday, August 24, 2022

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, August 27th, 2022

Name: _____ Guest: _____

Phone #: _____ E-mail: _____

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.**



Guest Speaker: Col. Jeri I. Graham, USA (Ret)
MOAA Health Care Committee Chair
Government Relations Committee

Topics

TRICARE Stop Copyay Overpay Act
MOAA Legislation Committee update on Health Issues
MOAA Virtual Chapters
Other National MOAA issues



THE LARGER OUR NUMBERS, THE GREATER YOUR VOICE.

Why MOAA chapter membership matters.



Western North Carolina Chapter



MOAA AND CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM

Name _____

Rank _____ Branch of Service _____

Active Retired Former Reserve National Guard Surviving Spouse

Spouse name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Date of birth _____ Telephone _____

Email _____

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

Are you a member of MOAA? Yes No Unknown

MOAA Member Number (if known) _____

**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 to learn more or call 800-234-6622**
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**
- **Print it out**, fill it in by hand, and mail it with a check made out to **WNC MOAA**

Mail to WNC MOAA PO Box 1984, Hendersonville, NC 28793

- Go to 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.

Chapter membership and dues information:

Check the one that applies:

- _____ New member
_____ Renewing membership
_____ Change in contact information.

Annual Chapter Dues Valid:

1 Jan - 1 Mar

Name Badge Application Included in new membership. Badge: Magnet Type Only

New Member: \$40 (Includes spouse)

Renew: \$30

Surviving Spouse

New Member: \$20

Renew: \$10

Spouse Name:

Email:

Cell

Phone: _____