

An Affiliate Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America

Save the Dates

2025

<u>BOD Mtgs.</u>	<u>Chapter Mtgs.</u>
October 14	August 16
	November 15

2026

<u>BOD Mtgs.</u>	<u>Chapter Mtgs.</u>
January 15	February 21
April 14	May 30
July 14	August 15

Chapter Picnic - May 29, 2026

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 (Feb, May, Aug, Nov)

August Meeting:

Henrick-Rhodes Veterans Center
900 N. Main St
Hendersonville, NC

Dress Code: Country Club Casual

Registration information for the August 16th is the last page of this newsletter.

Spouses and guests are welcomed to all Chapter meetings!



From the President's Desk:

WNC-MOAA - Serving with Purpose, Celebrating with Pride

Dear Members,

What an incredible summer it's been for our WNC-MOAA Chapter! Let's start with the *Picnic* - what a day! We had an outstanding turnout, the food from Mike B's Catering was absolutely delicious, and even a passing rain shower couldn't dampen our spirits, thanks to the perfect shelter at Mills River Park. A huge *thank you* to all the volunteers who helped with setup, registration, and clean-up - you made the event run smoothly. And I want to give a very special shout-out to my amazing wife, Jennifer, for the behind-the-scenes magic - coordinating with local businesses, assembling those fantastic raffle baskets, and making sure everyone walked away with a smile (and maybe a prize or two!). We're already working on making next year's picnic even better!

This summer also brought us two unforgettable outings. Our private chocolate factory tour at French Broad Chocolates in Asheville was a "sweet" success - filled with fun facts, laughter, and of course, exceptional chocolate. And our hands-on falconry experience with Curtis Wright Outfitters? That was a once-in-a-lifetime thrill! Getting to interact with birds of prey in such an intimate setting was powerful, educational, and exhilarating. These are the kinds of experiences that set our chapter apart - not just events, but opportunities to connect, grow, and share something meaningful with fellow members.

Our August 16 General Membership meeting is right around the corner at the American Legion Post 77 in Hendersonville. We'll begin at 11:15 AM. We're excited to welcome Adam Smith, a former Green Beret and founder of Savage Freedoms, as our guest speaker. Adam mobilized Special Operations veterans and volunteers to deliver disaster relief during Hurricane Helene, flying more than 2,500 air sorties across Western North Carolina. His message of courage, resilience, and servant leadership couldn't be more relevant - or more inspiring. I hope you'll join us for this meaningful gathering.

Looking ahead, our Annual Luncheon will be held at Champion Hills Country Club on November 15 at 11:00 AM. It's one of the highlights of our year. In addition to enjoying a great meal and time together, we'll hold elections for the 2026-2027 WNC-MOAA Board and vote on our 2026 dues. Please plan to attend - it's

(Continued on page 2)

From the President's Desk: (Continued from page 1)

always a wonderful way to close out the year together.

Our mission of service continues in countless ways. Each month, dedicated members of our chapter volunteer at the temporary location of the Veterans Restoration Quarters (VRQ) in Asheville, preparing and serving meals to formerly homeless veterans working to rebuild their lives. These quiet, consistent acts of service represent the heart of who we are.

On the legislative front, I want to highlight two significant pieces of state legislation that were recently signed into law:

- **Session Law 2025-72 (Senate Bill 118)** – the *Military and Veteran Support Act* - establishes long-needed protections for veterans using private VA claim service providers. It bans deceptive advertising, requires transparency in fees, and gives the state tools to enforce those rules. It also reduces concealed-carry permit fees for honorably discharged veterans.
- **Session Law 2025-20 (House Bill 91)** updates the legal definition of “armed forces” in North Carolina to include the U.S. Space Force, ensuring that service members are eligible for veteran benefits. It also allows religious institutions to retroactively file property tax exemptions for up to five years.

These wins are encouraging, but we’re not done. WNC-MOAA continues to work alongside other veteran service organizations, advocacy partners, and elected officials to push forward on the issues that matter to our members - because when we speak together, we speak louder.

If you’ve ever considered getting more involved - whether it’s serving on the board, helping with an event, or joining a committee - I encourage you to step in. This is *your* chapter. Your energy, your ideas, and your willingness to serve help keep us strong.

Thank you all for your support, your friendship, and your incredible enthusiasm. YOU are the reason WNC-MOAA is one of the most vibrant, respected, and active MOAA chapters in North Carolina. Let’s keep the momentum going.

‘Never Stop Serving’

Steve Watkins

President, WNC-MOAA Chapter



Asheville VA Patients Vets Need Us - It's Crunch Time!

Their Stock is SUPER LOW!

The Asheville VA Health Care System has once again reached out for our help. Their shelves are nearly empty, and they are in urgent need of individually packaged snacks and hygiene items to support Veterans in Day Surgery, outpatient clinics, Oncology, Hospice, and Mental Health programs.

This is an easy, direct way to make a meaningful difference in the daily comfort of our local Veterans. Whether it's a pack of crackers for someone waiting in Oncology or a travel-size hygiene item for a Veteran in Mental Health programming, our WNC-MOAA donations matter.

Items Needed:

Snacks (Indiv Packaged):

- Trail mix

- Crackers (peanut butter, cheese, etc.)
- Chips
- Little Debbie snacks
- Cookies (Oreos, Fig Newtons, Chips Ahoy, etc.)
- Chewy granola bars
- Mini sodas

Hygiene:

- Cuticle sticks
- Chapstick
- Toenail clippers
- Fingernail clippers
- Women’s hairbrushes
- Combs
- Travel-size deodorant

Important: Please check expiration dates before donating - they can’t accept expired items.

How to Donate:

1. **Direct Drop-Off at the VA:** Call 828-299-2514 between 8:30 AM - 2:00 PM, Monday-Friday, when you’re approximately 10-minutes away. A staff member will meet you at the back employee lot to help offload the donation.

or

2. **Bring Your Items to the August Chapter Meeting:** We will be collecting donations at the **WNC-MOAA meeting on August 16th at the VFW**. Just bring your snacks and hygiene items - we’ll handle the delivery to the VA.

Let’s step up once again and show the Veterans the support and gratitude they deserve. *Thank you for answering the call*



FY 2026 NDAA: Where It Stands and What's Next

The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) is the yearly defense budget that determines military spending

priorities, including pay and benefits for service members, retirees, survivors, and their families. VA benefits are not part of this budget; they are handled separately. The NDAA is created through two separate bills - one passed by the House and one by the Senate - each proposing its part of the defense budget. After both versions are approved, representatives from both chambers meet in a conference committee to resolve differences and produce a single, final bill, which is then sent to the President for signing into law.

As of mid-July, Congress is actively working through the FY 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), the annual bill that outlines military policy, pay, healthcare, and quality-of-life programs. Here's where things stand and what it means for our military community:

House Version – Already Passed

The House has passed its version of the NDAA, officially titled H.R. 8070. This bill includes several MOAA-supported priorities:

- A 3.8% across-the-board military pay raise for 2026
- Increased TRICARE oversight and pilot program reviews, with an emphasis on contractor performance
- Provisions for continued pay protection for military and civilian personnel during government funding gaps (through H.R. 1968)
- Support for military spouse employment, food security programs, and expanded maternal health care services

This House bill reflects MOAA's ongoing advocacy for better benefits, pay equity, and access to care for servicemembers and their families.

Senate Version – Still in Progress

The Senate has not yet passed its version of the NDAA. Instead, the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) has completed a markup — essentially their draft version — but it has not yet moved to a full Senate vote. Key Senate provisions include:

- Additional DoD contractor accountability
- Improvements in military housing transparency

- Enhancements to quality-of-life programs, like child care and base infrastructure

Because the Senate bill differs in several ways from the House version, we are still awaiting final language.

What Happens Next?

The Senate must vote on its version of the NDAA.

A conference committee of House and Senate members will then reconcile differences between the two bills.

The finalized version returns to both chambers for a vote.

Once passed, it goes to the President for signature to become law.



Photo: Vivianne Wersel

Take Action Now!
Legislative Action Center
www.moaa.org/takeaction

Your voice matters - especially while the Senate is still finalizing its version of the NDAA. Visit MOAA's Legislative Action Center to contact your Senators and advocate for provisions that support our military families, retirees, and survivors. To take action, click [here](#) or paste the following address into your browser's address bar. <https://moaa.quorum.us/>.

To follow the progress of the NDAA and learn more about related advocacy efforts, visit the MOAA website at MOAA.org and click on "Advocacy" under the "Legislation" section.

Legislative Action Center

It is essential to make your voice heard. Here is how:

- Start by visiting MOAA.org.
- Go to the Advocacy section in the top menu.
- Click on Legislative Action Center. Follow the instructions provided for each legislation to write, call, or share your story.

When MOAA Speaks, Congress Listens

Compiled & Submitted by: Dr. Vivianne Cisneros Wersel

WNC-MOAA Federal Legislative Affairs

National MOAA Surviving Spouses Advisory Board





Summer 2025

State Legislature Update

As we are in the dog days of summer and the state general assembly has been hard at work on a range of bills dealing with the state budget, disaster relief, healthcare costs and authorizations practices and education. Other topics include public safety election consideration and local government issues. There are a lot of committee efforts ongoing working through the bills that made the crossover list (having passed one of the legislative houses by 8 May). The general assembly has sent many bills to the governor for signature and many have been vetoed. None of those vetoed at this point have direct connections to veterans. If you are interested in the specifics, you can see the efforts outlined on NCLeg.gov. Most of the major decisions and vetoes are listed on the website's homepage.

The State House and the State Senate have each proposed their budget, but no compromise has yet been agreed upon at this point so that is still a work in progress. Additional appropriations are being considered due to the heavy devastation from Hurricane Helene, and I am sure additional disaster considerations are being considered in the tri-city area from the recent floods they experienced.

There have been two bills signed into law so far that impact the veteran community. The first one is HB91 or now SL2025-20 which recognizes Space Force as an official military

service branch, established on Dec. 20, 2019, and is effective as of 6/26/2025. The second bill is SB118 or now or now SL2025-72. This bill is 8 pages in length and includes a lot of different components and nuances. The major topics includes reducing concealed handgun fees for certain veterans, provides additional time for military families to provide proof of residency for public school enrollment, prohibits discriminatory admissions policies regarding active-duty service members and veterans, require military admissions deferment for certain persons admitted to the UNC system, and provide in-state tuition to certain honorably discharged veterans. It also regulates compensation for services related to veterans' benefits matters, authorize remote drivers' license renewals for active-duty military and their families; it provides children of wartime veterans scholarship funds award flexibility and authorizes sheriffs to send permit expiration notices via email. There are a lot of nuances and conditions under the main titles so I would recommend reading the bill/law if it may pertain to you. The goal is to link each bill to this newsletter and to the chapter website so you can read the actual bill/law that was approved and signed.

We are still working to learn more information on the study being worked (HB432) on property taxes and the other bills that made the crossover list and are being worked in various committees. We will continue to look out for your best interests and have asked for an external audit of the Veteran's Home Trust and how it is being used to ensure it is being used as intended and per the guidelines associated with the VA, Medicare and the private insurance monies that go into that trust. It was set up to benefit veterans to be managed to cover general operating expenses, facility improvements and resident care. It was not set up nor should it be used as a general veteran grant fund for

any project that a legislator wants approved but can't get general state funds set aside for. We have asked the new Secretary of the Department of Military and Veteran Affairs to look more deeply into this issue through the NC Veteran's Council. So more to follow on this effort in the future. Stay safe and we will continue to advocate for you and our fellow veterans.



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

NC Senate Bill 118 Military & Veteran Support Act

Signed in law 7/9/25

- **Concealed Handgun Permit Fees** reduced for veterans in NC
- **School Enrollment** made easier for military families transferring to NC
- **Veteran-Friendly University Admissions** ensured for UNC schools
- **Veteran Benefit Service Regulations** introduced to prevent predatory practices
- **Remote Driver's License Renewals** allowed for military Families

WNC-MOAA Picnic Brings Us Together

On May 30, 2025, the Western North Carolina Chapter of MOAA welcomed more than 60 members and guests to the Willow Oak Shelter at beautiful Mills River Park for our 2nd Annual Summer Picnic - and by all accounts, it was a great success!

Despite a few sprinkles of rain, spirits remained high as attendees gathered for an afternoon of good food, camaraderie, and fun. Our crowd included longtime members, surviving spouses, first-time attendees, and several veterans from across the services. Laughter, conversation, and the occasional good-natured service debates filled the air as friends caught up and new connections were made.

A Feast Fit for Members and Friends

Mike B's Catering delivered a delicious Southern-style spread that included:

- Texas-style smoked brisket
- Smoked chicken
- Traditional baked beans and coleslaw
- Classic potato salad & dill ditalini pasta salad
- Fresh fruit and juicy watermelon
- And a full-sheet cake topped with the WNC-MOAA logo to finish it all off!



Raffle Fun and Take-Home Goodies

Fourteen themed raffle baskets were awarded throughout the event, adding plenty of excitement and celebration to the day. Many attendees also went home with freebies - items generously provided by our chapter and supporters to thank guests for



their participation and support.

Special Thanks to Our Sponsors

This event would not have been possible without the generous support of local businesses and community partners. A heartfelt thank you goes out to:

- **Packa's Place** (Horse Shoe)
- **Two Trees Beverage Co.** (Fletcher)
- **Ecusta Brewing** (Brevard)
- **The Buzz** (Hendersonville)
- **Mills River Brewing Co.** (Mills River)
- **Hair Gallery and Spa** (Hendersonville)
- **Town of Mills River Town Council**



Their contributions helped us create an afternoon filled with food, fun, and appreciation for our community.

Gratitude and Looking Forward

Events like this picnic don't just happen - they are made possible by the many volunteers who plan, set up, greet guests, clean up, and work



behind the scenes. Thank you to each member who pitched in and helped make the afternoon such a success. Special thanks go out to our board members and spouses who helped coordinate logistics, raffle donations, and registration.

We're already thinking about next year - and with your feedback and continued support, we'll make it even better. In the meantime, we hope you'll join us at one of our upcoming events, continue to invite fellow officers to be a part of this great chapter, and help us live out our motto: **"Never Stop Serving."**

Picnic photos thanks to Donna Culp and Stacie Litsenberger



Your Chapter Needs YOU: Volunteer & Make a Difference!

Let's be honest - we can't do what we do without YOU. WNC-MOAA is powered by dedicated members who care deeply about our mission and each other. Right now, we need a few more hands, voices, and hearts to keep our chapter strong, connected, and thriving. Whether you've got a couple hours a month or just a passion for giving back, we've got a role that fits you.

CHAPLAIN - Do you have a calming presence, a steady voice, and a compassionate spirit? Then you might be the perfect person to serve as our Chapter Chaplain. You'll open meetings with prayer, offer words of comfort, and help keep our gatherings grounded in purpose and fellowship.

VA HOSPITAL / CLINIC LIAISON - We're looking for someone to be our eyes and ears with the Asheville VA Hospital and local clinics. All it takes is attending a quarterly webinar and helping us stay tuned into the needs of our local veterans. You'll be a vital bridge between the VA and our chapter.

MARINE CORPS REPRESENTATIVE - Marines, we're talking to YOU. Stay Semper Fi and help keep the Corps spirit alive in our chapter. This is a great way to show your pride and keep fellow members informed on what's happening with the Marine Corps. Let's hear those ooh-rah's!

ASSISTANT SURVIVING SPOUSE LIAISON - Help our Surviving Spouse Liaison, Sharon Woodcock, maintain strong, meaningful connections with surviving spouses in our chapter. It's not just about communication - it's about building a community of care, compassion, and continued inclusion.

PICNIC PLANNING CREW - Like to plan events, make things happen, or just have fun? Join our team to help organize next year's Chapter Picnic. It's one of our biggest and most enjoyable events of the year - and we promise you'll have a blast being part of it.

This is your invitation. Your moment. Your chance to make an impact.

If any of these opportunities sound like you - or you just want to help in some way - reach out to **Steve Watkins** at president@wnc-moaa.org.

We Need You. Our Chapter Needs You. Never Stop Serving.

A Sweet Adventure: WNC-MOAA Visits a Chocolate Factory



WNC-MOAA members recently indulged in one of our most delicious outings yet - a private factory tour of the renowned French Broad Chocolate Company in Asheville. This behind-the-scenes experience offered a fascinating look into the world of artisan chocolate making, from bean to bar.

We had a private tour reserved just for our WNC-MOAA group, which made the experience all the more enjoyable. Together, we asked great questions, shared plenty of laughs, and discovered just how much goes into every bite of handcrafted chocolate.



The knowledgeable staff at French Broad Chocolate walked us through each step of the process, from sourcing cacao and roasting the beans to tempering and packaging the final product. Their passion for sustainable sourcing and quality craftsmanship was

evident throughout.

And then came the tasting - rich, complex, and unforgettable. From silky single-origin dark chocolates to the company's unique



truffle creations, we sampled a range of flavors that showcased why French Broad Chocolate has earned such acclaim both locally and nationally.

The outing wasn't just educational and delicious - it was also a lot of fun. Whether longtime members or first-time event attendees, everyone left with a deeper appreciation for the craft and a sweet treat (or two) in hand.



We're always looking for unique experiences to bring our members together, and this tour hit the mark in every way. Thank you to the team at French Broad Chocolate for hosting us - and to everyone who joined us for making it such a memorable outing.

WNC-MOAA Members Take Flight with Curtis Wright Falconry

On a sunny summer afternoon, a group of WNC-MOAA members and a few neighbors gathered in Weaverville for a one-of-a-kind experience with Curtis Wright Falconry. Hosted by falconers Jeff Curtis and Sam, the hands-on session offered an exciting and educational dive into the ancient art of falconry - and provided plenty of up-close interaction with their impressive birds of prey.

The experience kicked off with an informative discussion about falconry's history, training methods, and the role these birds have played in human culture for thousands of years. The group asked great questions and learned about the unique personalities, diets, and instincts of raptors like hawks and owls.

Members had the chance to handle "Sam Adams," a striking Harris's Hawk, while trying to guess his weight - a tougher challenge than it sounds! We then watched "Hoppy," another Harris's Hawk, take flight and return for food in a live demonstration of falconry skills. One of the biggest hits of the afternoon was meeting "Oskar," a beautiful Barn Owl who showcased his silent flight and striking presence



Tricia with "Hoppy"



The WNC-MOAA crew, Jeff Curtis and "Oskar" the Owl

during feeding.

While we didn't get to fly "Sam Adams", we all walked away with a deeper appreciation for these powerful birds and the dedication it takes to work with them. More than anything, the outing brought members together for an afternoon of learning, laughter, and connection.

Thank you to Curtis Wright Falconry for making the event so engaging - and to our members who continue to show that no matter the activity, WNC-MOAA never stops serving, learning, or enjoying each other's company



WNC-MOAA Shirts and Caps!

We're excited to announce that WNC-MOAA shirts and caps are available! Show your Chapter Pride with these stylish pieces, featuring the embroidered WNC-MOAA logo. We expect to have a limited supply at our May 30th chapter picnic, so make sure to check them out!

Shirts: These classic grey shirts are available in assorted sizes, with the WNC-MOAA logo embroidered on the left chest. *Price - \$35.00.*

Caps: Choose between tan or grey, both with the embroidered WNC-MOAA logo. *Price - \$27.00.*

To order your gear and represent WNC-MOAA, visit <https://my.cheddarup.com/c/wnc-moaa-gear> to place your order today!



Leave a Legacy of Service in Western North Carolina

Support the Mission of WNC-MOAA for Years to Come

The Western North Carolina Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (WNC-MOAA) is built on a simple but powerful commitment: never stop serving. Our members put that into action every day - honoring hospice patients through our partnership with Four Seasons Hospice and the **We Honor Veterans** program, purchasing wreaths for veterans' graves across the region, supporting **Blue Ridge Honor Flight**, helping fund **JROTC** programs in local high schools, backing **Vet Smiles** to restore dignity through dental care, preparing and serving monthly meals at the **Veterans Restoration Quarters (VRQ)**, and supporting the **Western North Carolina VA Hospital and Clinics** through drives for hygiene items, snacks, and other critical needs.

Now, we invite you to extend that commitment through a lasting gift: a legacy donation.

What Is a Legacy Gift?

A legacy gift - also called a planned or estate gift - is a meaningful way to support WNC-MOAA through your will, trust, or beneficiary designations. It allows you to leave a gift without affecting your finances during your lifetime. You can give a specific dollar amount, a percentage of your estate, or name WNC-MOAA as the beneficiary of a retirement account or life insurance policy.

Why It Matters

Your gift helps ensure that WNC-MOAA remains a force for good across the mountains of Western North Carolina for years to come. It will support:

- Outreach and meal service at the VRQ
- Donations and support to the WNC VA Hospital and Clinics
- Wreaths Across America placements throughout our region
- JROTC recognition and leadership development
- The **Vet Smiles** dental care initiative
- Veteran honor ceremonies in hospice care
- Blue Ridge Honor Flight send-offs and welcome homes
- Chapter programming, events, and advocacy efforts

Rooted in Western North Carolina

Our chapter serves communities across Asheville, Hendersonville, Waynesville, Franklin, Brevard, Black Mountain, and beyond. A legacy gift lets your values live on - strengthening local efforts that support, honor, and connect veterans throughout the region.

How to Make a Gift

Making a legacy gift is straightforward. Here's sample language for your will or trust:

"I give and bequeath to the Western North Carolina Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America, a 501(c)(19) nonprofit organization, the sum of \$____ (or ___% of my estate) to support its veteran-focused mission in Western North Carolina."

You can also name WNC-MOAA as a beneficiary of a retirement account, bank account, or life insurance policy.

We'd Be Honored to Talk

If you've already included WNC-MOAA in your estate plans - or would like to learn more - please contact Steve Watkins at president@wnc-moaa.org or speak with any board member. We'll respect your privacy and ensure your gift is used according to your wishes.

Western North Carolina is our home. Service is our legacy. Your gift ensures we 'Never Stop Serving'.

★ **MOAA** ★
MEMBERSHIP

★ U.S. AIR FORCE ★
★ U.S. NAVY ★
★ U.S. ARMY ★
U.S. MARINE CORPS
★ U.S. SPACE FORCE ★
★ U.S. COAST GUARD ★
★ NOAA ★
★ U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE ★



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/>





Blue Ridge Honor Flight – Next Flight: September 27, 2025 - Calling All Veterans, Gold Star Families, and Guardians



Do you know a **WWII, Korean War, or Vietnam War veteran** who hasn't yet experienced an Honor Flight? Or are you a veteran from one of these eras who would like to take part? The next Blue Ridge Honor Flight departs for Washington, D.C., on Saturday, September 27, 2025 - and applications are open.

Veterans Apply at:

www.blueridgehonorflight.com/apply/veteran/

This no-cost, one-day trip honors veterans with visits to the WWII, Korean War, and Vietnam War memorials, Arlington National Cemetery, and other iconic landmarks. *It is a day of reflection, camaraderie, and long-overdue appreciation.*

Honoring Gold Star Families

Blue Ridge Honor Flight is also proud to welcome **Gold Star Family members** - those who lost a loved one in WWII, Korea, or Vietnam. These families help carry forward the memory of their fallen heroes.

Gold Star Family applications are also available under the "Applications" dropdown:

www.blueridgehonorflight.com/apply/Gold-Star-Family/

Guardians Needed - A Critical Role

Honor Flight **Guardians** are volunteers who accompany and assist veterans throughout the trip, ensuring their safety, comfort, and enjoyment. Guardians provide physical support, help with mobility (including wheelchairs and stairs), offer companionship, and act as liaisons between

veterans and Honor Flight staff.

Guardian Responsibilities Include:

- **Assistance:** Helping veterans with mobility - pushing wheelchairs, transfers, navigating stairs, etc.
- **Companionship:** Providing emotional support and meaningful connection throughout the day
- **Communication:** Coordinating with veterans, fellow Guardians, and staff
- **Safety:** Prioritizing the veteran's well-being at all times
- **Physical Fitness:** Being capable of walking long distances, lifting, and pushing wheelchairs
- **Time Commitment:** Being available for the full trip - including pre-flight briefings and the return

Being a Guardian is a deeply rewarding experience & a powerful way to give back. If you're interested in playing this vital role, **I encourage you to apply.**

Guardian applications can be found under the same dropdown menu at:

www.blueridgehonorflight.com/apply/guardian/



Upcoming Events - Everyone is Welcome

16 August 2025 - WNC-MOAA Chapter Meeting, 11:15am-2:00pm - VFW Hendersonville - 900 N Main St

20 August 2025 - Smoky Mtn Satellite Mtg - Waynesville - Market Street Diner - 18 N Main Street - 11:00am

27 August 2025 - BMW Plant Tour and Lunch Outing, Spartanburg, SC

6 September 2025 - Women Warrior's Keynote Luncheon - Blue Ridge Conference Center - Flat Rock - 11:00am-2:00pm

27 September 2025 - Blue Ridge Honor Flight Welcome Home Celebration

16 November 2025 - Chapter Mtg - 11:00am-2:00pm, Champion Hills Country Club, Hendersonville



Surviving Spouse Corner: Understanding Long-Term Care Insurance

Long-term care insurance (LTCI) is often overlooked until it's urgently needed - but by then, options may be limited or costly. In her insightful article for MOAA's *Surviving Spouse Corner*, Patricia Farnsworth, a member of the Surviving Spouse Advisory Council, helps demystify this important (and often confusing) aspect of retirement planning.

Farnsworth shares her personal experience of watching her husband transition from health to needing long-term care, and how having a LTCI policy in place allowed them to maintain his quality of life without the added stress of financial uncertainty. Her story is a reminder of why planning ahead matters - and how even those who never expect to use long-term care services may eventually benefit from them.

The article clearly explains:

- What long-term care insurance is - and isn't
- Types of policies available today, including traditional and hybrid plans
- Key terms such as *elimination period*, *benefit period*, and *inflation rider*
- What questions to ask when considering a policy
- Why early planning makes a difference in affordability and eligibility

Farnsworth writes, *"Everyone hopes never to need long-term care. However, when it is needed, a long-term care insurance policy could provide a higher quality of life for both the person needing care and the caregiver."*

This is a must-read for anyone exploring long-term care options - whether for yourself, your spouse, or a loved one. It's especially relevant to surviving spouses navigating complex healthcare and financial decisions alone.

Read the full article here: [Surviving Spouse Corner: Understanding Long-Term Care Insurance Policies](#)

By Patricia Farnsworth, Surviving Spouse Advisory Council, MOAA

VRQ Update: New Veterans Village & Community Center Coming Soon

You all know members from WNC-MOAA support the Veterans Restorations Quarters (VRQ) every month. Well there is exciting news for the VRQ. Huge progress is underway for our local veterans community. The former Quality Inn on Tunnel Road has been purchased as part of the larger *Veterans Village* vision - providing 134 units of permanent housing exclusively for veterans. The site will also serve as transitional housing during the rebuilding of the VRQ, which sustained severe damage from Hurricane Helene. In addition, the neighboring Zaxby's restaurant next to the VRQ property has been purchased and will be transformed into a Veterans Community Center, offering space for veteran service organizations and support agencies to better serve those who served us.

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

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: Check out our "Events" page to view an updated calendar of upcoming MOAA events.

Newsletters: Access the latest issue of our award-winning Chapter Newsletter, as well as archived editions for reference.

Photo Gallery of Events: Browse photos from our luncheons, special meetings, conventions, and more! If you've attended a WNC-MOAA event, you might just spot yourself in one of the albums.

Facebook: Follow us at WNC-MOAA on Facebook to view photo albums, like and share posts, and stay informed on chapter news and events.

Please note: By attending a WNC-MOAA event, you grant permission for your photographic image to be captured and used in our publications, including our website, newsletters, and social media platforms.





Come and hear these remarkable stories of achievement and resiliency!

The 2025 Women Warriors' Keynote Luncheon

September 6, 2025 (11am - 2pm)
at Blue Ridge Conference Center, Flat Rock, NC 28731

Featuring **Lt. Col. Lisa Jaster**
★ **BEST SELLING BOOK** - *Delete the Adjective* ★

- with Guest Speaker Sarah Scully from Brothers and Sisters Like These -

Tickets are ~~\$50*~~
See Below

Tickets include **Lunch** and a **copy of Lisa's best selling book**, *Delete the Adjective: A Soldier's Adventure in Range School*.

*Sponsors are covering the costs of all Veterans to attend. Please email veteranshealingfarm@gmail.com for the promo code.

Scan the QR code to register!



Register today!

Come and hear these remarkable stories of achievements and resiliency featuring **Army Lt. Col. Lisa Jaster**, one of only three women to graduate from the first integrated United States Army Ranger program. Also, special guest speaker **Sarah Scully** from Brothers and Sisters Like These. Scully joined the Army as a journalist after 9/11 and served from 2003-2008. In 2016, therapists at the Asheville VA diagnosed her with PTSD from Military Sexual Trauma, which helped her heal and survive.



Thank you to our sponsors!



Veterans Healing Farm | www.veteranshealingfarm.org
138 Kimzey Road, Mills River, NC 28759 • Phone: 828-595-6111 • [f /VeteransHealingFarm](https://www.facebook.com/VeteransHealingFarm)

- Sponsors have covered the \$50 ticket price for our Veteran community. NOTE: Spouses and family are also included but need to register separately.
- All attendees will receive her best-selling book, *Delete the Adjective: A Soldier's Adventure in Ranger Training*. She'll do a book signing immediately following the luncheon.
- Please have everyone register/get tickets <https://www.veteranshealingfarm.org/2025-women-warriors-luncheon> (everyone must register)
- Enter Promo Code - **VETERAN** (this will take the cost to \$0).

Important Update: No End Date for Legacy Retiree ID Cards

As of **July 22, 2025**, the Department of Defense has confirmed there is **no official termination date** for the legacy (pre-2011) Uniformed Services ID (USID) cards used by military retirees and their dependents.

In a recent article by *Kevin Lilley* published by the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) clarified that retirees are not required to proactively replace their legacy IDs unless they are lost, stolen, or expired. However, confusion remains, and some installations may mistakenly deny access to those still using the older IDs.

**** WNC-MOAA recommends that members consider updating to the new Next Generation USID card to avoid potential access issues. Several members have already had success scheduling appointments at the Asheville DEERS/ID office and receiving their updated cards without issue.**

Bottom line: Legacy IDs remain valid for now, but upgrading is a smart move to stay ahead of any local or future policy changes.

For full details, read the original MOAA article here: <https://www.moaa.org/idjuly2025>

Credit: Kevin Lilley, MOAA.org

FY 2025 CASH FLOW REPORT - 7/26/2025							
INCOME	1st Qtr	2nd Qtr	3rd Qtr	4th Qtr	YTD	Budget	Diff
Membership Dues	\$2,200.00	\$315.00			\$2,515.00	\$4,200.00	-\$1,685.00
Miscellaneous Income					\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Donations			\$250.00		\$250.00	\$0.00	\$250.00
VA Donations					\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Chapter Meeting & Raffles	\$1,290.00	\$2,157.00			\$3,447.00	\$0.00	\$3,447.00
Badges	\$15.00	\$15.00			\$30.00	\$0.00	\$30.00
Surviving Spouse Dues	\$10.00				\$10.00	\$200.00	-\$190.00
NCCOC		\$333.33			\$333.33	\$0.00	\$333.33
MOAA HQ	\$49.36	\$3,550.00			\$3,599.36	\$0.00	\$0.00
Wreaths /America donations							
Total Income	\$3,564.36	\$6,370.33	\$250.00	\$0.00	\$10,184.69	\$4,400.00	
EXPENSES							
NCCOC Dues	\$207.00				\$207.00	\$228.00	\$21.00
BCVC	\$50.00				\$50.00	\$50.00	\$0.00
Recruiting & Retention		\$200.00			\$200.00	\$1,000.00	\$800.00
Web/Digital Services	\$160.00				\$160.00	\$350.00	\$0.00
Liability Insurance					\$0.00	\$538.00	\$0.00
IRS tax filing	\$50.00				\$50.00	\$50.00	\$0.00
USPS/Shipping	\$200.00				\$200.00	\$350.00	\$150.00
Administrative Supplies	\$81.62				\$81.62	\$300.00	\$218.38
JROTC Awards	\$128.96	\$41.58			\$170.54	\$150.00	-\$20.54
Speaker Gifts					\$0.00	\$200.00	\$200.00
Badges	\$25.61				\$25.61	\$0.00	-\$25.61
Donations	\$500.00				\$500.00	\$0.00	-\$500.00
Meetings Expenses/Raffles	\$2,166.30	\$2,019.63			\$4,185.93	\$0.00	
Smoky Mtn Satellite Support					\$0.00	\$0.00	
Woodfin Satellite Support					\$0.00	\$0.00	
President's Travel					\$0.00	\$500.00	\$500.00
Wreaths/America expense					\$0.00		
Total Expenses	\$3,569.49	\$2,261.21	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5,830.70	\$3,716.00	\$1,343.23
NET INCOME (Loss)					\$4,353.99		
(RESERVE) BANK BALANCE				7/9/2025	\$19,117.73		

Hails and Farewells and TAPS

Hails

Capt Jerry Moran, USMC
 Col Jim Gough, USMC
 CPT Archie Ray, USA
 MAJ Pat Schluter, USA
 COL Gayle Watkins, USA

Farewells

CDR John Nunnelee, USN

TAPS

CDR John Jensen, USN

'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 **Steve Watkins, 608-225-0594** or steve.watkins.email@gmail.com



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**.



Blue Ridge Honor Flight transports American veterans to Washington, DC two 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 **Steve Watkins at 608-225-0594** or steve.watkins.email@gmail.com or www.blueridgehonorflight.com

Next flight: September 27, 2025



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



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>**



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** or go to: <https://theveteransmuseum.org/>



CAMARADERIE WITH A PURPOSE



Join the WNC-MOAA 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://my.cheddarup.com/c/wnc-moaa-join/>

- Select your '**Member Dues**' or '**Surviving Spouse Member**' 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.
- Select the length of membership you would like (example - selecting a 3 years membership will protect you from any dues increase during those 3 years).
- Complete the contact information.



WNC-MOAA Board of Directors and Officers 2024 - 2025

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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)

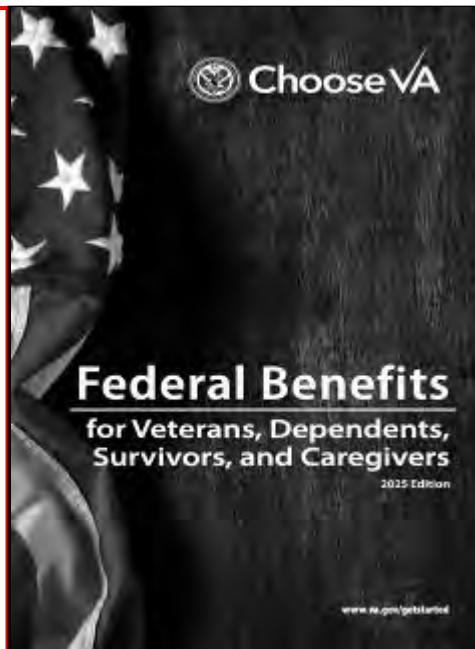
Webmasters Steve Watkins, COL, USA (Ret)
John Culp, LTC, USA (Ret)



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/>



To download your copy go to:

[2025-Federal-Benefits-for-Veterans-Dependents-and-Survivors.pdf](#)

TRAGEDY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR SURVIVORS



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

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



MOAA:

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



The Western North Carolina Chapter of MOAA has once again earned MOAA's highest honors for 2024, with the awards presented in 2025. We are proud to be recognized as a 5-Star Levels of Excellence Chapter and a 5-Star winner of the Harris Communications Award for both our newsletter and website!

THE LARGER OUR NUMBERS, THE GREATER YOUR VOICE.

Why WNC-MOAA chapter membership matters.



WNC-MOAA CHAPTER & MOAA MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM (2025)

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 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 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
- 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.

Western North Carolina Chapter membership of MOAA

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

Member

- \$35 - New Member (includes Spouse)
- \$35 - Renew

Surviving Spouse

- \$10 - New or Renew

Name Badges

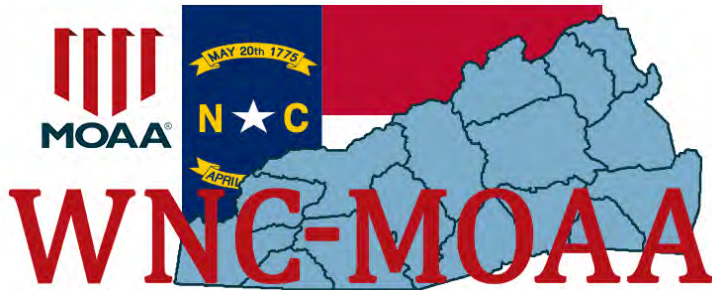
(Badges are Magnet type only)

- All Badges - \$15 each
Badge Name(s): _____

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

Clear Form

Join us for a Luncheon!



Saturday, August 16, 2025

**Location: Hedrick-Rhodes
Veterans Center
900 N Main St
Hendersonville, NC 28792**

Meeting / Lunch Registration: 11:15 AM Check-in / Social - 12:00 PM Lunch / Program

Registration & Payment must be received NLT Monday, August 11, 2025

Registration and Payment options

Option 1 (Preferred)

Register & Pay link or with QR code -
\$30 each

[https://
wncmoaaaug25.cheddarup
.com](https://wncmoaaaug25.cheddarup.com)



Option 2

Lunch by mailed check - \$30 each

Mail Registration & Check 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 16, 2025

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: The main parking lot is located on the west side of the building. For those requiring handicapped parking, spaces are available on the east (back) side of the building, where a ramp provides safe entry into the meeting room. We will gather in the Multipurpose Room (Room 201) on the second floor, which can be accessed via stairs or elevator.

“Resilience in Action: Leadership Lessons from a Green Beret”

Join us for an unforgettable luncheon featuring Adam Smith, a former Green Beret and founder of Savage Freedoms. From the chaos of Hurricane Helene to leading 2,500+ air missions in Western North Carolina, Adam transformed crisis into coordinated action. His bold approach to leadership, disaster relief, and readiness will leave you inspired - and better prepared for life's unpredictable moments. Don't miss this dynamic speaker who proves that real leadership doesn't wait - it acts.

Don't miss this opportunity to connect and be inspired!

