

The Summit (MAR 2017)

The Summit Newsletter



The High Country Chapter of the MOAA was formed in 2004 and serves Avery, Mitchell, and Watauga counties. The Military Officers Association of America is a non-profit veterans' association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and to preserving the earned entitlements of members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors. Membership is open to those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, or NOAA and their surviving spouses.



Where our Battles Take place

President's Remarks

Please take the time to read the MOAA **2016 Year in Review** which was sent via email from MOAA President Dana Atkins to MOAA members on March 16th. The list of accomplishments at the national level is quite impressive. Through various lobbying efforts, MOAA helped secure a full pay raise for active military, blocked a significant increase in Tricare Pharmacy fees and maintained eligibility for military couples housing allowances. MOAA continued to provide a wide range of member services including a full suite of insurance products and transition assistance to service members returning to civilian life.

This is a reminder about the mailing last month from outgoing Secretary Dave Garvin regarding the North Carolina Council of Chapters 2017 State Convention September 7-10 in Williamsburg, Va. This is an all-inclusive package and I ask you to consider attending. Please note that deposits are due by April 14th. Details regarding registration are in the package mailed to you.

To repeat from last month, MOAA and other military support groups will be closely monitoring the upcoming legislative process at the state and national levels. MOAA's non-partisan mission of advocating for active duty military, veterans and their families is the one constant in a sometimes volatile legislative environment. I urge you to stay current by reading the MOAA Legislative Updates. These are great summaries of pending legislation which could impact our military families. Go to the MOAA home page or moaa.org/legislative to sign up.

I want to welcome several new members to our Board. Dr. Doug May, Capt. USMC will serve in an Officer position as First Vice President; Chuck Rhodes, Capt., USN (ret) will serve as Second Vice President and Dr. Thomas "Marv" Williamsen, MAJ, USA (ret) will serve as Secretary.

I's also like to congratulate Dr. Lynn Gregory for her recognition on March 25th as an Honorary Chapter Member

Thanks
Fred Schmitt

CHAPTER BOARD MEMBERS

President: Capt Fred Schmitt USCG

1st VP: Capt Doug May USMC

2nd VP: CAPT Charles Rhodes USN

Secretary: LTC Dave Garvin USA

Treasurer: MAJ Dinah Pinney USAF

Past President: MAJ Bob Gibbard USA

BOARD MEMBERS:

LtCol George Brudzinski USMC (PP)

CPT Nick Friedman USA (PP)

LTC Ron Branch USA

COL Ben Covington USA (PP)

LTC Ed Groff USA

CoL John Alley USA (PP)

LTC Michael Halus USA



Chaplin's Corner

Beliefs Are The Engine of Life

St. Patrick's Day has come and gone, but this date generally doesn't turn too many heads; not around these parts, at least. Easter, on the other hand, marks America's biggest church attendance day of the year, rivaling even Christmas. It commemorates the resurrection from the dead of Jesus of Nazareth, someone who claimed to be none other than God himself! He further claimed, as the apostle Paul wrote, "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved" (Romans 10:9, NASB). The reference to "saved" here essentially speaks to forgiveness of sin, salvation from Hell, and eternal life with Jesus in Heaven after one's physical death. Could Jesus truly be God and fulfill such extraordinary claims? According to a recent ABCNews/Beliefnet poll, 83% of Americans call themselves Christians, or followers of Christ, and to that question they would say, "Absolutely!" Many other belief systems abound as well, of course. How about you? Do your core beliefs generate that kind of confidence and joy? Do they make you *truly* happy in life? I hope so. If not, let's talk some time.

James Bell | Cell/Text/VM 917.675.0910

Chaplain | MOAA High Country NC 21

Major | USMC



Trivia question:

Can you identify where this photo comes from?

Hint: It's in the United States.

Veterans Corner.

By Mike Halus

Who is eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits?

General Eligibility for VA Benefits: Discharge from active military service with a discharge other than dishonorable. There are additional qualifications for some VA services, for example, wartime service. Benefits are also available for spouses, dependent children, parents, and widows/widowers. Special programs are available for homeless vets.

Categories of Service Connected Disabilities are: VA Health Care, Veterans with Service Connected Disabilities, Pensions, Education and Training, Home Loan Guarantee and Mortgage Assistance, VA Life Insurance, Burial and Memorial Benefits, Reserve and National Guard, Transition Assistance, Dependents and Survivors Health Care and Benefits, and Military Medals and Records

Veteran Benefits: 1) In the past, some vets were evaluated by the VA for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and informed they were not disabled for PTSD. The VA has reevaluated the criteria and requests all previously diagnosed vets who were not given a disability schedule a reevaluation.

2) **Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI):** The VA has substantially increased disability benefits for veterans with mild traumatic brain injuries, acknowledging that veterans suffering from this less severe version of the Iraq war's signature wound will struggle to make a living. The VA also has a program for a significant one-time payment for some vets hospitalized with TBI.

Benefits available to spouses, dependents and survivors: 1) Health care benefits are available for those qualified under the Civilian Health and Medical Program of the Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA). Certain dependents and survivors can receive reimbursement for most medical expenses including: inpatient, outpatient, mental health, prescription medication, skilled nursing care and durable medical equipment. There are specific criteria to be eligible for these programs.

2) Additional VA benefits: Dependency and Indemnity Compensation – If a vet's death is the result of a service connected disability; survivors may receive over \$1,000 a month. A death pension to certain low income surviving spouses and unmarried children of vets with wartime service can provide a maximum annual payment up to \$7,933 with higher rates under certain situations.

For answers to questions or for more information, contact Mike Halus at 828 260-0620. For residents of Watauga County, I recommend you call April Wagner, County Veterans Service Officer, at 828-265-8065. She is very knowledgeable.

Upcoming Events

1. Last Thursday of the Month, March 30th Officers Call Thursday, 5:15 PM at the Appalachian Brewing Company.
2. First Wed of the Month April 5th board meeting. 5: pm at Sagebrush Restaurant.
3. Last Thursday of the Month, April 27th Officers Call Thursday, 5:15 PM at the Appalachian Brewing Company.
4. First Wed of the Month May 3rd board meeting. 5: pm at Sagebrush Restaurant.
5. Last Thursday of the Month, May 26th Officers Call Thursday, 5:15 PM at the Appalachian Brewing Company.
6. Memorial Day ceremony Boone Mall Monday, May 29th 10am – 1200am.

Resources

Please copy and paste the following links to your links list on your computer. www.facebook.com/hccmoaa
e-mail: hccmoaa@gmail.com

High County Chapter Home Page
<http://hccmoaa.org/index.html>

North Carolina Council of Chapters Home Page
<http://www.moaa-nc.org/>

National MOAA Home page
<http://www.moaa.org/>