CHARLOTTE-METROLINA

January 2015

The Military Officers Association of America

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year for 2015. As with every New Year, it seems strange typing 2015 and, for a while, we will all tend to address letters, date checks, etc. with 2014.

I am certain, for each of us and for our nation, this past year was certainly one of some good things, not so good things, some sorrows and also challenges for many on a personal level and also society-wide. It is also for certain that time and change marches on.

2014 was a very good year for our Charlotte-Metrolina Chapter of MOAA. All of our chapter successes are largely due to the leadership, forethought, and guidance of Colonel Harley Ellinger who is ending a four year service as our Chapter President. We owe many kudos and our thanks to Harley for his dedication to the chapter. One of the best things that Harley had going for him and our chapter was the behind the scenes work and coordination of efforts by Martha. As Martha leaves the Board of Directors, we also thank her for all she has done and for serving so well as Harley's second brain. Her institutional memory guided all of us. During Harley's tenure and because of his leadership and personal effort, some of our accomplishments are:

Chapter By Laws and 501(c)3 Status – The chapter has a solid set of bylaws and amendments that among other things establishes our chapter's status as a 501(c) 3 organization with all donations treated as tax-free.

Legislation Affairs / NCCOC Involvement – There has been an elevation of legislative affairs knowledge and activity by and for the chapter due to Harley's service as the North Carolina Council of Chapters (NCCOC) VP for Legislative Affairs and the election/appointment of Gloria Scienski to the chapter's 3rd VP for Legislative Affairs. Harley and Carol Aljets holding office on the State level has greatly enhanced the chapter and state communication lines.

Chapter Meeting Programs – The chapter had a great year of chapter meeting program speakers from local area military history presentations to active duty military and veteran support programs. We were very fortunate (continued on next page)

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NEXT MEETING

Sunday, January 18, 2015

Red Rocks Cafe

4223 Providence Rd

Social Time	**1500**
Meeting with Meal	**1530**

this past Spring to host Colonel Richard Erickson, National MOAA Board member, and hear his wise counsel on becoming a better chapter. Sadly, he passed away in late September, but his message to us lives on.

JROTC Awards and Fund Raising for Scholarship Awards – Our JROTC leadership awards program continues strong with our 34 participating high schools and the leadership of Larry Stawicki. 2014 was our successful kick off fund raising campaign for our newly established JROTC Scholarship Program. Harley and Martha's generous financial donation at the start of 2014 gave us a solid foundation to build from.

Chapter Website and E - Newsletter – This past year was the birth of our chapter website and E – Newsletter. Largely thanks to Harley's insistence, encouragement and Ron Wilsbach's work we got her done. See: http://charlottemoaa.org

New Membership and Retention Gains – Perhaps the biggest 2014 accomplishment has been in new membership. National MOAA has us gaining 28 new chapter members, 22 of which we will obtain a MOAA national financial incentive. Likewise, member retention has been excellent as we launched a campaign this fall to get some past dues brought current to 2015.

5 Star Chapter Award – All of this activity and success during the recent years, led by the initiative of Harley to complete the Chapter Award application, resulted in our chapter, for the first time ever, receiving the designation as a 5 Star Chapter, the highest MOAA chapter award. Thanks Harley and the many others who contributed to this award.

My guidance to the chapter for 2015, much the same as the new Commandant of the Marine Corps, General Joe Dunford said in his message to the Corps when he assumed command in October, "Continue the march!!!" There will be more guidance for initiatives and a request for your involvement and assistance coming in later January. **Happy New Year.**

Ron Morgan, Colonel, USMC (Ret)
President

PROGRAMS – JAY GARBUS -- 1st Vice President

Chapter meetings are held at the Red Rocks Café, 4223-8 Providence Rd., Strawberry Hill area where Fairview/Sardis Rds. cross Providence, behind Fresh Market. Social starts at 3:00 PM, followed by a short business meeting, then dinner (order from the menu) and speaker presentation.

January 18, 2015 – Installation of Officers – The MOAA North Carolina Council of Chapters (NCCOC) President, Jeri Graham will install chapter officers and provide a look at the initiatives and actions of the NCCOC in cooperation with national MOAA and local chapters. She is a dynamic and engaging leader that all will enjoy hearing. We are also awaiting word from Congressman Pittenger's office on when he will be joining us either in January, February or March.

Future Meeting Dates – Place these dates on your 2015 calendars

- February 15
- March 15
- April 12
- May 17

North Carolina Council of Chapters Biennial Statewide Convention, 11 – 14 June 2015 at High Hampton Inn and Country Club – Cashiers, NC - For all MOAA members in this most welcoming and luxurious mountain locale, with great dining, amenities, and outdoor activities, including a historic golf course. See: www.highhamptoninn.com Lots of camaraderie, fun and just a small amount of business meeting time. Prices: Couple or 2 sharing a room $ 979. Price includes: room (3 nights), all meals, cocktail hours, taxes, fees and gratuities. $ 100 deposit now due by January 25. Registration form is attached to this newsletter and will be available at chapter meetings. Also see: www.moaa-nc.org

JROTC Scholarship Fund Donations – A letter of request for donations for our chapter JROTC Scholarship Fund will be sent to all chapter members and some other supporters just after Thanksgiving. Prior to the end of 2014 and during the holiday season is a perfect time to provide a financial donation/gift (Tax deductible) to support scholarships for worthy Charlotte area JROTC students. We would like to maximize chapter member participation regardless of the amount you can give.

MEMBERSHIP – TIM DREMANN -- 2nd Vice President

See President's Message

LEGISLATIVE -- GLORIA SCIENSKI – 3rd Vice President

This is the season of hope and light. I find myself remembering many small and meaningful moments of joy and a few not so small moments of loss and sadness. This is a season of reflection and connection. Friends and families mark the winter holiday season with parties, celebrations, and all sorts of social gatherings.

Although the holidays are a time of joy and optimistic hopes for a new year, this is not always true. People may be filled with sadness, loneliness, and anxiety.

This week a dear friend reminded me of the need for our advocacy and support for the victims of suicide and their families. My friend, John Madigan, is the Vice President of Public Policy with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention/SPAN USA. He recently participated in the Sexton Act press conference with U.S. Senator Joe Donnelly.

At the press conference, Senator Donnelly (Indiana Democrat), who serves on the Senate Armed Services Committee, said, "It's incredibly concerning how many service members we are losing to

suicide. Any service member lost is one too many. There are commonsense steps we can take to address the scourge of military suicide, and I hope that one step we take is passing the Jacob Sexton Act."

For two straight years, we have lost more service members to suicide than combat. According to the Pentagon, in 2012, 522 service members took their own lives, while we lost 316 in combat. Last year, a record number in the National Guard took their own lives, and we lost 474 service members overall, more than three times the number killed in combat.

The Sexton Act seeks to help prevent military suicide by requiring annual mental health assessments for all service members, including Active Duty, Guard, and Reserve; maintaining strong privacy protections for service members; and requiring a Pentagon report to evaluate existing military mental health practices and provide recommendations for expansion and improvement.

In the spirit of the season, let's extend a hand of love and friendship to those that may be alone and sad. All of us have different seasons in our lives. We can help make this winter season of hope and light touch someone when they need us most.

FY 2015 Defense Bill

Col. Mike Hayden, USAF (Ret), reported on the FY 2015 defense bill and the results were mixed. The results could be considered good, bad, and potentially ugly.

The good: The final compromise blocked the consolidation of TRICARE systems and means-testing TFL enrollment fees while limiting the impact of the commissary, housing allowance, and pharmacy fee proposals to one year modifications.

The bad: 2015 marks a second year of pay caps below private sector wage growth. The last two pay raises are tied for the lowest raises in 50 years. With four additional years of pay caps included in the president's 2014 budget submission, this isn't a statistical anomaly, it's the emergence of a disturbing trend.

The ugly: In two obscured sections of a joint explanatory statement of the defense bill, House and Senate Armed Services Committee members stated that they have not yet rejected DoD plans to further erode housing allowances or increase TRICARE pharmacy fees, and will again "commit to consider" these proposals next year.

But if sequestration returns, an even uglier scenario will be on the horizon. The joint statement goes on to say that if sequestration returns, " DoD will need to make painful cuts and achieve substantial savings across its entire budget in order to avoid an unacceptable reduction in readiness."

The bottom line: To ensure we don't go from good, to bad, to ugly, MOAA's mission in 2015 will be to remind Congress that erosions to pay and benefits led to significant readiness problems in the past.

Keep up to date on legislative action that affects you and your world. MOAA's weekly Legislative Update e-newsletter is a great service. The best way to be heard is to call the congressional switchboard at 202-224-3121. When calling this number you will reach a person that will forward you to the office of your Senator or Representative. Most effective are telephone calls made on Monday and Tuesday due to the

voting schedule. Sign up to receive the Legislative Update by visiting www.moaa.org/email. Remember, your voice counts.

National MOAA 800-234-6622 / 703-549-2311 **Legislative affairs legis@moaa.org**

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." ~Margaret Mead

CHAPTER SECRETARY – RON WILSBACH

Minutes of the Charlotte-Metrolina Chapter (NC-04)
Of the Military Officers Association of America
December 7, 2014

President Harley Ellinger called the meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. at the Red Rocks Café. Harley welcomed everyone to the Chapter Christmas Party and reminded the Chapter that this is also Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. In honor of the 2400 plus American service members who lost their lives that day, Harley asked for a moment of silence and reflection. The Invocation was given by Darrell Long and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. Harley introduced LTC (Ret) Dan Caldwell and wife Neta. The 50/50 raffle prize of $30.00 was won by Larry Stawicki.

Officer Reports:

1st VP – (Ron Morgan): Ron advised that the next meeting will be January 18th when the new officers will be installed. Program speaker will be Col. (Ret) Jeri Graham, President of the North Carolina Council of Chapters, MOAA. She will install the newly elected Chapter Officers. Ron has invited Congressman Pittenger to speak during 2015. Ron said that Jay Garbus will be taking over the program chairmanship in January and asked members to be on the lookout for individuals who may be interesting guest speakers. Ron Morgan told the Chapter that we attained 27 new members during 2014. He stated that retention is a big part of an active chapter. Ron told the members that this past week he sent about 30 letters or emails to members delinquent in their dues from 2013 and earlier. The letter/email advised those members that unless they renew their membership with the Chapter by January 2, 2015 they would be dropped from membership (with a few exceptions). A new program to award outstanding JROTC Officer and NCO instructors is being developed throughout North Carolina. More information to follow. Ron said that on December 1, 2014 he sent a solicitation letter to all Chapter members for funds to increase the Chapter's scholarship program. Ron requested that members provide the names of individuals, organizations and businesses that may be potential donors. The goal for funding the program is $25,000.

3rd VP –Legislative Affairs (Gloria Scienski): Gloria told the chapter that a joint conference committee of House and Senate has reached agreement on the 2015 Defense Authorization Bill. The three main items in the bill effecting personnel are the level of pay raise, housing allowances and pharmacy fee increases. She also told members that the year 2015 legislation will be challenging with sequestration

requiring deep cuts to the Defense Department Budget. Gloria also reminded members to be diligent about sending MOAA recommended letters/emails to Congressional members when requested by Legislative Updates or MOAA Military Officer Magazine.

Secretary Report - (Ron Wilsbach): The minutes of the November Chapter meeting, November 16, 2014 were approved with no changes.

Treasure's Report: (Ron Wilsbach): Ron reported that the General Fund has a balance of $4037.06 and the Scholarship Fund has a balance of $1524.17. There were no questions regarding the report.

Newsletter - (Carol Morgan): Carol requested inputs for the January Newsletter by December 23rd. She also asked that members provide biographical inputs to feature in upcoming editions.

Old Business:

Fund Raiser – (Larry Stawicki): Larry has just seven tickets remaining from the AutoBell Carwash fund raiser.

Announcements: Harley requested members to go onto our Website, review and make suggestions and/or corrections to improve the site. Ron Morgan advised that Chuck Martin is now the MOAA Representative to Congressman Mulvaney in the State of South Carolina. He advised that the Chapter will be applying to USAA for a $300.00 grant to co-host an event with Charlotte Bridge Home during 2015. Harley explained that the money from USAA is a once a year grant that must be used by the chapter within the community for outreach of military issues and cannot be used within the Chapter.

Ron Morgan told members that volunteers for committees will be sought during the coming year. Harley thanked the members for their very generous participation in the **Toys For Tots Program.** He reminded the Chapter that the next Board Meeting would be at the Red Rocks Café on January 7, 2015 and the next Chapter meeting would be January 18, 2015. The next NC Council of Chapters meeting will be in New Bern on January 16th and 17th. Harley reminded members of the Statewide Convention in Cashiers, NC on June 11-14, 2015 and asked for participation.

Harley introduced John Kan, Keyboard Instrumentalist who provided Christmas music during the meal and for the carol sing along after dinner.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Ron Wilsbach, Secretary

ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS:

Future Meeting Dates – The dates for chapter meetings in Spring 2015 are:

- January 18
- February 15
- March 15
- April 12
- May 17
- **June 11-14, 2015 – NC Council of Chapters Convention, High Hampton Inn, Cashiers NC**

NC-04 CHARLOTTE-METROLINA CHAPTER
Of the Military Officers Association of America
ENROLLMENT/RENEWAL FORM

New Member? _____ Renewal? _____

First Name _____ Middle Initial ____ Last Name _____

Rank _____ Branch _____ Spouse's Name _____

Address: _____
Street

_____
City State Zip code

E-Mail Address _____ Phone No. _____

I would like to receive my newsletter by: _____ US mail _____ E-mail

National MOAA Member? Yes ___ No ___
Membership No. _____
(Found above your first name on magazine mailing label)

*Enclosed is my check for $25.00
$10.00 for Surviving Spouses
Mail to: Charlotte-Metrolina Chapter, MOAA
P.O. Box 31394
Charlotte, NC 28231-1394

Scholarship Donation: _____ Receipt: Yes ___ No ___

Membership Requirements: Commissioned and Warrant Officers of the seven uniformed services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and U.S. Public Health Service) and the reserve and other components of these services may become regular members. Widows and widowers of any deceased individual, who would, if living, are eligible for membership as auxiliary members. Regular members must hold and maintain membership in both the national organization as well as the local chapter. Auxiliary members are encouraged but not required to hold both memberships.

Please join us at the
Biennial Statewide Convention
11-14 June 2015 at the
High Hampton Inn and Country Club – Cashiers, NC

Every two years, we gather together and do something very special in a particularly welcoming venue. The past two NCCOC State Conventions have been held on cruise ships. This time, we wanted to stay "home" and thus we looked at a variety of great places from mountains to the coast. We selected the *High Hampton Inn and Country Club* which has a fantastic reputation for being a most welcoming and luxurious mountain locale, with great dining, amenities and many opportunities for great exploring (www.highhamptoninn.com) We're planning on lots of camaraderie and just a small amount of quarterly business time. This event is for ALL MOAA members and their families and friends with a goal of *Connecting, Learning and Building* our organization and certainly making wonderful memories. We're on the National MOAA calendar and have invited a great group of Very Special People to join us from MOAA and the Great State of North Carolina.

REGISTRATION FORM

Member Name_____ **Name on Badge**_____

Spouse/Guest Name_____ **Name on Badge**_____

Address_____ **City, State, Zip**_____

Telephone Home_____ **Cell**_____ **Email**_____

Dietary Restrictions _____ **Accessibility Requirements**_____

If single, do you want a roommate? **Do you want help finding a roommate?**

Prices: Couple or 2 sharing room $979/Single $849 . Price includes room, all meals, taxes, fees and gratuities.

Deposit of $100 / per couple or $50 for single - due 15 October 2014. The balance will be due 15 March 2015.
Please make checks payable to : MOAA/NCCOC
Mail to the NCCOC Treasurer: COL Ed Baisden, USA (Ret)
2000 Country Club Court, Sanford, NC 27332

Please contact COL Jeri Graham, USA (Ret) with any questions or concerns at (910) 616-3487 or email: jigrahamusa@gmail.com Please check www.moaa-nc.org for information and updates.