

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS MOAA CHAPTER

January – February 2021

SOUND OFF!



Woo Pig Soobie

The NWA Chapter of MOAA is 501(c)(3) non-profit organization (Tax ID #47-5390089) whose mission is to benefit members of the uniformed services, their families and survivors and to advocate for a strong national defense, while providing needed support to the community and its members. More information is at our website below.

Chapter Web Site – www.moaa.org/chapter/northwestarkansas

Arkansas Council Web Site - www.moaa-arkansas.org

MOAA Take Action web address – <https://takeaction.moaa.org/>

CHAPTER LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE (LOE) AWARDS



5-STAR

2008 2009 2010
2012 2016 2017
2018



4-STAR

2011 2014
2015

COLONEL MARVIN J. HARRIS COMMUNICATIONS AWARD



5-STAR
2015



5-STAR
2016



5-STAR
2017



5-STAR
2018

CHAPTER OFFICERS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Pres– COL Brad Welch, USA (Ret)
1st VP- COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret)
Tres – LTC Michael Dillingham, USA (Ret)
Legislative–Col Dan Mumaugh, USAF(Ret)
Scholarship–CAPT Steve Unger USN (Ret)
Public Rel. - LTC David Phillips, USA (Ret)

Past Pres- Lt Col Buster McCall, USAF (Ret)
2nd VP - **VACANT**
Secy – CDR Sam Sansom, USN (Ret)
Personal Affairs– LTC John Rownak, USA (Ret)
Mbrship–CDR Sam Sansom, USN (Ret)
ROTC Liaison-COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Greetings Chapter Members and welcome to 2021. Hopefully this year will return us to a time of meeting together and sharing each other's company. 2020 ended quite badly for me personally and I truly appreciate all the cards and prayers of concern regarding the passing of my father. Sadly 2021 did not start off well either as I lost two uncles within three days of each other in mid-January leaving my mother without her husband and two brothers for support. She does have two sisters and other family living within her immediate area, but I will maintain an even more regular presence to see to her welfare.

Now for more upbeat news. **Thank you, thank you, thank you** to Mike Dillingham for stepping up and assuming the role of Chapter Treasurer, David Phillips for taking the reins from 1st VP Bob Crawford as our Chapter Public Relations Officer, and Steve Unger for volunteering to lead our Chapter's Scholarship Committee. We **still have an open 2nd VP position** needing to be filled, but the response to my plea a few months ago is greatly appreciated.

Thank you to all those that have paid their yearly Chapter dues. As it stands, over 70% of our Members have paid bringing our coffers to a very healthy level which will enable us to do the good work this Chapter is known for.

Gentlemen, a friendly reminder that Valentine's Day is rapidly approaching us. Don't forget that special lady that makes sure your tie is straight, your household is joyful, and your life complete.

Never Stop Serving!

Brad Welch

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (PART DUEX):

(By popular demand, rerun from last newsletter)

This is a difficult, but I believe an absolutely necessary "second" message I feel my duty to give.

We, as leaders, all planned our operations much the same way...“Prepare for the worst. Hope for the best.” During the last couple of Chapter Board meetings, as our official business was wrapping up, our discussion wandered into a discourse regarding the pandemic-induced hardships, social unrest, and related political turmoil that is roiling our country. As difficult as this last year has been, some of us believe even more and maybe worse trouble is on the way -- particularly in light of how the November election continues to unfold.

No matter which side of the political aisle you are on, we as professional military leaders, who have been educated and trained to see potential flash points perhaps better than many of our fellow countrymen, must view the future with a good degree of trepidation. Our experience and our training should cause our “early warning systems” to start illuminating amber and red lights. We should start to prepare ourselves and our families for what might be tough times ahead.

To be absolutely clear, I am **not** making a political statement nor am I alerting you to partisan action. I **am** alerting you that it may be time to take simple but vitally important steps to insure you can get by if things start to get out of hand in the days ahead.

By “...*out of hand*...” I mean that if civil unrest starts to erupt in communities across the country due to any number of inflamed passions, fragile supply chains could start to stress and people begin to panic. We have all seen this earlier this year and if it starts to happen again, it could be much worse than it was in the spring. We need to prepare.

Preparations should include “...*simple but vitally important*...” things like:

- Having a few months (**yes, a few months**) of food, soaps/cleaners, personal care supplies, and other consumables stored up. Do not forget your pets’ needs.
- Insuring you have an adequate supply of medicine (prescription and over the counter) **for a few months**. Again, don’t forget about Fido and Fluffy.
- Building or purchasing a robust first aid/trauma kit.
- Keeping your vehicle(s) fully fueled. And keeping extra fuel on hand if you can do it safely. Perhaps a spare battery and extra motor oil are called for as well.
- Having a reliable “Emergency/Weather Radio” – battery and plug-in powered.
- Laying in a good supply of batteries of various sizes to power various devices and flashlights/LED-type lanterns.
- And if you can afford it -- obtaining/purchasing a backup power source.
- Establishing a solid network of family and friends upon whom you can rely for

help and know how to contact them in an emergency.

I trust you know that our Chapter is a one of those networks upon which you can depend, but don't forget about your Church as well. It would be wise to have this same frank discussion with your congregation. As a rural community, many members have resources that don't immediately come to mind. One of my church-goers raises chickens. This, in normal times, is an innocuous fact, but when supply chains fail, it is nice to know where one might get fresh eggs. Sharing of resources can bridge those gaps.

Of course the things noted above are far from being an all-inclusive list of "must haves", but such a supply would constitute a very good starting package should widespread trouble ensue over the next weeks or months.

On behalf of your MOAA Chapter Board, I offer this Be Prepared message. As with our motto, we as brothers and sisters in arms "Never Stop" being family. We spent years (heck, entire careers!) prepared to act and take care of each other whenever danger lurked. It is indeed sad to have to say that there may be dangerous times ahead for our country – the warning signals are flashing. So out of an abundance of professional affection and respect, I advise we all place preparedness at the forefront. To do less is to invite potential unnecessary hardship.

May God bless you and your family.

Never Stop Serving! Brad Welch, Colonel, USA, Retired

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT REPORT:

COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret) is the Chapter's First Vice President.

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

I only open the First Vice President's Report with a paragraph about the Second Vice President because we are still looking for a Chapter member to volunteer to serve as Second Vice President.

The volunteer will serve as Second Vice President until December 31, 2021 and then will be the First Vice President through all of 2022 and 2023. On January 1, 2024 the volunteer will begin her/his two year term as President of our Chapter (2024 – 2025). If you would like more information about this service opportunity, please contact President Brad Welch (colbradwelch@gmail.com), 1st VP Bob Crawford (crawforn@hotmail.com), or Secretary Sam Sansom (samayeam@pgtc.com).

COL MARVIN J. HARRIS COMMUNICATIONS AWARD

Due date for our self-nomination for the COL Harris Communications Award was February 1st, but we were ahead of schedule by submitting our nomination on January 7th. The award is for excellence in communications via newsletter and/or website. Our submission was for our newsletter. The very, very best Chapters receive a five-star award. Above-average Chapters receive a four-star award. Criteria for the newsletter ranges from information about MOAA National to legislative initiatives to benefits of joining MOAA and the Chapter. In addition to submitting a copy of our November-December 2020 newsletter, our input included copies of our Recruitment Letter, Overdue Dues Letter, and our Chapter's Membership Roster.

2021 LEVELS OF EXCELLENCE AWARD SUBMISSION

The 2021 Levels of Excellence Award is one of MOAA's most prestigious awards earned by self-nominating Chapters. The award is a look back on the 2020 calendar year programs, initiatives, and successful experiences. The award nomination is usually due on May 1st each year. The submission includes both objective and subjective sections. The objective section includes questions about percent of Chapter membership who are national MOAA members, whether Chapter has a Legislative Affairs board member, if there is a Membership board member, does Chapter have a Surviving Spouse Liaison, and if the Chapter belongs to the State's Council of Chapters. The subjective section asks about grassroots advocacy, community engagement, recruiting, retention, leadership succession plan, and significant accomplishments. The very best Chapters receive a five-star award while the above-average Chapters receive a four-star award. We are currently on track to complete our award self-nomination prior to the submission deadline.

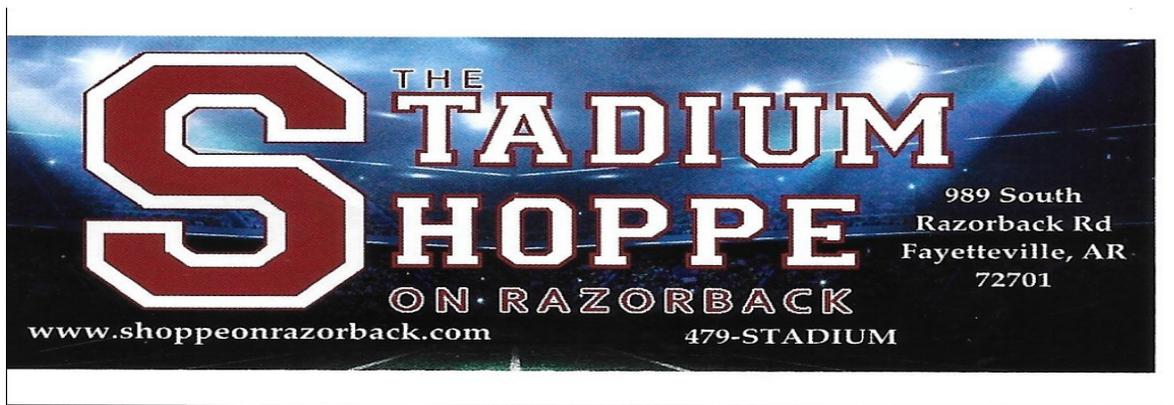
FEBRUARY DINNER MEETING: Regrettably our February Dinner meeting at Mermaids Restaurant on Friday, 19 February 2021, has to be canceled due to current flu limitations. We're hoping to have our 16 April 2021 dinner meeting as schedule and will advise everyone.

HOW STONG IS YOUR CHAPTER?: Some folks might think since the Chapter hasn't had the ability to have dinner meetings that the Chapter has weakened a bit. Your Chapter Newsletter Staff is hear to tell you "poppycock!"

Your Chapter is the **second largest MOAA Chapter in Arkansas** with 69 members, the most we've seen in a great number of years.

Dues payment are always an indicator of an organization's strength. Your Chapter is stronger than ever in this area as **71% have paid their 2021 dues.** This leaves **19 members who haven't paid** their 2021 dues. We know with the New Year, some things are put on the back burner.

In case you're one of those 19 folks, here's all you need to know to submit your \$25 annual Chapter dues. Make your \$25 check payable to NWA MOAA Chapter and mail it to Michael Dillingham, 4356 Oakmont Drive, Fayetteville, AR 72701. If in doubt as to whether you paid you dues, drop me (samayeam@pgtc.com) a line, I keep pretty good records.



ONE VACANCY STILL EXISTS: As Bob Crawford mentioned in his 1st VP message above, another strength of our Chapter for the past 15 years or so has been the succession process of leadership at the President's level. That is, the 2nd VP is a two-year tour and then rotates into the 1st VP position for two years and then becomes Chapter President for two years.

This format has worked well as the 2nd VP gets four years of observing the inner workings of the Chapter before becoming President. **Our problem** right now is **we have a vacant 2nd VP position.** We can't afford to break the succession process and thus a **member is urgently** needed to fill the role.

Could that be you? Call Brad at 417-227-0141 or drop him a line at colbradwelch@gmail.com. You could also call Bob Crawford our 1st VP at 501-240-7562 or drop him a line at crawforr@hotmail.com. Sam is also always standing by to receive a call (479-761-3772) or drop him a line at samayeam@pgtc.com.

ROTC LIAISON OFFICER (RLO) REPORT: COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret) is the Chapter's RLO and with his ever expanding cadre of volunteers have done some amazing work with the ROTC Detachment at the University of Arkansas. But there's always a need for more help.

FALL COMMISSIONING

Both Army and Air Force ROTC departments conducted “in-person” fall commissioning ceremonies. The Army’s ceremony was on December 17 in the ROTC Drill Hall. Two cadets (Kirby M. Reed and Kaleb Weidel) were commissioned as Second Lieutenants. The Air Force ceremony was on

December 18 in Giffels Auditorium in Old Main. There were three cadets (Landon D. Mays, Walker A. Rosenbaum, and Bryan T. Withers) from the Air Force who were commissioned as Second Lieutenants.

COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret), was our representative at each commissioning. COL Crawford presented 2LT bars, MOAA certificates, and copies of the U.S. Constitution to each cadet being commissioned. Bob also made a few remarks during the ceremony about leadership, professionalism, and the military as a calling.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE

Our Mentorship Program with both Army and Air Force ROTC departments has been put “on hold” due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This would have been our second year of the program. Fortunately, both Army and Air Force commanders have expressed the desire to continue the program once the pandemic is under control and things return to normal (or the New Normal – whatever that looks like). Our current plan is to continue the program during Academic Year 2021-22.

MENTOR VOLUNTEERS

While we wait for the situation to normalize, you can still volunteer to be a mentor. We need to have our mentor line-up established so that we are ready once we get the go ahead. So if you are interested in volunteering or just want to know more information about the mentorship program, please contact our ROTC Liaison Officer – COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret), at 501-240-7562 or crawforr@hotmail.com. Thanks to following Chapter members who have volunteered to be mentors to date:

1. COL Mike Anderson, USA (Ret)
2. COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret)
3. Col Bill Murphey, USAF (Ret)
4. MAJ Shaan Patel, USA (Ret)
5. LTC Chad Quayle, USA (Ret)
6. LTC Tim Rose, USA (Ret)
7. COL Brad Welch, USA (Ret)

OTHER ROTC ACTIVITIES

We will continue to pursue other opportunities for involvement with the ROTC departments. For example, as part of their Annual Awards Ceremony, each department will select one Junior Cadet to receive the MOAA Leadership Award. At least one representative from our Chapter will attend the ceremony to present the award to the awardees. In addition, we will participate in the Spring Commissioning Ceremony in a similar manner as we did in the Fall Commissioning Ceremony last December. We also plan to restore some activities that seemed to be very successful last Academic Year, to include serving on discussion panels during classroom lessons, advertising and attending the UA ROTC Alumni Social on a Friday before a home football game, and inviting one Senior Cadet from each department to our bimonthly dinner meetings. We will do other activities as they emerge.

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER: LTC David Phillips, USA (Ret), is your new Public Relations Officer and here's his report:

CHAPTER NEWS IN ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE

Notice of cancellation of the February dinner has been published in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette in the Sunday, January 31, 2021 edition. The notice doesn't simply announce the cancellation but it also lets the readers know a bit about the Chapter. Besides, *“The NWA Chapter of MOAA is a non-profit organization whose mission is to benefit members of the uniformed services, their families and survivors and to advocate for a strong national defense, while providing needed support to the community and its members.”* The notice also lets folks know that, *“The Chapter is active in a robust Veterans Scholarship Program and the expansion of the Fayetteville National Cemetery. Also, member volunteers coordinate and teach a U.S. flag etiquette program for local 5th grade students. In addition, the Chapter participates in the Northwest Arkansas Veterans Coalition. The Chapter has a close relationship with the University of Arkansas Army and Air Force ROTC departments.”* So as you can see, while the notice mentions the dinner cancellation, it also presents a great picture of what our Chapter does and David

is the POC for those interested in linking up with us.

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS VETERANS COALITION (NWAVC)

The Veteran's Coalition of Northwest Arkansas is not having in-person meetings at this time. Their focus now is emplacing some kiosks funded through the CARES ACT.

UPCOMING EVENT OF INTEREST

The local members of the Navy Seabee Veterans of America are preparing to dedicate a monument at the Veteran's National Cemetery on March 5, 2021 at 14:00 hours. Attendees at the dedication ceremony include our two Seabee Chapter members RADM Jack Buffington, CEC, USN (Ret) and RADM Mike Johnson, CEC, USN (Ret). Our Chapter's Chaplain CDR Sam Sansom, USN (Ret) will present the invocation and benediction prayers. Space availability due to flu compliance may restrict the number of participants. However, an email "blaster" will be sent to the Chapter as more specific information is received.

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS REPORT: Col Dan Mumaugh, USAF (Ret), our Chapter's Legislative Affairs Officer provides us with legislative items of interest.

There is currently and ongoing discussion among some of our Arkansas MOAA Chapters and leaders thereof regarding the advisability of trying to advance a state level (Arkansas) legislative proposal to eliminate state sales tax on all purchases made by 100% disabled former service members. Some of our fellow member/leadership believe it a good time to push for this proposal while others believe it will hamper other issues important to MOAA members at this point. We will keep you updated should any news break on this issue. Our Chapter has not taken any position on this subject to date.

Again, and always, please read your MOAA Magazine - "Advocacy" pages and log on to the MOAA website (moaa.org) to read about MOAA's 2021 legislative priorities and news about how they fare in Washington D C and in individual states.

DEPENDENT ID EXPRIED? The **Armed Forces Reserve Center** located at 6800 Southwest Minuteman Ave., Bentonville is currently closed due to the virus and manning issues. For now, the closest DEERS/ID office is the Air National Guard base at Fort Smith -- Phone is: 479-573-5761. They do accept walk-ins and their hours of operation are: Monday-Friday 7:30 – 4:00, except on Thursday 7:00 – 11:30. Probably won't hurt to call before hand if for nothing else to ascertain their C-19 procedures.

VA HIGHLIGHTS: Even though LTC Michael “Dilly” Dillingham, USA (Ret) graciously stepped up to fill the critical vacancy of Chapter Treasurer, he continues keeping us informed on future items of interest taking place on the VA Hospital and elsewhere in the greater VA system.

VA BENEFITS - Ever wondered exactly what your VA benefits are? You can easily explore VA benefits and find out which ones you and your family may be eligible to receive. It's easy at <https://explore.va.gov/benefits-navigator>

SUPERFLUOUS INFORMATION: You don't know the number of email our Complaints Department received when we forgot to include this section in the last newsletter. Our Proofreading Department found these recent headlines:

New Study On Obesity Looks For Larger Test Group
Hurricane Rips Through Cemetery, Hundreds Dead
Police Begin Campaign To Run Down Jaywalkers
Cold Wave Linked To Temperatures

SERIOUS INFORMATION: The Northwest Arkansas MOAA Chapter is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America which is the nation's largest and most influential non-partisan association of military officers.

MOAA has over 355,000 members worldwide from every branch of service. There are 400+ Chapters throughout the United States. Over 5,000 MOAA members reside in Arkansas served by nine chapters under the umbrella of the Arkansas Council of Chapters. If you know of anyone wanting to join our Chapter just give them Sam's contact information: samayeam@pgtc.com or 761-3772, and he'll take it from there.

**Now and Always
We'll be There.**



1-800-247-2192 • www.moaainsurance.com