

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS MOAA CHAPTER
January – February 2022

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 Linked In - <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12595073/>

Chapter Web Site - [Northwest Ark Chapter \(moaa-arkansas.org\)](http://Northwest Ark Chapter (moaa-arkansas.org))

MOAA Take Action web address – www.moaa.org/takeaction

CHAPTER LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE (LOE) AWARDS



5-STAR

**2008 2009 2010
2012 2016 2017
2018 2020**



4-STAR

**2011 2014
2015**

COLONEL MARVIN J. HARRIS COMMUNICATIONS AWARD



**5-STAR
2015**



**5-STAR
2016**



**5-STAR
2017**



**5-STAR
2018**



**5-STAR
2020**

CHAPTER ELECTED/APPOINTED DIRECTORS & LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Pres– COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret)

1st VP- LTC Jay Stout, USA (Ret)

Tres – LTC Michael Dillingham, USA (Ret)

Legislative–**CAPT Jeff McCune, MSC USN (Ret)**

Scholarship–LTC Jay Stout, USA (Ret)

Public Affairs - LTC David Phillips, USA (Ret)

RNCIC Liaison – Col Merle Williams USAF (Ret)

Flag Education – CPT Cliff Mosier, USA (Ret)

Past Pres- Lt Col Buster McCall, USAF (Ret)

2nd VP – LTC Eli Otonshi, USA (Ret)

Secy – CDR Sam Sansom, USN (Ret)

Pers Affairs– LTC John Rownak, USA (Ret)

Mbrship–CDR Sam Sansom, USN (Ret)

ROTC Liaison-COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret)

NJROTC Liaison-COL Bob Crawford USA Ret

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE – WELCOME TO 2022

Happy New Year!!! Hopefully everyone had a fantastic 2021 and you're looking forward to an amazing 2022. Our Chapter is anxiously anticipating a rewarding and productive new year with all our ongoing programs, some new initiatives which are discussed in this newsletter, and a great lineup of guest speakers at our upcoming Dinners/Meetings.

In January we submitted our self-nomination for MOAA's Col Marvin J. Harris Communications Award. Our chapter has won this award in 5 of the last 6 years and we fully anticipate winning again for 2021. We should receive the results in late Spring or early Summer. The primary factor in the nomination is our Chapter's newsletter. Tremendous thanks to Sam for the hard work he (and his imaginary editorial staff) puts into making our newsletter world class and one of the best in MOAA (if not the best).

Dinner Meetings. We had a fantastic Christmas dinner in December. Seventy-seven signed up to attend, which may be the most we have ever had at one of our dinners. Notably, twenty-five introductions were made of new members, spouses, and guests. Lighthouse choral group from Har-Ber High School gave a spectacular performance of Christmas classic and contemporary songs.



NWA Chapter President COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret), presents a MOAA Certificate of Appreciation to Clint Pianalto, Director of Har-Ber High School Lighthouse Chorus.

In February, make plans to attend our next Dinner meeting on February 18 at Mermaids Restaurant in Fayetteville. Our guest speaker will be MG Kendall Penn, the Adjutant General of the Arkansas National Guard. His message should resonant with all of you as he will give an update about Arkansas National Guard operations, initiatives, and accomplishments. Also, you'll want to meet and get to know the large number of guests and prospective members who have already said they will attend.

Then in April we'll have our Dinner meeting on the 22nd (the 15th is Good Friday) and it's another one you won't want to miss. Capt Erin Stone, JAGC USN (Ret), will be our guest speaker. Erin is the Senior Director for Council and Chapter Affairs at MOAA National. She will certainly have an interesting and informative message for us, so mark your calendars and save the date.

Super excited about a new initiative that the Board discussed at our last meeting. Many prospective members in our area have never been contacted about joining the Chapter and may not even know that there is a local MOAA Chapter. The Board decided to pursue a new program in which we partner with MOAA National to invite all eligible officers (active, former, and retired) in our catchment area to attend "Meet and Greet" sessions (at least two a year) in which we discuss Chapter activities, programs, and benefits of membership. MOAA National can do this even though many of these officers may be (knowingly or unknowingly) on the "No Contact List." If you are interested in participating in this innovative project, please let us know.

Army ROTC Professor of Military Science Rick Frank was promoted to Colonel on January 3, 2022. Great achievement for a remarkable Army officer. Rick has already been selected for 0-6 command and has begun his pre-command courses.

Promotion ceremony for COL Rick Frank, USA, on January 3, 2022. MOAA Chapter President COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret), officiated at Rick's ceremony. On the left is Bob congratulating Rick following the promotion and his oath of office. On the right is COL Rick Frank, USA, with his wife Megan and their four children.



Finally, a “shout out” to our Flag Education team lead by Cliff Mosier. The team has taught over 3,300 students about flag heritage and etiquette so far this school year. Another 2,000+ will be taught before the end of the semester. A second “shout out” to Fayetteville and Springdale American Legions who donated \$300 each to purchase flag pins that are given to the students at the end of each class. With the matching \$300 from our Chapter, we have purchased enough pins for the remainder of this school year and the beginning of next year.

Hope everyone is able to stay healthy. Please make sure you are taking appropriate safety and health precautions in your daily activities and if you need any assistance, reach out to a Board member to let us know.

Bob

President, NWA Chapter

CHRISTMAS DINNER AFTER ACTION REPORT

WOW! Whether you read that frontwards or backwards, it's the same – WOW. That just about sums up our evening at Mermaids on Friday, 17 December 2021. Bob gave us a great wrap-up on the dinner meeting in his President's Message above but there were a couple of other items worth mentioning as well.

At the Christmas dinner a new tradition has been established. Your 1st VP LTC Jay Stout, USA (Ret), volunteered to setup a “Missing Man Table” and provide the Chapter with a description of its significance. Jay also prepared Christmas Program memento brochures for our tables. The following pictures of the memorable “Missing Man Table” display (left) and dinner program brochure (right) were provided by one our Chapter guests, Jenny Kuckens:



The final event at the Christmas dinner besides enjoying a great meal was the installation of our new Chapter Officers for the next two years. These are your officers: Chapter President COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret); 1st Vice

President LTC Jay Stout, USA (Ret); 2nd Vice President LTC Eli Otoshi, USA (Ret); Treasurer LTC Mike Dillingham, USA (Ret); and Secretary CDR Richard “Sam” Sansom, USN (Ret).

There was even a little humor at the dinner meeting. As many of you know when Sam is given a “few minutes” to speak he has a tendency to exercise of bit of a time oratory license. At the dinner he very enthusiastically commended the U.S. Naval Academy Midshipman's defeat of the Military Academy Black Knights in their annual football game. It was indeed close, 17-14, but a win is a win. Sam forgot to mention that it's highly unusual for a 3-8 team (Navy) to overcome an 8-3 team (Army). Maybe Sam felt enthusiastic and bold because he had previously visited the area he where left his hat: (picture by Jenny Kuckens)



FEBRUARY DINNER SPECIFICS

WHAT: NWA MOAA Chapter Dinner

WHEN: Friday, 18 February 2022, starting at 6:00 P.M. social hour followed by dinner at 7:00 P.M.

WHERE: Mermaids Restaurant, 2217 N College Ave, Fayetteville, AR 72703

MENU: Chef's special buffet

COST: \$30 per person

PROGRAM: MGEN Kendall Penn, TAG, ARNG

ATTIRE: Completely casual (relax, enjoy)

RSVP: Not later than Wednesday, 9 February 2022 Contact our 1st VP Jay Stout at (jaystout12@yahoo.com or 973-3717)

REMINDER: If you RSVP for the dinner and end up being a “no show,” you will still be responsible for paying for your meal. Also if you RSVP and cancel after the Wednesday, 9 February 2022, closing date, you will still be responsible for paying for your meal. “Nothing Personal just Business.”



CHAPTER “REACHES OUT” TO TOUCH MORE PEOPLE: Your Board of Directors is always trying to find ways to “reach out” and touch more people to let them know about our Chapter. Chapter 1st VP LTC Jay Stout, USA (Ret) took the lead and has submitted the following:

CHAPTER’S LINKEDIN PAGE:

LinkedIn is a popular social network with a specific purpose. While others like Facebook and Twitter focus on your personal life, LinkedIn is all about professional networking. So, we have entered social media by creating a page on LinkedIn and want to invite you to join our growing network. Go to this link to join “Northwest Arkansas Chapter – MOAA”:

<https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12595073/>

We strongly encourage you to send this link to your friends that have a military background as well. The goal is for this site to enhance the overall effectiveness of our Award-Winning Newsletter and to provide more information on the areas of significance to our chapter and MOAA.

As with any social media algorithms, interactions are the key to success. When you connect, scroll down the page and “Like” the posts you enjoy and if you feel compelled to do so, make a comment; we get more exposure!

So, please connect with us and let us know what you think of our page. We'd love to hear from you and welcome any suggestions for improvement.

ROTC LIAISON OFFICER (RLO) REPORT: COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret) is the Chapter's RLO.

AROTC and AFROTC at University of Arkansas:

Army Fall Commissioning Ceremony. Army ROTC commissioned three cadets on December 17th. NWA President Bob Crawford was the guest speaker where he spoke about the meaning of the oath of office, soldiers as an officer's credentials, and the importance of family to a military career. LTC Jay Stout, USA (Ret), 1st Vice President of the NWA Chapter, presented a copy of the U.S. Constitution, MOAA Certificate of Achievement, and 2LT rank to each of the new Lieutenants.



COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret), is the Keynote speaker at the Army ROTC Commissioning ceremony of December 17, 2021.



LTC Jay Stout, USA (Ret), makes presentations to new Army 2LT (L to R) Nathan Phillabaum, Logan Matthews, and Willy Pegues.

Air Force Fall Commissioning Ceremony. Air Force ROTC commissioned two cadets on December 17th at the Air and Military Museum in Fayetteville. NWA Chapter member Col Gary Culp, USAF (Ret), (pictured below) made brief remarks during the ceremony as part of the MOAA presentation of mementos.



Mentoring. Our Chapter's mentorship program with senior cadets from both the Army and Air Force departments is going strong. Mentors have begun sessions with their cadets for the Spring Semester at the University of Arkansas. A voluntary In Progress Review (IPR) will be conducted soon for all mentors where their lessons learned from the Fall Semester can be shared.

PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER: LTC David Phillips, USA (Ret), is the Chapter's Public Relations Officer as well as our Representative to the Northwest Arkansas Veterans Coalition. The majority of David's Public Relation (PR) efforts are issued in the form of Press Releases to a wide audience of Northwest Arkansas news sources. He also provides a steady stream of Chapter news and special event reports to MOAA National Headquarters. These submissions routinely appear in the MOAA Weekly Newsletter and the MOAA Military Officer magazine. To say he's one busy guy would be an understatement. However, David will never turn down inputs involving Chapter members and their activities in the community. Contact [David](#) and let him know what you're doing.

NWA VETERANS COALITION REPORT: Camp Connect implementation continues with 35 of 65 machines currently installed. Most of the machines are at DMV's. A new one will soon be placed at the U of A in the Veterans Resources Center. Civilians may also use these machines as some benefits are not military specific.

Camp Connect is a resource and communication hub utilizing interactive and informative kiosks located in common places frequented by Military and Veterans. Resources include; physical and mental health, career, education and training, legal, family and child services, emergency assistance.

Veterans Coalition President Pete Rathmell also initiated a discussion on how best achieve coalition goals in 2022. The next meeting is scheduled for February 1, 2022, at the Benton County Veterans Service Office (VSO).

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS REPORT: CAPT Jeff McCune, MSC, USN (Ret), recently relieved Col Dan Mumaugh, USAF (Ret), at an impressive Change of Command. Jeff stated that Dan provided a very thorough turnover and he said he's "hitting the decks a running" in his role of our Legislative Affairs Officer. He has the following items for your information:

HAVE YOU ASKED YOURSELF THIS? One of the questions asked by new members is, "What can MOAA do for me?" Although there are many answers, one answer is that MOAA acts as our lobbyist on Capitol Hill. This year MOAA has established fourteen Legislative Priorities for 2022. Some of these priorities are carry-overs from previous years. Here is what is being focused on for 2022:

Sustain pay rises and adequate BAH for the troops and COLA raises for retirees.

Ensure the Coast Guard, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and Public Health Service continue to receive pay during a government shutdown.

Protect the value of the military health care benefit.

Protect the Military Health System pharmacy benefit, and achieve flexibility in TRICARE pharmacy co-pays.

Address barriers to accessing care within the MHS, including TRICARE coverage gaps and mental health care access challenges.

Protect family support programs, and ensure military-provided services (housing, PCS, child care, youth programs financial counseling) are readily available and meet standards for quality and costs.

Achieve equity of benefit, protections, and administrative support for Guard/Reserve members consistent with their active-duty counterparts.

Sustain Veterans Health Administration (VHA) foundational missions and services.

Reform the presumptive process to support veterans claiming service-connected disabilities for toxic exposures.

Achieve concurrent receipt of service-earned retirement and VQA disability pay.

Protect full military honors and burial at Arlington National Cemetery for those

currently eligible.

Improve survivors' benefits.

Support a quality transition experience from active duty to veteran status for all service members.

Recognize the pandemic continues to affect the lives of our service members.

Over this year I would like to hear what you think of these priorities, and more importantly which ones you are passionate about and would like to have more information. It is my job in the Chapter to make sure your voice is heard, both locally and nationally. Drop me a line at: mccune10@yahoo.com.

SBP-DIC OFFSET UPDATE: Surviving spouses whose benefits increased last year as part of the phased elimination of the Survivor Benefit Plan-Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBP-DIC) offset will see another increase on February 1, 2022.

Language in the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) will end the offset by 2023. Here's the breakdown:

In 2021, all surviving spouses affected by the change should have seen their SBP offset cut to no more than two-thirds of their DIC payment.

This year, beginning with their February 1, 2022 payment, surviving spouses should see their SBP offset cut to no more than one-third of their DIC payment. In 2023, the offset will be removed entirely.

All surviving spouses eligible for the Special Survivors Indemnity Allowance (SSIA) will continue to receive that benefit in 2022, according to [the Defense Finance and Accounting Service \(DFAS\)](#). The maximum SSIA benefit is \$346 per month for 2022, per DFAS, or equal to the gross SBP amount (if SBP is less than \$346 a month). SSIA will no longer be paid in 2023, when the full offset is removed.

Surviving spouses affected by this change should have received a letter from DFAS in December with individualized estimates of your upcoming benefit payments. [Click here](#) for a sample letter, which includes links for more information on eligibility verification, managing your benefits online, tax statements, and the [DFAS Survivor SBP Newsletter](#).

Beneficiaries with questions about the SBP-DIC changes can contact DFAS at (800) 321-1080.

COLA WATCH: The latest COLA can be found at this [LINK](#).

ID CARD EXPIRED, WHAT NOW?: What should I do if my or maybe my dependent's ID has expired? Glad you asked because there's a simple and close by solution. **The Armed Forces Reserve Center located at 6800 Southwest Minuteman Ave., Bentonville is your best bet to get it renewed. They can be contacted at (501) 212-7421.** It's first-come/first-served with no requirement for an appointment and they are open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday with slightly different hours on a couple of the days. **Give them a call before heading out!** This is certainly much closer than Fort Smith and not as busy. Joyce Roberts and Margaret Barron recently renewed their ID cards at the AFRC Bentonville and they said it was a very pleasant experience.

EMPLOYER SUPPORT TO THE GUARD AND RESERVE (ESGR):

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) is a Department of Defense organization established to promote cooperation and understanding between Service members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from the employee's military commitment. The ESGR Ombudsman Services Program provides neutral counseling and mediation of issues relating to compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Imagine you are a young individual that loves his/her hometown and family, but patriotism runs high, and you want to serve your country. So, you join the National Guard in your hometown. Your employer doesn't support your service and tells you he/she won't promise you'll have a job when you return from deployment. This could determine the fate of your military career. ESGR will fight for you!

Our Chapter will explore how we can be a strong ally for the ESGR as many of our members serve or have served in the Reserve Component. We want to help them by recommending and supporting those employers that have gone "above and beyond" in support of their employees that serve.

This support will allow of the National Guard and Reserves to continue to defend and protect our country and not have to worry if they will have a job or not when they return from service. We also know that this doesn't only affect the service member but greatly impacts those left behind picking up the slack and managing all demands until their loved one's return.

VA HIGHLIGHTS: LTC Michael Dillingham, USA (Ret), Chapter Treasurer, also keeps us informed on future items of interest taking place at the VA Hospital and elsewhere in the greater VA system. Many of the items Mike

provides need quick dissemination so they are sent to all Chapter members via an email “blaster.” Other items are not a time critical and they're published in the newsletter.

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>

VA HISTORY OFFICE: If you wanted to create an album of your family's history but were limited to 100 items, what would you put in it and what would you leave out? These were the central questions that the VA History staff asked while compiling the “History of VA in 100 Objects” virtual exhibit.

The exhibit tells the history of the nation's efforts to honor and reward Veterans for their services by spotlighting individual objects that illuminate key parts of that story. Two new objects are planned to be added each week.

The VA History Staff invites readers to submit their own suggestions of objects to include in the exhibit. Send your ideas to VAHistoryOffice@va.gov. If they use your proposal they will give you full credit in the text when your object is published on the website. You can visit the history site at the following link:

https://www.va.gov/HISTORY/100_Objects/Gallery.asp

VA BOARD OF VETERANS' APPEALS: For those considering a VA disability application submission, check the following VA Board of Veterans' Appeals website for useful information as to why an application was denied, remanded, or granted. <https://search.usa.gov/search?affiliate=bvadections>

At this website, enter search terms, such as tinnitus, agent orange, kidney cancer, Parkinson's, in the search box. This will display a list of all the VA citations for review that include the requested term(s). These citations will explain the disability application review Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Reasons and Bases for Findings and Conclusions. The reasons/explanations provided in these citations might help you to provide the type of information that could assist with your application's approval.

SUPERFULOUS INFORMATION: What would our newsletter be without a little jocularly? I think, based on the number of inputs we receive from our members, you enjoy this section more than any of the others (just saying). By the way, that's why we put it near the end of the newsletter. Here we go, and who doesn't like puns:

Dad, are we pyromaniacs? Yes, we arson.

How much did the pirate pay to get his ears pierced? A buccaneer.

I went to the toy store and asked the assistant where the Schwarznegger dolls are and he replied, "Aisle B, back."

I got over my addiction to chocolate, marshmallows, and nuts. I won't lie, it was a rocky road.

What do you call a pig with laryngitis? Disgruntled.

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.

WHAT OUR CHAPTER DOES

Network with fellow officers; support our local communities; support a Veterans Scholarship Program; teach U.S. Flag Education to 5th graders; involved with Arkansas ROTC/JROTC Programs; and influence pro-military legislation at the State level.

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.

The newsletter is provided to Chapter members electronically via email and is also available electronically on our NWA Chapter Linked-In group and the NWA Chapter Website ([Northwest Ark Chapter \(moaa-arkansas.org\)](http://Northwest Ark Chapter (moaa-arkansas.org))) Those unable to receive the newsletter electronically are mailed a "hard copy" of the newsletter.

