

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS MOAA CHAPTER

January – February 2024

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

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

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

MOAA Advocacy link - <https://moaa.quorum.us/issueareas/>

CHAPTER LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE (LOE) AWARDS



5-STAR

2008 2009 2010

2012 2016 2017

2018 2020 2021 2022



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



5-STAR
2021



5-STAR
2022

CHAPTER ELECTED/APPOINTED DIRECTORS & LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Pres– LTC Jay Stout, USA (Ret)

1st VP- Lt Col Mike Lewis, USAF (Ret)

Tres – LTC Billy Robison, USA (Ret)

Legislative–CAPT Steve Unger. USN (Ret)

Scholarship–MAJ Marty Michna, USA (Fmr)

Pub Relations–CW3 David Dunn, USA (Ret)

Flag Education – LTC Jay Stout, USA (Ret)

RNCIC Liaison – Col Merle Williams, USAF (Ret)

Surviving Spouse Liaison – MAJ John Cascamo, USAF (Ret)

Past Pres- COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret)

2nd VP – **VACANT (HELP! HELP! HELP!)**

Secy – CDR Sam Sansom, USN (Ret)

Pers Affairs– LTC John Rownak, USA (Ret)

Membership– CDR Sam Sansom, USN (Ret)

ROTC Liaison– COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret)

NJROTC Liaison– COL Bob Crawford USA Ret

(NEW OFFICERS IN RED!)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:



Hello members, I hope your 2024 is starting off well and that it will be a great year for our chapter. 2023 was a great year and as your new President, I intend on continuing the momentum the chapter has experienced. I want to express my gratitude COL Bob Crawford as well as the Board of Directors who were responsible for the growth of the chapter and the successful events throughout the year. The tasks that need to be addressed by the Board of Directors are the review of our Chapter By-Laws and to establish a Chapter Budget for 2024. Both documents are the basis for the success of any organization of this nature.

Filling Chapter Board vacancies is another priority, and I would like you all to join me in welcoming the following members to our Board of Directors:

CW3 David Dunn, USA (Ret) to the position of Public Affairs Officer
MAJ John Cascamo, ARNG to the position of Surviving Spouse Liaison
MAJ Marty Mitcha, USA (Fmr) to the position of Scholarship Coordinator

I am encouraged how 2024 is starting out and believe it will make us stronger as we continue our mission to protect the rights and interests of all chapter members from the eight uniformed services, their families, and survivors; that has served our nation honorably.

This challenge, I accept and appreciate your confidence in me and the Board of Directors. I feel this chapter is the most influential group of individuals for veterans' affairs that exists in Northwest Arkansas, and we can bring change with our voices. So, it is with great enthusiasm I look forward to 2024 as your President building on the successes of 2023. I also want to stress to you all that I want to hear your comments and suggestions regarding the chapter so please feel free to reach out to me, with email being the best option.

BEST NEW YEAR DUES START EVER! You don't see the words BEST and DUES and EVER together in the same sentence very often in our newsletters. But the start of 2024 has indeed been the best ever for a chapter with 132 members! With many folks paying their dues at the Christmas dinner meeting, plus those that paid in advance and with those mailing in their 2024 dues, we're already at nearly 50% paid for the year. Remember, even though prices have exploded in many areas of our lives, our Chapter dues (\$25) haven't changed since 2016. As always, of the \$25 Chapter dues, \$15 goes to the General Operating Fund and \$10 goes to the Veterans Scholarship Fund. So, you can pay your dues via Zella using your bank's app (nwa.moaa.treasurer@gmail.com) or make your \$25 check payable to NWA MOAA Chapter and put it into the mail addressed to Billy Robison, 16450 Hook Dr. Siloam Springs, 72761.

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret) is the Chapter's Immediate Past President and here is his report:

NEW MEMBERS INTRODUCED AT THE DECEMBER DINNER. Wonderful news that our Chapter welcomed seven (7) new members at the December dinner.

COL Allen Baker, USA (Ret), is a 1976 graduate of the University of Arkansas. He served 35 years in Army Aviation. Allen is the father of AROTC PMS LTC Sidney Roberts.

Maj John Cascamo, USAF (Ret), received his commission via the National Guard's Officer Training School. He served in the Air National Guard for 23 years and had 6 years in the Navy.

COL Aaron Cater is a 2002 graduate of the University of Arkansas. He has 27 years in the Army Reserves; 5 years enlisted and 22 years commissioned. Aaron is a Logistician.

COL David Pelkey, USA (Ret), graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1993. He has 30 years of service in the Infantry, Psychological Ops, and Logistics.

LTC Sidney Roberts is a 2007 graduate of the University of Arkansas and currently serves as Professor of Military Science in Army ROTC. She is a career Aviation officer.

Lt Col (Chaplain) Steve Rogers, USAF (Ret), received a direct commission into the Chaplain's Corps in 1993. He served a total of 25 years and retired in 2014.

LTC Bob Stewart, USA (Ret), is a 1966 graduate of the University of Oklahoma. As an Ordnance officer, he served 26 years. Bob and Pat are the grandparents of Chapter member Juli Plank.



LTC Sidney Roberts and
COL Allen Baker



Maj John and Katherine
Cascamo



COL Aaron and Lyndsey
Cater



COL David and Melanie
Pelkey



Lt Col (Chaplain) Steve and
Diane Rogers



LTC Bob and Pat
Stewart

MEMBERSHIP. WOW, does our Chapter continue to grow? At the end of 2023 we had 136 members, which is an increase of 37 during 2023, and a 137% growth in the past two years. Our numbers give us a tremendous foundation and lots of talent to support community service activities in Northwest Arkansas. Our membership motto, "Every member is a Recruiting Officer," has served us well. If you meet someone eligible to join MOAA and the Chapter, please send Sam the contact info.

CHAPTER BREAKFAST. RECORD ATTENDANCE! Twenty-six members, spouses, and prospective members joined each other for the bimonthly breakfast on February 3rd we met at Village Inn Restaurant. The food was delicious, but even better were the conversations we had with each other about family, military careers, civilian jobs, current events, and humorous personal experiences. Two new members joined us for their first Chapter event, Lawrence Anderson, and Ralph Ledgerwood. Once prospective member, Marsha Messer, also joined us. Twenty-three of the attendees are pictured below. Not pictured are Hope Benedict, Dale Benedict (Hope's dad), and Betty Anderson (Lawrence's wife). **MARK YOUR CALENDARS:** Our next Chapter breakfast is tentatively planned for Saturday, March 16,2024.



Kevin Long (Frank's son), Frank Long and Bob Stewart



Lawrence Anderson (new member) and Dick Huie



Sam Sansom, Ralph Ledgerwood (new member) and Less Carroll



Doug Newcomb, Clark Middleton, and Madeleine Middleton



Jack King, Merle Williams, Dave Bowman,
and Mike Johnson



Marsha Messer (prospective member) and
Bob Callier



Bill Murphey and John Rownak



Jack Buffington, David Ormsby,
Cliff Mosier and me

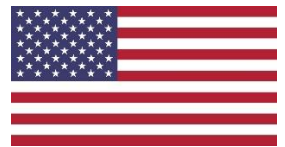
Bob Crawford

Immediate Past President, NWA MOAA Chapter

Your character is not defined by your talents, it's defined by your choices.



**U.S. Flag Education
Program**



From LTC Jay Stout, U.S. Flag Education Coordinator:

So far, it's been a great year for the U.S. Flag Education Program. We have visited 31 area schools (Public, Charter, and Private) to deliver our presentation and have another three scheduled. This will bring our student count to 3,387 for this school year. I've been in contact with other charter schools in the area as well as some that are classified as "Alternative" to get them scheduled as well.

I've reached out to the LISA Academy (both in Springdale and Fayetteville), The Hill School (Fayetteville), The Grace School (Fayetteville), K-8 Connect (Springdale), Anthem Classical Academy (Fayetteville), and the Prism Education Center (Fayetteville).

I'm happy to announce that we have scheduled our first-ever class at the Fayetteville Virtual Academy. A teacher is very excited to have us present this material and here is what she had to say:

"We would love to have you come (to our school). To be really honest, I'm so excited that they will be getting information about this. Because we are virtual, we never say the Pledge of Allegiance. I've also noticed that students at sporting events aren't always aware of what they should do during the National Anthem. They need this."

Melissa Green, 4th & 5th Grade Advisor/Teacher

More feedback from the schools:

From a Facebook post from Walker Elementary School:

"We were honored to have retired soldier with the U.S. Army & Army National Guard, Jay Stout, visit Walker Elementary today! His passion for flag education left a lasting impact on our fifth-grade students. Thank you for your service and inspiring the next generation!"
#springdalefamily

From Sonora Elementary School:

"Mr. David (Blankenship) did a good job. He had some good stories to share with the kids. We could tell he was a teacher and has a passion for the flag and history."

From a Facebook post from Turnbow Elementary School:

"5th grade had the opportunity to listen to a flag etiquette presentation by retired U.S. Army Lieutenant Colonel, Jay Stout. We are so thankful he took the time to share his knowledge about the United States Flag and teach us how to have proper flag etiquette!"
#noplacelikeTurnbow



LTC Jay Stout at McNair Middle School and Monitor Elementary School, CDR Bill Epperson at T.G. Smith Elementary School

We've completed 11 more schools since the last newsletter and we can't publish all the photos, if you want to see more, you click on the link below to take you to our Chapter's LinkedIn page:

[Northwest Arkansas Chapter - MOAA | Groups | LinkedIn](#)

Student Feedback about our program (from Colbert Middle School):

U.S. FLAG EDUCATION PROGRAM - STUDENT FEEDBACK

SCHOOL NAME: JLC STUDENT NAME: Seamus M

WHAT DID YOU THINK OF THE U.S. FLAG PRESENTATION: It was good, I
liked the last questions, and that you
said all the dates of occurrences. (said) (occurrences)
I also like all the pictures. (pictures)

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY TO ALL VETERANS: Thank you for
letting me be free.

Please take a picture of completed form and email to: jaystout12@yahoo.com

DID YOU KNOW (Springdale School District school namesakes with military service):

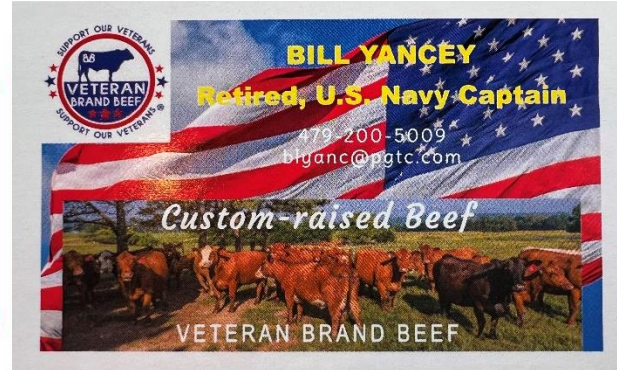
T.G. Smith Elementary School, named after Thurman G. Smith, former Springdale Schools Superintendent, also served in the Coast Guard as a seaman and port security specialist. He was honorably discharged in 1945.

Walter Turnbow Elementary School, named after Walter Turnbow, served for 3 years in the Army Air Force during World War II stationed in England. He was also responsible for securing the rights to use Popeye on the labels for spinach produced by his canning company.

Harp Elementary School, named after Gerald Harp, served in the U.S. Army, most notably during the Berlin Wall Crisis and was instrumental in a monument being erected for Veterans of the Springdale School system.

J.B Hunt Elementary School, named after Jonnie Bryan Hunt, served in the U.S. Army in the 1950's and failed at his first attempt of running a trucking business.

Shaw Elementary School, named after Willis Shaw, a true innovator in the refrigerated trucking industry, also served in the Texas National Guard.



ROTC LIAISON OFFICER REPORT: COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret), Chapter President is also the ROTC Liaison Officer and here is his report:

NAVY JUNIOR ROTC IN BENTONVILLE:

NJROTC Change of Command Gala. The Chapter's support to the NJROTC program remains strong. The next NJROTC event is its Annual Change of Command Gala!

SO MARK YOUR CALENDARS – all Chapter members are invited. The Gala is on April 20, 2024, at 5:30 PM in the National Guard Armory, 6800 SW Minuteman Ave, Bentonville, AR.

AROTC AT UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS:

ARMY ROTC COMMISSIONING. Your MOAA Chapter recently supported the Army ROTC Fall Commissioning ceremony where eight cadets become the Army’s newest Second Lieutenants. Following presentation of 2LT Gold Bars, MOAA certificates and copies of the U.S. Constitution, I was given a few minutes to talk about leadership and the officers’ oath to the U. S. Constitution.



LTC Sidney Roberts administers Oath of Office



2LT Grace Coleman is “pinned” by her parents



LTC Stout with mentees: Andrea Chandler and Sara Conaway



Me with mentees: Grace Coleman and Nile Hanna



MSG Martin receives Silver Dollar for "First Salute"



Remarks and presentation of U.S. Constitution

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM. Our Mentorship Program is going strong. Mentors routinely meet once a month with their mentees at local restaurants to discuss leadership, military culture, profession of arms, and a variety of other topics. Feedback from the Air Force and Army ROTC departments is overwhelmingly positive.



Dick Huie with mentee: Silas Hill



Bryan Huntsman with mentees: Sophia Robinson and Tom Weishaar



Steve Zega with Colton Leonard



Cindy Quayle with mentees: Wyatt Moore and Ahmad Pace



Cindy and Chad Quayle with mentees: Wyatt Moore and Ahmad Pace



Marty Michna with mentee:
Chris Able



Me with Mentee:
Grace Coleman



Me with mentees:
Marybeth Burgess and Nile Hanna

CHAPTER MENTORS. Thirteen (13) Chapter members have volunteered to be mentors for senior ROTC cadets in Army ROTC and Air Force ROTC at the University of Arkansas. These volunteers are greatly appreciated. On February 10th, the mentors will gather at Village Inn Restaurant to enjoy breakfast together and to discuss the first semester of the Academic Year, with special emphasis on lessons learned and best practices. The intent is to have an even more successful second semester of the program for AY 2023-24.

COL Bob Crawford, USA (Ret)
ROTC Liaison Officer, NWA MOAA Chapter

“Your character is not defined by your abilities. Character is defined by your choices.”

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS REPORT: CAPT Steve Unger, CHC, USN (Ret) is our Chapter's Legislative Affairs Officer, and he has these important items of interest:

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.**

Hours are 0800-1400, Monday through Friday. Still walk-ins only, but they recommend arriving at 0800 to avoid a line. Required: expired ID card, another form of identification, and military sponsor (unless spouse has a power of attorney). [Give the Center a call before heading out!](#)

MOAA NATIONAL INFORMATION.

1. Are you receiving the MOAA Newsletter every week on Thursday morning? It provides information about advocacy, career transition, finance, health care, families, and more. Subscribe at https://moaa.highroadsolution.com/moaa_preference_page/EmailSearch.aspx
2. Get the most current info about MOAA's legislative advocacy by enrolling in MOAA's Legislative Action Center (AKA Quorum) at https://moaa.quorum.us/sign_in/
3. Would you like to upgrade your MOAA membership to give added support to MOAA's member services, advocacy efforts, and receive "Military Officer" magazine. You can do so at: <https://www.moaa.org/content/join-moaa/why-join-moaa/>

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MOAA LEGISLATIVE LINK: This [link](#) will give you the latest MOAA Key Advocacy Issues, MOAA-Supported Legislation and even help you find your elected officials.

NEW MOAA LEGISLATIVE SOURCE: A new MOAA weekly video series entitled, "The MOAA Advocacy Update," brings MOAA's advocacy agenda to an expanded audience with a user-friendly video format. You can see the entire series library, including new episodes on MOAA's YouTube channel [at this link](#).

SURVIVING SPOUSE LIAISON OFFICER: MAJ John Cascamo, USAF (Ret), recently volunteered to be the Chapter's Surviving Spouse Liaison Officer and as he settles into the position, he will provide us with updates regarding this critical aspect of the Chapter providing continuing support to our military surviving spouses.

An article in a recent edition of the on-line MOAA Newsletter contained the following link with some excellent need-to-know information ranging from estate planning to survivor's benefits:

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2023-news-articles/advocacy/new-va-campaign-highlights-end-of-life-benefit-offerings/>

VA HIGHLIGHTS: LTC Michael Dillingham, USA (Ret), 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 as 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>

DD-214S ARE NOW ONLINE - Can YOU answer this question? "Where can I get a copy of my DD-214?" Well, here's your answer - the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) has provided the following website for veterans to gain access to their DD-214s online:

<http://vetrecs.archives.gov/> or try <http://www.archives.gov/veterans/military-service-records/>

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER: Your Chapter's Chaplain has never attempted to pen comments in the newsletter, but he couldn't pass up this timely illustration from a Marine Corps Colonel stationed in Afghanistan commenting about a past Super Bowl:

"So, with all the kindness I can muster, I give this one piece of advice to the next pop star who is asked to sing the National Anthem at a sporting event:

Save the vocal gymnastics and the physical gyrations for your concerts. Just sing this song the way you were taught to sing it in kindergarten – straight up, no styling.

Sing it with the constant awareness that there are soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines watching you from bases and outposts all over the world. Don't make them cringe with your self-centered ego gratifications.

Sing it as if you are standing before a row of 96-year-old WWII Vets wearing their Purple Hearts, Silver Stars and flag pins on their cardigans and you want

them to be proud of you for honoring them and the country they love – not because you want them to think you are a superstar musician. They could see that from your costume, makeup, and your entourage.

Sing “The Star Spangles Banner” with the courtesy and humility that tells the audience that it is about AMERICA, not YOU! Francis Scott Key does not need any help. Semper Fi.”

SOME 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 is 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.

BENEFITS OF JOINING OUR CHAPTER

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 <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/12595073/> and the NWA Chapter Website [Northwest Ark Chapter \(moaa-arkansas.org](http://NorthwestArkChapter(moaa-arkansas.org) Those unable to receive the newsletter electronically are mailed a “hard copy” of the newsletter.



MOAA
INSURANCE
PLANS

**Standing with you
at every stage.**

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www.moaainsurance.com/plans

100392



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