



# MECMOAA CHAPTER NEWS



Beginning with this edition, your MECMOAA newsletter will be published semiannually, in June and December. This will help us share more relevant content with each publication, as we catch up with each other every other month over brunch.

So, what has happened in the last six months? Here are a few highlights:

- ◆ We welcomed five new members and their spouses
- ◆ We presented four scholarships and awards to ROTC and JROTC cadets
- ◆ We presented MOAA awards at 10 local high schools and ETSU
- ◆ We were recognized with a 5-star Colonel Marvin J. Harris Communications Award for our website and a 4-star award for this newsletter (2022)
- ◆ John Rice and Bill Woods shared stories of their days as Naval Aviators

We'll start with New Member Spotlights. It's our intent to introduce you to all new members within the past two years, continuing here from previous newsletters. These narratives are written by each members, telling you what he or she thinks is most important to share. We're catching up, and our newest members will be featured in December's newsletter. If we've missed your spotlight, please let us know!

## New Member Spotlights

### George R. Brown, MD (Maj, USAF) and Joan Koelbel

George was born in Schenectady, NY, to a military family (Navy) and was commissioned in the USAF during his college days at the University of Rochester. He earned a Health Professions Scholarship from the USAF to attend medical school at the U of R, Strong Memorial Hospital, and graduated second in his class. He completed a 4 year residency in



psychiatry as an officer at Wright-Patterson AFB. Due to his early successes in academic medicine, he was stationed at the Air Force's largest teaching hospital, Wilford Hall Medical Center (San Antonio), as one of 14 designated training psychiatrists force-wide at the time, with primary responsibility for training future Air Force psychiatrists and conducting military research. He specialized in the study of HIV in military personnel, prior to the time there were any treatments for HIV/AIDS. The Air Force further supported his work with transgender active duty and veteran personnel, including the first medical research publications on this topic in the literature.

Dr. Brown and one other psychiatrist started the extensive tri-service HIV research program which joined with the Henry M. Jackson Foundation for Military Research. Upon leaving active duty after the first Gulf War, he worked as a full time Senior Scientist at Wilford Hall conducting HIV military research. At the conclusion of this work, Dr. Brown continued to serve Veterans by moving from Texas to the

Mountain Home VAMC, where he served as Chief of Psychiatry for 17 years, building the service from 5 staff in 1992 to over 50 at the end of his tenure as Chief. He was promoted to a full time VA research position in Washington, DC, where he authored the largest studies ever published on transgender health issues in Veterans. Dr. Brown

worked directly with DoD on training recruiters and medical staff in all branches of the service on the psychiatric, medical, and surgical issues in active duty transgender personnel, estimated to be at least 15,000 across the active duty and reserve forces.

Dr. Brown has published over 160 scientific papers and 33 book chapters, a majority of which involve military/veteran health issues. He continues his work as a volunteer teacher for VA medical students and residents and as Associate Chairman for Veterans' Affairs in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences at ETSU. He recently completed 30 years of VA service in addition to his 12 years of Air Force service.

His partner of many years, Joan Koelbel, is also from upstate NY, born to a WWII Navy veteran. She is a local small business owner (Gecko Hospitality) where she and her team find positions for executive chefs and restaurant managers across North Carolina, Virginia, and Washington, DC.

George and Joan live on a 56 acre farm in a log house outside Bluff City, TN.

### Jack Evans Butterworth, Jr.



Jack Evans Butterworth, Jr. was born in Winnsboro, SC, on December 21, 1937. His family moved to Marietta, Athens, and finally Gainesville, GA, where he attended Gainesville High School. Following high school, he attended Emory University in Atlanta, and then The Medical College of Georgia in Augusta. For internship, he chose Memorial Mission Hospital in Asheville, NC.

Jack commissioned in the US Army and trained at Ft. Sam Houston for both Basic Medical Officer training and Preventive Medicine Orientation.

Jack is married to Nancy Godsey Butterworth and has two sons and a daughter, with three granddaughters. His first son John was born at Brooke Army Medical Center. His younger son is named Evans and daughter is Mandy.

He was initially assigned to Ft. Bragg, NC, to the 6th Special Forces Group. While there, he worked in the Special Forces dispensary as well as the Womack Army Medical Center. He attended the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare School course in Counter Insurgency. Upon completion, he participated in a group jungle training exercise in Florida. Following completion of this training, he was assigned to Ft. Gordon and the 29th Civil Affairs Company.

After a short preparation, the Company was transferred to Danang, Viet Nam, via the USS Gordon transport ship. The company was composed of many Officers with varying specialties--MP, Legal, Medical, Horticulture, Engineering, Transportation, and others. They were stationed at the III Marine Amphibious Force Headquarters in East Danang, commanded by Lt. General Lewis Walt. The mission outlined by General Walt was to win the hearts and minds of the population. Jack's medical team, composed of two physicians and four corpsmen, traveled to villages within I Corps and gathered information on medical activities in that region and attended patients at each site. They held clinics at orphanages and vaccinated hundreds of children for childhood and adult diseases. The team visited villages from the DMZ to Chu Lai and covered the entire area of I Corp using Air America planes and Marine helicopters. Their Civil Affairs team worked with USAID individuals to house and feed the large numbers of refugees coming into this northern Province from North Viet Nam.

While they attended several VCs and were confronted by attempts to thwart their clinics, they were not attending directly any US personnel other than those in their units. Jack had the opportunity to transfer children to the USS Sanctuary and accompanied them to the hospital for work not available in-country.

Jack's team was commissioned to compile the civilian medical status for I Corps, and that was completed in early 1967. At that point, he requested a transfer to the Milphap (Military Provincial Hospital Assistance Program) Team in Quang Ngai City, I Corps. This was under MACV command, and in addition to MEDCAP village visits, required regular medical work in the Quang Ngai Provincial Hospital. Jack worked in the general medical ward and pediatric ward on Vietnamese civilians at that facility.

On return to CONUS in April 1967, Jack attended the Medical College for General Surgery and Urology training. He moved to Bristol, TN, in 1971 and practiced Urology for the next 32 years. During those years he saw VA patients because there were not sufficient Urology doctors at the Johnson City VA. Jack then took a mission trip to Congo and worked on Urology patients in Vanga Hospital while teaching physicians who came for lectures and surgical observation.

On return from Congo, Jack was asked to work in the administration of Bristol Regional Medical Center to improve issues in the operative room. For the next five years, he worked as the Executive Vice-President of Medical Affairs.

Since 2010, Jack and Nancy have been retired. Jack devotes time to genealogy research, music, golf, and ROMEO (Retired Old Men Eating Out), a men's lunch group which he organizes for weekly lunches. He researched family ancestry enough to join the Sons of the American Revolution, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Baronial Order of the Magna Carta, the Order of the Crown of Charlemagne and Order of House of Wessex. These organizations offer interesting historical elements and a new group of friends whenever one can attend the meetings. Retired life is full, and it is a joy to associate with the members of MECMOAA and learn their history. Jack thanks this organization for accepting him and Nancy as members, and they are among our most loyal attendees at membership brunches.

### William K. Richardson, Brig Gen, USAF (Ret.)

Bill Richardson graduated from Officer Training School in May, 1969, after graduating from the University of Mississippi. After completing undergraduate pilot training school at Williams Air Force Base in Arizona, his first assignment was flying C-130s at CCK Air Base, Taiwan. The unit's primary duty was flying the C-130 in Vietnam. Over twenty-two months, he flew approximately 400 days in Vietnam and 100 in Thailand.



After completing that assignment, Bill returned to Langley Air Force Base, Virginia, where he flew missions in the US and two three-month rotational assignments to Mildenhall Air Base, UK, and one to Howard Air Force Base, Panama. From those locations, he flew missions in Europe and Central and South America.

In 1975 Bill retired from the active Air Force and continued flying the C-130 in the Mississippi ANG; Air Force Reserve at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland; New York ANG Suffolk County Air Force Base, Long Island; and the North Carolina ANG at Charlotte. His final assignment at the NCANG was as Assistant Adjutant General for Air and Commander of the NCANG.

During his civilian career, Bill was an accountant for the USDA in Hyattsville, MD; an Air Force Reserve Technician; and C-130 pilot for the Andrews AF reserve unit. He was a B-727 pilot for Braniff Airlines from 1978 until 1980 when the airline declared bankruptcy. He then worked as an Aviation Safety Inspector for the Federal Aviation Administration until 2011. His duties included monitoring airline training, approving training programs, and administering flight and simulator checks in the B-727, B-737, B-767, B-747 and Airbus A-320 aircraft. These airlines included TWA, PanAm, Eastern, Saudi Arabian Air, and Piedmont/USAir.

Bill comes from a family with aviation and military experience. His father served 30 years in the USAF flying B-17s in the second World War and B-47/52s in the Cold War, retiring in 1973 as Colonel.

Bill's wife, Jane, has 7,000+ hours flying time as an instructor, pilot examiner, charter pilot and corporate pilot. She also worked as an Aviation Safety Inspector for the FAA, where she worked with the DHC-100 and the Fokker 100 aircraft.

Jane and Bill lived in Kernersville, North Carolina, and later retired to Banner Elk and Fort Myers, Florida. They currently are enjoying life in Johnson City, Tennessee.

*Welcome to our only dual-pilot member and spouse!*



# MECMOAA recognizes outstanding ROTC & JROTC Cadets

Thanks to your generosity and the continued legacy of CAPT Herb Ladley, we were able to present additional scholarships and awards this year to our outstanding cadets from our local ROTC and JROTC units. ROTC scholarships were \$1,000 each, and JROTC awards were \$500 each. These cadets, their unit leaders, and family members attended our May membership brunch.

Congrats to our 2022 MECMOAA & Herb Ladley scholarship & award recipients!



Cadet Christian Morgan from ETSU's Buccaneer Battalion received both the MECMOAA and Herb Ladley scholarships (pictured with LCDR (Ret.) John Rice)



Cadet Nanchaya "Dow" Bailey from Daniel Boone HS and Cadet Kalee Church from Sullivan East HS received this year's JROTC awards.



Behind the scenes: A BIG thanks to Ed Champion for his decades-long commitment to honor our local ROTC & JROTC cadets each year!

## Local JROTC awards ceremonies

As we do each year in May, MECMOAA members collectively supported JROTC award ceremonies across our local high schools, presenting MOAA's JROTC medals and certificates to cadets selected by their respective leadership teams. As always, Ed Champion led the effort for MECMOAA. Thanks to all of our members who helped this year with this very important community service effort! Below is a photo of Col Charlie Thomas, USAF (Ret.), presenting at David Crockett High School.



## MECMOAA continues to earn MOAA Awards

### Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Award



Our chapter has again earned the Five Star Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Award (for 2022) for our website. This award is to identify councils and chapters that do an outstanding job communicating with their members and community. We received a Five Star Award in 2021 and a Four Star Award in 2020. This newsletter also brought home a Four Star Award for 2022, following a Five Star award in 2021 and a Four Star Award in 2020. Thanks to our webmaster, Stan Gedelman, for always keeping our

website professional, current, and relevant!



## Legislative Update



Our legislative update is brought to you by Col Donald F. Thompson, USAF (Ret). If you're newer to MECMOAA, you might have met Don and his wife Miriam at one of our recent brunches. But, you might not know that in addition to being our Chapter's Legislative Liaison, Don serves on the MOAA Board of Directors and currently chairs the Health Care Committee. We are blessed to have Don's service and insight right here in our Chapter. Here's what he has to share in this edition:

MOAA's advocacy efforts continue to show progress! The FY2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) was advanced from both House and Senate Armed Services Committees in late June. Both authorize a 5.2% pay raise for servicemembers, and both will improve the calculation of Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH), a key MOAA priority. While they do not fully restore BAH to 100% of housing costs, they both move in the right direction. Click [here](#) to see the MOAA Issue Paper that provides more information. Please contact your legislators and urge them to support these priorities in the NDAA. (See below for details.)

**Legislative Action Center and Advocacy** – The MOAA Legislative Action Center at <https://moaa.quorum.us/> is the easiest, most important tool we can use to advocate as a national organization. The top two issues at the Legislative Action Center are the two that we emphasized during our Advocacy in Action in Washington, DC in April. Please go to the website, sign up, and click the buttons to the right to see draft letters on each issue with prepopulated emails for Senators Blackburn and Haggerty and Representative Harshbarger. You can edit the letter if you want to make it more personal. I sent a couple letters 10 days ago and had an email response back from both senators that same evening. These letters may not be as effective as cornering one of our legislators at Food City, but they do add up!

**What's Coming on Healthcare** – MOAA is starting to ramp up advocacy work on what we expect will be exploding pharmacy costs in FY27. DoD has the freedom to begin to raise costs for pharmaceuticals then, and we fear that non-Active Duty, especially retirees, will have to pay a lot more for our medications then. The Defense Health Agency continues to explore ways to cut costs, and pharmacy costs are a big target. For now, make sure you have signed up at the Legislative Action Center and for MOAA newsletters so you can stay informed.

If you have a question or concern on any legislative topic at either the federal, state or local level, please reach out to Don!

### **Are you a MOAA National Member?**

If not, why? As John Rice says, "The magazine alone is worth the cost of membership." Just click this link to see MOAA membership options, from Basic (free) to Lifetime:

**[Join MOAA](#)**

As organizations exempt from federal taxation under Sec. 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code, MOAA and its affiliates must take care to avoid engaging in partisan political activities. Under IRS rules, we are prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for public office.

## Member presentation

At our May membership brunch, John Rice and Bill Woods (aka Maverick and Goose) shared information about Naval Aviation, including some of the wisdom and stories they gathered along the way. Thanks, John and Bill!



Before we wrap up with our remaining membership brunch and meeting schedule, we'd like to know your answer to these two questions:

*What local organization or cause are you passionate about, and is it something you think MECMOAA can and should consider helping?*

## 2023 Membership Brunch & Meeting Schedule

We meet at Blackthorn Club in The Ridges on a bi-monthly schedule. Cost is \$25 at the door.

- Begin gathering at 12:30 in the outdoor pavilion unless otherwise noted
- Meeting formally begins at 1:00 with brunch, chapter business and our speaker's presentation

Upcoming meetings:



Note: Nametags are funded for members and spouses through membership dues. Once you pay your 2023 dues, we'll order you and your spouse a new nametag, if you have not already received one. If you should have received a new nametag and did not, please let Mark know by emailing [mecmoaa@gmail.com](mailto:mecmoaa@gmail.com).

**We'll see you at brunch on July 16!**

We hope you enjoyed this newsletter. Please send any comments or suggestions to [mecmoaa@gmail.com](mailto:mecmoaa@gmail.com).

***Never Stop Serving.***

Mountain Empire Chapter (MECMOAA) is an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America

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