

MOUNTAIN MOAA NEWS

WINTER/SPRING 2007

FROM THE BRIDGE: NOW HEAR THIS

By CDR Clint Smoke, USCG-Ret

At the recent MOAA North Carolina Council of Chapters meeting in Charlotte we heard important information which I want to share with you.



At that meeting, we met **Col. Lee Lange, USMC, Ret.** MOAA's new Director of Council and Chapter Affairs Department. Col Lange (shown at left) joined the staff of the MOAA, in the Government Relations Department, in June 2001, when he became the lead on military survivor issues. In June 2006, Col. Lange was named as the deputy director, Council and Chapter Affairs Dept., and he became director of that department in December 2006.

Col Lange shared with us information about the important legislative issues of interest before Congress. Several of these are as follows:

- **Concurrent Receipt of Military Retired Pay and VA Disability Compensation.** Congress needs to fully eliminate the law that makes most disabled uniformed services retirees forfeit part or all of their military retired pay for VA disability compensation.
- **Retired Pay versus Active Duty Pay Adjustments.** Retired pay and active duty pay increases are different in most years because they are based on different compensation principles.
- **Government Pension Offset (GPO)/Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).** Significant changes to Social Security in 1977 and 1983 cut Social Security benefits of many federal (Civil Service Retirement System) retirees and state retirees who did not participate in Social Security.
- **COLAs and Military Retired Pay.** Government retired pay promises must be kept, including annual cost-of-living adjustments (COLA) to prevent erosion of retirees' purchasing power by inflation.
- **Uniformed Services Former Spouse Protection Act Reform.** The Uniformed Services Former Spouse Protection Act (USFSPA), which governs division of military retired pay in divorce cases, contains significant inequities.

Col. Lange noted that while MOAA staff is lobbying Congress on these issues, he noted the importance of our direct contact with elected officials, and encouraged each of us to express our opinions. The easiest way to do this is by signing and mailing the cards and letters that are frequently included in your copy of *Military Officer* magazine. You can keep up to date on these important issues by checking MOAA's website at www.moaa.org. (continued on page 2)

In another matter, Col. Lange announced that the Give Me 10 Recruiting Campaign was very successful in 2006, and that it will be continued in 2007. MOAA has just over 360,000 members. Of these 74,000 are also affiliated with local MOAA chapters. Recruiting at both the national and local levels is vital if we are to survive. If you know of someone who is eligible for MOAA membership and not member, take the initiative to show them a copy of MOAA's outstanding magazine or our chapter newsletter, and invite them to one of our meetings.

At the State level

At that same MOAA North Carolina Council of Chapters meeting in Charlotte, there was considerable discussion about House Bill 233, Equal Tax Treatment of Government Retiree Benefits. This is a continuation of efforts to extend the provisions of the Bailey settlement allowing an exemption of taxes on pensions in North Carolina to those now retiring.

For those who may have forgotten what this is all about, the Bailey/Patton Settlement provided tax exemption for those retirees who had 5 years credible service as of August 12, 1989. At issue is the fact that the provisions do not apply to those who retired after August 13, 2004. As a result we have two classes of retirees, based on the date of their retirement. Not a fair system!

The proposed legislation would correct this inequity. House Bill 233 would exempt 100 percent of federal, state and local retirement benefits. As a result, it is projected that more retirees would relocate or remain in North Carolina, some starting second careers, with little or no burden on the community in terms of medical or other needs.

While many of us enjoy the benefits of this settlement, let us take a lead here and think about these who are following us. Many, including present employees of state and local government are not aware of this issue. Let them know! And write to your state representative in Raleigh. A list of our elected official is provided for your convenience. In your letter you might say that "...you are undoubtedly aware of House Bill 233, Equal Tax Treatment of Government Retiree Benefits, and how important this bill is to the fair and equitable treatment of North Carolina retirees. I urge your prompt endorsement of this bill.

"This bill, when enacted into law, will induce retirees to remain in North Carolina rather than retire elsewhere. As homeowners, these retirees will pay property taxes, and with second careers they will pay state income and sales taxes. Military retirees are good law-abiding citizens who present few if any burdens to state and local government. It is time for fairness so that there will be one class of retirees. Passing House Bill 233 is a step in the right direction and the correct thing to do."

For our young men and women retiring now and in the future, I urge you to contact your NC representatives. Time is of the essence as this bill will be in the House Pensions and Retirement Committee initially, and then on May, 15, 2007 it will go to the House Finance Committee. On May, 30, 2007 it will go onto the floor of the House. It is imperative that it gets on the agenda.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

May 2, Board of Directors meeting.

May 19, General Membership Meeting, Hendersonville CC, 4:30 pm Cash Bar; 5:30 pm Dinner and program. Details in the next newsletter.

County	House and Senate District (s)
Buncombe	Senate Districts 48, 49: SEN Tom Apodaca (R-48), SEN Martin Nesbitt, Jr (D-49) House Districts 114, 115, 116: REP Susan Fisher (D-114), REP Bruce Goforth (D-115), REP Charles Thomas (R-116)
Cherokee	Senate District 50: SEN John Snow, Jr. (D) House District 120: REP Roger West (R)
Clay	Senate District 50: SEN John Snow (D) (House District 120: REP Roger West (R)
Graham	Senate District 50: SEN John Snow (D) House District 120: REP Roger West (R)
Haywood	Senate District 47: SEN Sam Queen (R) House Districts 118, 119) REP Ray Rapp (D- 118), REP Phillip Haire (D-119)
Henderson	Senate District 48: SEN Tom Apodaca (R) House Districts 113, 117: REP Trudi Walend (R-113), REP Carolyn Justus (R-117)
Jackson	Senate District 50: SEN John Snow (D) House District 119: REP Phillip Haire (D)
Macon	Senate District 50: SEN John Snow (D) House Districts 119, 120: REP Phillip Haire (D- 119), REP Roger West (R-120)
Madison	Senate District 47: SEN Sam Queen (R) House District 118: REP Ray Rapp (D)
McDowell	Senate District 47: SEN Sam Queen (R) House District 85: REP Mitch Gillespie (R)
Polk	Senate District 48: SEN Tom Apodaca (R) House District 113: REP Trudi Walend (R)
Rutherford	Senate District 46: SEN Walter Dalton (D) House District 112: REP Bobby England (D)
Swain	Senate District 50: SEN John Snow (D) House District 119: REP Phillip Haire (D)
Transylvania	(Senate District 50: SEN John Snow (D) House District 113: REP Trudi Walend (R)
Yancey	Senate District 47: SEN Sam Queen (R) House Districts 84, 118: REP Phillip Frye (R- 84), REP Ray Rapp (D-118)

Name	Address	Phone
Apodaca, Tom	1127 Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27601-2808	919 733-5745
Dalton, Walter	523 Legislative Office Building, Raleigh, NC 27603-5925	919 715-3038
England, Bobby	2219 Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27601-1096	919-733-5749
Fisher, Susan	420 Legislative Office Building, Raleigh, NC 27603-5925	919-715-2013
Frye, Phillip	1019 Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27601-1096	919-733-5661
Gillespie, Mitch	1008 Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27601-1096	919-733-5862
Goforth, Bruce	1220 Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27601-1096	919-733-5746
Haire, Phillip	419B Legislative Office Building, Raleigh, NC 27603-5925	919-715-3005
Justus, Carolyn	1023 Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27601-1096	919-733-5956
Nesbitt, Martin	300B Legislative Office Building, Raleigh, NC 27603-5925	919 715-3001
Queen, Sam	1121 Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27601-2808	919 733-3460
Rapp, Ray	2213 Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27601-1096	919-733-5732
Snow, John	2111 Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27601-2808	919 733-5875
Thomas, Charles	518C Legislative Office Building, Raleigh, NC 27603-5925	919-715-3012
Walend, Trudi	1015 Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27601-1096	919-715-4466
West, Roger	1004 Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27601-1096	919-733-5859

THE WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
CHAPTER
of the
MILITARY OFFICERS
ASSOCIATION of AMERICA, INC.
P.O. Box 1028
Hendersonville, NC 28793
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID

MOUNTAIN MOAA NEWS

*is the official publication of the
WNC Chapter of MOAA.*

Published Six Times Annually

Editor:

LTC Charles M. Luce, USA-Ret

662 Phillipsville Loop

Canton, NC 28716

828-648-7369

Luce54@aol.com



**IF YOU HAVE NOT YET PAID YOUR
DUES FOR 2007 PLEASE DO IT NOW!!**

MOAA Council and Chapter Affairs
Dept. Director COL Lange, right, and
WNC Chapter President CDR Smoke
shared few minutes together at the re-
cent Council of Chapters meeting. You
can learn more about COL Lange and
what he said inside this Special Edition
of the *Mountain MOAA News*.

