

CATAWBA VALLEY MOAA NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2010



MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER

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President's Comments: We're all aware of the need to maintain complete situational-awareness in tactical settings. That requirement still continues even though most of us are no longer serving on active duty. We must stay aware of legislative initiatives in Congress that could negatively impact our benefits and entitlements. Such activity has increased lately because our deployed forces are getting very close to the culmination of one war and are pushing extremely hard to achieve victory in the other war. This "light at the end of the tunnel" scenario has prompted a few members of Congress to call for a repeat of the post-Vietnam era. That is, recklessly dismantle the military infrastructure and reduce the size of our forces as quickly as possible. Our first concern is that a strong national defense has to be based on more than a hollow military, sometimes referred to as a Paper Tiger. Then there follows the concern that our benefits and entitlements could be significantly diminished. This isn't mere hypothetical thinking. On July 22nd, the Defense Business Board reported that the current military retirement system is unaffordable, especially the Tricare For Life program. Their report actually said, "The Military Retirement sacred cow is increasingly unaffordable." Meanwhile, some experts are declaring that our Social Security system is unsustainable. No doubt we'll eventually hear that new legislation will contain grandfather clauses, but there's still potential for erosion, such as reduced cost-of-living increases, increased health care premiums, etc. It's clear that these are indeed difficult times, but we shouldn't let the military become the low hanging fruit that's "easy pickens" for a few overly eager politicians. By the way, of the 541 members of the current Congress, only 121 have ever served in the military, and that number keeps decreasing with the passage of time. MOAA lobbyists are doing yeoman's work on our behalf to influence legislators in Washington. We can complement their efforts by voting this November, but we have to achieve complete situational-awareness in order to cast a legitimate vote. The MOAA magazine and web site are good starting points; the Military.com web site also provides insights into Congressional activity, and the web sites of the incumbent politicians and the political candidates are yet another source of information. Then, there's the news media, including the many forums hosted by the TV networks. Thankfully, many retired military officers are called into these forums to publicly render their expert opinions. The point is, we should not formulate our political views based on a few out-of-context and sensationalized snippets provided by some charismatic "news personality." It takes a little extra effort to achieve full situational-awareness, but the extra effort ensures that our votes will be more legitimate and allows us to vote with even greater conviction. See you at the polls!



Congresswoman Foxx Addresses CVC Members

Distinguished Visitor at CVC Picnic: Congresswoman Virginia Foxx was the guest of honor at our Chapter’s picnic on 24 July in the Catawba Springs Clubhouse. She offered highly informative insights on a spectrum of current legislative issues, including those raised by chapter members in attendance. She also explained the bill that she recently introduced in Congress titled, the Disabled Veterans’ Surviving Spouses Home Loans Act. Her important bill provides access to VA home loans for surviving spouses of permanently disabled veterans whose deaths are not necessarily attributed to their service-related disability. Wonderful work of this nature is obviously what prompted the National Republican Congressional Committee to present Congresswoman Foxx with the prestigious Ronald Reagan Award this past March. Her visit here was a huge honor for the Chapter.

West Lincoln High School JROTC Ceremony:

Cadet Victoria Fenn recently received one of the Chapter’s prestigious MOAA JROTC Awards. The formal presentation was made during a military formation at the high school. She wrote an enthusiastic letter of thanks to our Chapter in which she stated that she was surprised to have been selected and that it was a great honor to have received the award. Cadet Fenn is in her second year of “Rebel Navy” JROTC at the West Lincoln High School. She is looking forward to wearing the medal throughout her continued participation in the JROTC program. She said this award encourages her to strive to better herself and her unit in the forthcoming academic year.



Cadet Victoria Fenn Receives MOAA Award

Hoist the Colors: These are the suggested days for flying the U.S. flag during the months of September and October:

- September 6th Monday Labor Day
- September 11th Saturday Patriot Day
- September 17th Friday POW/MIA Day
- October 11th Monday Columbus Day



Military Records On-Line: The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files, such as a DD-214 for employment purposes. Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site. The new web-based application was designed to provide better and faster service on these requests by eliminating the records center's mailroom and processing time. NPRC web site: www.archives.gov/st-louis/

State Property Tax Relief: For some Disabled Veterans, certain vehicles are exempt from state property taxes. Specifically, a Disabled Veteran's vehicle that is altered with special equipment to accommodate a service-connected disability could be tax exempt. In this policy, disabled veteran means a person as defined in 38 U.S.C. Â§ 101(2) who is entitled to special automotive equipment for a service-connected disability. This could also come into play as a service connected medical condition deteriorates in later years, thus requiring the automobile modification. Also, Disabled Veterans issued a registration plate are entitled to park in spaces designated for the handicapped and unlimited parking time in most parking zones having time restrictions.

Purple Heart Homes Golf Event: A Purple Heart Homes charity golf tournament will be held at the Lakewood Golf Club in Statesville on Saturday the 11th of September. Check-in starts at 7:45 AM and play begins at 8:30. The fee to participate is \$75 per golfer or \$300 per team; past participants pay a lower fee. Call 704-838-4044 or e-mail info@phnc.org to register for the event. The Purple Heart Homes organization gives aid to veterans who are deserving of assistance in transitioning to a new home or an accessible home for those veterans who have sustained physical injuries. Visit the Purple Heart Homes web site at www.phnc.org.

Moving Target: If you aim to visit the Carolinas Aviation Museum you'll have to adjust a bit from the original instructions provided in this newsletter a few months ago. The museum is still at the Charlotte-Douglas Airport but they recently moved a very short distance to 4672 First Flight Drive Charlotte NC 28208. The staff says that's a valid address for GPS navigation systems. In any event, just go past (not through) the Air National Guard base gate; then follow the blue signs that lead you to the museum's hanger. Their phone number is 704-359-8442 and their web site is www.carolinasaviation.org.

Focusing on Health: There's a great deal of well organized and very universal health care information at the web site www.healthfinder.gov. There you'll see a Quick Guide to Healthy Living, a Health Encyclopedia containing over 1,600 health topics, a section that gives the latest health news, and a section containing free interactive tools to self-assess your health, get personalized advice, and keep track of your progress. If you have Internet access, it might be useful to add www.healthfinder.gov to your bookmarked list of "favorites" so that you'll always have current healthcare information at your fingertips.

Medallions for Veterans' Graves: The Department of Veterans Affairs now offers bronze medallions to attach to existing, privately purchased headstones or markers, signifying a deceased's status as a veteran. This special item is available for any veteran who passed away after Nov 1, 1990 and whose private cemetery grave is marked with a privately purchased headstone. The medallion is available in various diameters, the largest being five inches. Each bronze medallion features the image of a folded burial flag adorned with laurels and is inscribed with the word "Veteran" at the top and the branch of service at the bottom. Procedures for obtaining VA-furnished medallions are on the web site: <http://www.cem.va.gov>, click on the title Veterans Services.

Hickory VA Clinic: The Outpatient Clinic is now located at 2440 Century Place SE. The new clinic provides primary care, general mental health, podiatry, audiology, and optometry services. The clinic's service area includes Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Iredell, Lincoln and Wilkes counties. To get to the clinic from I-40, take exit 126 toward US70/Newton/Hickory; at the ramp turn onto McDonald Pkwy SE which is north toward Hickory; stay on McDonald Pkwy SE for 1.5 mile (heading north); turn right at the light onto Tate Blvd; turn left at the light onto Performance Dr. SE; turn left onto Century Place SE; the VA Clinic is on the left.

Penny Pinchers: DFAS advises that beginning with the June 1, 2010 paycheck, Concurrent Retirement Disability Pay (CRDP) is being rounded down to the nearest dollar amount, rather than paid to the exact penny. DFAS will not recoup previous payments that were not rounded down. The change is due to legal requirements.

Long Term Schedule: Here are the 2010 dates for forthcoming General Membership Meetings which will be held at the Lake Hickory Country Club: 23 September and 2 December 2010. Congressman Patrick McHenry will be the Chapter's guest of honor at the 23 September General Membership Meeting.

Treasury Status: CDR Dave Olson reported that the Chapter is in sound financial condition. There's a grand total of \$7,293.36 in the Chapter's treasury as of 19 August 2010.

Officers, Directors, and Committee Chairs: The 2010-2011 chapter principals are COL Joe Cansler, President; Capt (USN) Allen Stewart, 1st Vice President; Maj Jack Gantt, 2nd Vice President; COL Ray Anderson, Secretary; CDR Dave Olson, Treasurer; COL Bob Barton, Director; Col John Liburdi, Director, Lt Col Ted Hayes, Director; Lt Col Marshall Hiatt, Program Chair; LTC Dave Imschweiler, JROTC Coordinator. The next CVC board meeting is on 21 October at 1100 hours in Duffy's Tavern at Lake Hickory Country Club.

Newsletter Info: E-mail jliburdi@hotmail.com to switch to the e-mail version of the newsletter. Use the same e-mail address to request a printed version of the newsletter in the event you can't view the e-mail attachment. Each newsletter will also be posted at www.moaa-nc.org, click on "NC Chapters" and then on Chapter 11.

TO JOIN THE CATAWBA VALLEY CHAPTER: First year national dues are just \$15 and local chapter dues are waived the first year. The first General Membership dinner is free of charge for you and your guest/spouse. Contact the Chapter's Membership Chairman: CDR David Olson cdrmolson@charter.net or 828-328-4401.

RESERVATION FOR 23 SEPTEMBER MOAA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

This is my reservation for the MOAA CVC general membership meeting at the Lake Hickory Country Club on 23 September at 6:00 PM. Congressman Patrick McHenry will be the Chapter's guest of honor at this event.

Number of persons: _____. Dinner selections(s): _____ Carved Sirloin Beef and _____ Lemon Pepper Flounder

NAME OF ATTENDEE(S): _____ & _____

Please send this slip and your check (\$19.00 per attendee) to arrive no later than Monday, 20 Sept to: CDR David Olson at 5755 Selkirk Dr. Hickory, NC 28601-8923