

NORTH CAROLINA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS
“STORM THE HILL” RALEIGH, NC
APRIL 15, 2015
AFTER ACTION REPORT

MIKE FLYNN COL USA (RET) & HARLEY ELLINGER COL USA (RET)

MOAA MEMBERS PRESENT: Chris Canipe, Juan Chavez, Doug Ehrhardt, Harley Ellinger, Mike Flynn, Nancy and Bob Garman, Don Gersh, Kris Gupton, David Lee, Tom Nesbit, Vern Pike, Chris Spada

Our group convened at 7:30 A.M. in the 1400 court area and proceeded to the front of the legislative building for the opening ceremony and posting of the colors with the accompanying music of our traditional bagpipes. Following the ceremony we proceeded to visit our senator and representative offices to pass out the legislative talking points and discuss military issues.

The NC State MOAA joined by members of other North Carolina Veterans Organizations met at the N.C. General Assembly. The veterans met at 10:00 A.M. to discuss with legislators issues of concern to the military services and to veterans. Members of the veterans' organizations were invited into the house chamber where we were welcomed by Speaker of the House Tim Moore. Speaker Moore thanked the veterans for their service and indicated support for programs to assist veterans and to make North Carolina a “military friendly” state. During the Question and Answer session Vern Pike of the Triangle Chapter urged enactment of the bill to extend the Bailey, Emory, Patton settlement to all state and federal employees and military. Speaker Moore indicated he understood the rationale behind extending the terms of the bill to currently noncovered retirees.

Secretary of Veterans' Affairs Ilario Pantano addressed Speaker Moore and indicated that although North Carolina bills itself as a military friendly state, other states such as Texas and Virginia provide greater incentives to the military and to veterans. According to Secretary Pantano somewhere on the order of 120,0000 military and veterans leave the state on retirement or on the expiration of their service. Ilario indicated that North Carolina needs to do more, not only regarding tax issues, but also on tuition, job creation and skill training to be competitive. Speaker Moore indicated he understood the issues and the General Assembly was currently discussing several of the issues Secretary Pantano had raised.

The Veterans Council of North Carolina was invited to meet with Senator Pro Tem Berger in the Senate Caucus Room at 11:00 A.M. Issues discussed were taken directly from the North Carolina Veterans Council 2015 Legislative Goals and Associated Talking Points, and were presented by the President of the Council as follows:

1. **Establish a NC Dept. of Military and Veterans Affairs at the Cabinet level in state government.** The discussion topics included “if you do not sit up to table you are not heard, and you are out of sight and out of mind”, “you are of little importance

- if you do not sit at the table”, and “there was a cabinet position for Military Affairs from 1973 to 1977 in the NC Cabinet.”
2. **Ensure relevant military service experience is considered in licensing and credentialing.** The discussion acknowledged that much has already been done to date and a comment was made “that the military must insure that their training meets the requirements of the civilian community so that it is directly comparable
 3. **The Bailey/Patton tax law.** The discussion centered around “making North Carolina as “Military Friendly” as our surrounding and competing states of Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, South Carolina, and Florida concerning taxes.” It was decided that we could not be compete with Texas.
 4. **Encourage and promote the use of veteran-owned small businesses.** The discussion sought to counter the argument “that favoring veteran owned businesses would clash and compete with other minority owned businesses.”
 5. **Protect military personnel from predatory loan practices.** The discussion acknowledged that “some work has already been done in this area and the timing is important – payday and moving times. It was pointed out that the government does not pay the complete cost of the movement of a military person and his/her family.”

During the next several hours the members once again spread throughout the buildings to talk with senators, representatives, and their staffs to spread our message. At the same time a great big round of thanks to Nancy Garman, Bob Garman, and Vern Pike who operated our table in the courtyard passing out literature, and talking to people about MOAA and our legislative goals.

At 2:00 P.M. we traveled to the Senate chamber where we were recognized and thanked for our military service. Closing out our table in the courtyard we concluded our “STORM THE HILL”