

Veterans

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Post Commander William McDonald, a Vietnam vet who retired from the US Army in 1995, after 23 years of service to his country.

The free luncheon, an annual tradition, is led by members of the Post's Ladies Auxiliary. The 2013 event attracted dozens of veterans to the Post on Old Rural Hall Road. After a brief program, attendees dug into the sumptuous feast of ham, chicken, green beans, pasta salad, macaroni and cheese, tossed salad and sweet potato pie that were lovingly prepared by the Ladies, some of whom have been involved with the Post for decades.

"We are very, very thankful for all that they did," said Betty McDonald, the commander's wife and president of the Ladies Auxiliary. "They went through a lot for us to have our freedom and be able to do these kinds of things."

Across town at Goler Memorial AME Zion Church, more than 100 veterans and their families took part in HARRY Veteran Community Outreach Services' Fifth Annual Veterans Day Luncheon. Attendees swapped stories and shared laughs as they dined on a spaghetti dinner with all the trimmings in the church's Family Enrichment Center, where the event was held for the first time this year.

City native Claude Moore attended the Veterans Day luncheon for the second year in a row. "I always come out to their events," he said. "It's good to see old friends and stuff."

Moore, an alumnus of East Forsyth High School,



Ladies Auxiliary members (front row, from left): Betty McDonald, Margie Pitts, Evelyn Funches, Dorothy Britt (back row, from left): Phyllis Smith, Molly Cunningham, Beverly Williams and Shirley Scott.



Claude Moore

said he joined the military after graduation because of the opportunities it presented him as a young man. He remembers his years in the service fondly.

"I was ready to get away from Winston-Salem. I wanted adventure - I wanted to see the world," remarked the retired carpenter, whose service took him as far as Germany. "I've gone to all parts of the world. It was beautiful."

Former Army nurse Adele Turner says she makes a point of attending a special event for Veterans Day every year. This year, the Long Island, NY native brought along her eight year-old granddaughter, in hopes that she would learn to appreciate the contributions that military men and women make to their coun-



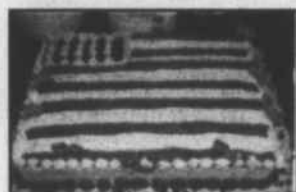
Molly Cunningham (left) and Beverly Williams prepare a veteran's plate.

try on a deeper level.

"Children - the younger generation - a lot of them are not educated on the importance of what we do and what it means to serve our country," said the grandmother of six, who spent eight years in the military. "We don't just put on the uniform; it means something."

Rev. Dr. George Banks, the church's pastor, said he felt hosting the luncheon was a good way for Goler to demonstrate their support for veterans and the organizations that serve them.

"I think that the church as a universal body has a responsibility of reaching out to those who need our help," said Banks, who has led the congregation for just over a year. "Many of



Veterans at Post 128 enjoyed a patriotic cake.

our veterans gave their service to this country, and to come back and not be able to find jobs or adequate healthcare, that is one of the great travesties, I believe, of the American democracy. The church is here to make a difference in our community, in our world ... anything we can do to help, then that's what we're going to do."

Many among the parade of local officials who addressed attendees also expressed concerns about the many pitfalls that



Vivian Burke, former Marine Alfonzo Boyd and Everette Witherspoon recite the Pledge of Allegiance.



Former Army nurse Adele Turner with her granddaughter Tieshero Reid.

veterans face in today's society. Despite the sacrifices they make for the greater good, many veterans don't get the support and assistance that they need on the home front, and Mayor Pro Tempore Vivian Burke said she is determined to see that change here in the local community.

"God blessed us with veterans and I don't want to put a damper on this, but I have said so many times to the city that our veterans are homeless and without jobs," she stated. "...I will stay this course to try to do everything that I can so our vets will not be homeless and hopeless."

County Commissioner Everette Witherspoon, who helped to found the HARRY organization, decried the high rates of suicide and unemployment among veterans. Because they are more likely to be employed in the public sector than their civilian coun-

terparts, veterans are harder hit by cuts to government-led programs and services, he said.

"Twenty two veterans kill themselves every day. More of our veterans are dying by their own hands than in Afganistan - that has to stop," Witherspoon declared. "...We give them one day, but the fight for veterans is an everyday fight."

The HARRY luncheon was followed by a HanesBrands clothing giveaway and a healthy living presentation by John and Rosie Raye.

Veterans and civilians in search of employment are invited to visit a job fair at the North Carolina Armory, 2000 Silas Creek Parkway, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 15. Forsyth County Workforce Center Vet Staff will be in attendance. For more information, call 336-776-6723.

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