

CAPITAL DISTRICT CHAPTER, NEW YORK MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Volume 8, Issue 6

November-December 2017

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4-Star Chapter – 2016, 2015 & 2009



CHAPTER LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Contributed by Pat Piccirilli, LTC USA Ret.

In the current issue of Military Officer (November 2017) under the banner of Budget Uncertainty, we are told that "once again DoD is running on borrowed money and time. It hasn't had a stable budget in seven years, which has affected all of the services negatively"; a continuing resolution (CR) is funding the government through the first week in December. This leads us to the first issue on a list of issues that MOAA is working towards remedying: That issue is **Sequestration**. Ever since the Budget Control Act of 2011, the military has had to make significant cuts which reduced its mission capabilities.

Another issue, as you may recall, is the "**Widow's Tax**" issue that MOAA has steadfastly been pursuing for a final resolution. Both House and Senate versions of the FY17 Defense Authorization Bill prevent the \$310 monthly allowance (SSIA) for SBP-DIC widows from expiring. But neither bill would continue previously intended increases in SSIA to make progress toward phasing out the SBP-DIC offset.

A third issue is **TRICARE fee increases**. The FY2018 national defense authorization bill negotiations are underway. The Senate's budget request includes large increases to TRICARE fees across the board.

In any event, our **Chapter Legislative Committee** (Skip Bebernitz, Chris Costigan, and Pat Piccirilli) is actively advocating for us to our Congressional representatives during their recess periods. But we need your assistance and continued support. If you are unable to volunteer on the committee, your help making phone calls, sending emails (either self-composed or MOAA-composed) or letters would be appreciated.

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Here are some tips and resources for your consideration:

1. Visit <http://capwiz.com/moaa/home> to familiarize yourself with MOAA's position on an issue that might arise. This website will also enable you to identify contact information for elected officials and more.
2. Call MOAA's Member Service Center at (800) 234-6622 or email legis@moaa.org for the latest status on an issue, a legislator's co-sponsorship status, and advice on how you might approach a legislator on a particular issue.
3. Sign up to receive MOAA's weekly Legislative Update and the monthly Council & Chapters Update e-newsletters.

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

NEXT MEETING/LUNCHEON – ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING & CHRISTMAS/HOLIDAY PARTY

Sunday December 10, 1300 - 1600 hours at the Edison Club, Rexford, NY [The luncheon reservation form is on page 5.] *No grab bag this year – we are supporting Toys for Tots instead. (See below.)*

REMINDER: Please get your reservation and payment to CHRIS COSTIGAN NOT LATER THAN Wednesday morning December 6. The Edison Club needs a final count by the Wednesday before our meeting. If you plan to attend, even if you aren't 100% sure, please pay in anticipation. If for any reason you can't attend, we will refund your payment.

REMINDER #2: Yes, it's time again to send in our **annual Chapter dues** of \$15 for 2018. You may include your dues payment with your luncheon reservation payment, or you may send a check separately to the Chapter PO Box. Please make checks payable to NYS-CDC MOAA. Thanks!



HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY for this issue - TOYS FOR TOTS



At our Christmas luncheon this year, we are again collecting toys for the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program. Their mission: Collect *new, unwrapped toys* during October, November and December each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to less fortunate children in Albany, Broome, Clinton, Essex, Fulton, Franklin, Hamilton, Montgomery, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Schoharie, Washington and Warren counties.

What types of toys may we donate? The program does not recommend specific toys, but suggests items appropriate for children up to age 12 and early teens. For pre-teens/teens you might consider sporting equipment/bags/balls, books, backpacks, cosmetics, purses, watch/wallet gift sets, bath gift sets, board games, radio control cars/trucks, hand-held electronics, skateboards/helmets, curling irons, hair straighteners, and hair dryers. *Please do not give realistic looking weapons or gifts with food*, as such items will NOT be distributed. For more information about the program in our region visit:

<https://albany-ny.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites/Default.aspx>



Chapter Events, Past and Future:

- **October 15** - At our last luncheon on, Nick Lailacona, LTC USA (Ret), presented **lapel pins** commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War **to Vietnam Era Veterans** in attendance who *served on Active Duty sometime between March 1955 and 31 December 1975.*



President Skip Bebernitz, member Harold Brockman, and Nick Lailacona

- **December 16 - 1200 hours, Wreaths Across America™ at the Gerald Solomon National Cemetery**, Schuylerville. This is a beautiful ceremony, and placing individual wreaths is a very moving experience to remember those who served our nation. Please consider participating. Toward the goal of 10,000 wreaths, only 5,375 have been donated as of November 20. Our chapter has donated 39 so far. If you have already donated, thank you very much. If you have not done it yet, please seriously consider making a donation. The deadline is November 27. Wreaths are left on the graves for approximately one month before they are removed.

CHAPTER PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope that you had a fantastic Thanksgiving spent with friends and family. Hopefully you have had chance to work off all of the turkey and pumpkin pie by now.

We are now into the Holiday Season. There is a lot going on not only in our personal lives but in all of the organizations around us. The **Chapter's Annual Holiday Luncheon and Annual Meeting** is on 10 December at the Edison Club. I look forward to seeing all of you who normally attend our luncheons and really want to encourage those of you who either have never attended or had not done so lately to please consider coming out to enjoy the camaraderie that comes with attendance. This is the luncheon at which we collect donations for "**Toys for Tots**". Remember *new, unwrapped toys* are accepted. The "Toys for Tots" of Albany services the children of 14 upstate counties. Therefore the need is "Fucillo HUGE".

Other events that might be of interest are the **West Point Band's Holiday Show** at The Eisenhower Hall on the campus 2 and 3 Dec at 1300 hours. The admission is free, but you must show photo ID at the gate. The show is approximately 1 hour long. It culminates with an arrangement of "Little Drummer Boy" that is somewhat akin to the "William Tell Overture" wherein it starts out slowly and quietly and crescendos to a Hell Cats Drumline Solo accompanied by laser lights. Previous years performances of the entire concert are available on YouTube.

The **Navy Band** will be performing their Holiday Concerts at DAR Constitution Hall 16 Dec at 1500 & 2000 hours and again at 17 Dec at 1500 hours. Up to six tickets can be obtained for free at <http://usnavyband.ticketleap>. The show will be streamed live for those who can't attend. The link to watch the show will be available at www.navyband.navy.mil prior to the start of each show.

Have a Happy and Safe Holiday Season and a healthy and prosperous New Year! *Skip Bebernitz* 📧

THE SEASON FOR GIVING

Many private organizations, our Chapter included, need funding to operate. This time of year, it seems as though they come out of the woodwork to get their hands on our money. Yet, many of us still look to help those in need through programs that support our values. Here are a couple of worthy causes for your consideration:

THE VETERANS MIRACLE CENTER/ VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER, 10 Interstate Avenue, Albany, NY 12205 (518-486-8398)

The Center has been in existence for four years. Their purpose is to help veterans in need. They have a small "store front" about the size of an AFEES Shopette, open by appointment only 0900-1700, M – F. Veterans can "shop" to fulfill their immediate needs at no charge. All of the store items are brand new, not second-hand. Items include civilian casual clothes and suits, military pride clothing, down vests and coats, diapers and baby formula, Attends and catheters for adults, paper towels, and toilet paper.

Behind the "Store Front" is a warehouse. When veterans gets their first apartment or home, the VMC gives them a bed, mattress and box spring, living and dining room furniture, and pots and pans to start their next phase of life. If you know of anyone in need, please seek this organization out. This is a fantastic resource located in our backyard.

But they depend on the generosity of others. They receive a lot of material from other merchants: goods with damaged packaging or last year's design. The Center also relies on charitable monetary donations (and time) from individuals and groups. If you are in a position to contribute time or money, please give what you can.

(The Season for Giving, continued from page 3)

MOAA-SPONSORED OPPORTUNITIES TO "NEVER STOP SERVING" ON GIVING TUESDAY, NOV. 28TH!!

Giving Tuesday is an annual day of giving, encouraging people everywhere to donate. What a wonderful opportunity to express our shared commitment to Never Stop Serving by donating to your MOAA charities! On this #GivingTuesday, Nov. 28, please consider a gift to two of our MOAA charities. Their important work depends upon the year-end generosity of all MOAA members.

- The **MOAA Military Family Initiative** [MOAA MFI]
- The **MOAA Scholarship Fund**

Learn more about their important work at www.MOAA.org/GivingTuesday or in the December issue of Military Officer! Donate here: www.MOAA.org/GivingTuesday

CHAPTER DUES: Over the past decade, our Chapter has become increasingly active in supporting programs that help military members, veterans, and the local community. But, we haven't raised our annual dues since 2005! We feel we *should* do more, but our funds are drawing down. Should we raise dues to \$20, \$25, \$30 or more? WHAT DO YOU THINK? Please let us know!

NOTICE FROM MOAA: TRICARE CHANGES

Administrative and structural changes to the TRICARE program in the very near future will affect most beneficiaries except those using TRICARE for Life. For beneficiaries under age 65, to include active duty family members, it is time to take the required action if you need to.

There are key system transitions which necessitate modified technology adjustments to beneficiary data in the DEERS system - commonly called file transfers and new identifiers changing TRICARE Standard to the new TRICARE Select. In addition, the three current TRICARE Regions will be reduced to two, and the TRICARE contractors will be changing in both the East and West regions.

If you want to make changes to your TRICARE coverage, TRICARE officials are urging beneficiaries to do so as soon as possible.

What you need to know:

- By November 20, 2017, beneficiaries should have completed any and all enrollment actions. Beneficiaries will *not* be able to use the Beneficiary Web Enrollment website to enroll in or dis-enroll from TRICARE Prime options. Additionally, beneficiaries will *not* be able to use the web enrollment to enroll in TRICARE Young Adult or TRICARE dental options while this website is unavailable.
- Beginning December 1, DoD will "freeze" enrollment files as they will be transferred to the new TRICARE contractors and revise the plan options (Standard to Select) in the DEERS system.
- Beneficiaries can still send enrollment forms to the contractors and they will be processed in DEERS when the file transfer is complete. This will take 3 weeks.
- Regional contractors will accept enrollment applications through other channels, for example by phone and mail. The contractors will be able to process these enrollments after the freeze is complete.
- This will not affect any care you receive during the enrollment freeze. Remember to keep any and all receipts for purchased care.
- Remember, keep your DEERS information up to date as beneficiaries must be registered in DEERS to enroll in TRICARE Prime or a Prime option online, by phone or by mail.

KEEP THIS PAGE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

CHAPTER OFFICERS

CHAPTER OFFICE	INCUMBENT	E-MAIL
President	Ernest "Skip" Bebernitz, MAJ USA, RET	pres@cdnymoaa.org
1 st Vice President	Christopher J. Costigan, CDR USN, RET	1vp@cdnymoaa.org
2 nd Vice President	Emanuel "Manny" Biondi, MAJ USA, RET	2vp@cdnymoaa.org
Secretary	Ralph Folger, LCDR USNR, RET	secr@cdnymoaa.org
Treasurer	Fred Ames, CW4 USA, RET	treas@cdnymoaa.org

BOARD MEMBERS

Anthony J. Ficara*, COL USA, RET	
Rocco D. Acquilano, CDR, USNR, RET	Thomas W. Lenahan, Capt USAF, RET
Martin Leukhardt**, RADM USNR, RET	Charles Marshall, CWO4 USNR, RET
Alfred M. Memole, LTC USA, RET	Ronald Neaton**, CAPT USNR, RET
William Potts, CW4 USA, RET	Edmund M. Scheiber, Jr.**, Lt Col USAF, RET

* Immediate Past-President

** Former President

Luncheon Reservation Form

Date: **December 10, 2017**

Location: **Edison Club, Rexford, NY**

Time: 1:00PM - Social Hour
2:00PM – Dinner

Menu Choices: *FLAT IRON STEAK CHICKEN ALEXANDER PECAN-ENCRUSTED SALMON*

Price: \$30.00 per person (Please make checks payable to: NYS-CDC.)

To pay Chapter dues for 2018, please add \$15.00 to your total.

Send reservation form and check to: **Chris Costigan** (phone: 518-884-2943)
153 Paisley Road
Ballston Spa, NY 12020-2109

Please make your reservation Not Later Than Wednesday, December 6.

Your name: _____ Choices: Qty Menu Item
_____ Flat Iron Steak
Number of persons attending: _____ _____ Chicken Alexander
_____ Pecan-Encrusted Salmon



New York State Capital District Chapter
 Military Officers Association of America
 PO Box 373
 Waterford, NY 12188-0373

The NYS Capital District Chapter and the Military Officers Association of America are non-partisan member organizations that honor, assist, and advocate for all who serve and have served honorably in the uniformed services of the United States of America.

ONLINE NEWSLETTER BONUS SECTION

MOVING OUR CHAPTER FORWARD IN 2018

Chapter members downloading this newsletter electronically from our website comprise probably 80% of our most active and involved members. You responded when called upon, and even unsolicited when you saw that the Chapter needed to take action. So, it makes sense to start by engaging you in dialogue before we broaden our discussion to include our "snail-mail" members. Looking toward 2018, our Chapter needs to find at least two dedicated souls to head up important committees/initiatives:

1. Surviving Spouses. We are reaching out to surviving spouses to find a volunteer, but it might be more attractive to one person if a couple of others would volunteer to back-up and assist the primary liaison. *Do YOU know someone, maybe a few "someones" to ask?*
2. Transition Assistance. Few officers leaving active service decide to return to or settle in – or transition from the Capital District, but some do. MOAA provides many aids and resources and our Chapter should be a major resource for officers transitioning to civilian life or resettling here. But to serve this demographic takes one or more volunteers to dedicate a little time periodically to help fellow officers entering a new phase of life. Is this a mission you are suited by training, experience, and personality to handle? Do you know members who are?
3. Membership. The sine qua non of all our Chapter committees! Is there anyone out there who can spare a little time during the year to help recruit *and retain* new members?

2018 Chapter General Membership Sunday Meeting/Luncheon Schedule

February 11 – Guest Speaker TBD

April 8 – Guest Speaker: Dave Hubbard, "Spies in Hoopskirts"

June 10 – Guest Speaker: Jim Ketcham (Mark Twain)

October 14 – Guest Speaker TBD

December 9 – Annual Business Meeting and Christmas/Holiday Party

Dates, speakers subject to change.

Actually, all our other committees could use extra help. Most are committees of one.

MORE NEWS

A 4-STAR CHAPTER ONCE AGAIN. Chapter President Skip Bebernitz revealed our third 4-Star Level of Excellence Award at the October luncheon meeting. The award was presented at this year’s MOAA National Conference. *[Right]*



West Point Band presents:

West Point Holiday

Sunday, December 3, 1:30 p.m.

Eisenhower Hall Theatre

West Point, New York

What is the significance of these MOAA Level of Excellence awards?

Each year, state councils and local chapters may submit formal requests to MOAA to be recognized for their work and achievements. MOAA reviews the applications and evidence and may award one of two Levels of Excellence to the councils and chapters that have applied:

1. FIVE-STAR AWARD goes to “the very, very best councils or chapters.”
2. FOUR-STAR AWARD is awarded to above-average councils or chapters.

MOAA has made revisions for the 2017 Level of Excellence (LOE) awards, which are designed “to encourage interest and increase the number of chapters eligible to compete for the LOE award.” For the 2017 awards:

- Scoring will be aligned with traceable information from the MOAA database.
- Adjustments to achievable criteria will be made according to the percentage of chapter membership versus national membership.
- Criteria remain the same; however, the format is slightly different. The focus remains highlighting council and chapter legislative/grassroots advocacy, community engagement, and recruiting and retention.

The 2017 LOE submission deadline is May 1, 2018. The LOE award ceremony will be held in conjunction with MOAA’s annual meeting, Oct. 30–Nov. 2, 2018, in Phoenix.

**WWII 75TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION EVENTS
at the World War II Memorial, Madison Avenue, Albany**

Thursday, December 7 - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Observance

Our Chapter's Website earned a 5-star Communications award for 2016, which was presented to our webmaster, Ralph Folger at the June luncheon. We also earned a 4-star award for our newsletters in 2016. Chapter President Skip Bebernitz presented the award to the Newsletter Editor, Al Memole, at the October luncheon meeting (photo below)



This August, President Skip Bebernitz invited the Chapter Officers and Board of Directors to an exclusive group tour of the Saratoga Battlefield that he arranged to show his sincere appreciation for their dedication and contributions throughout the year. Although few could make it due to busy schedules, all of the Officers and Directors were grateful for the invitation. As you can see from the photos of Skip and the tour guide, it was a beautiful day for a terrain walk!

