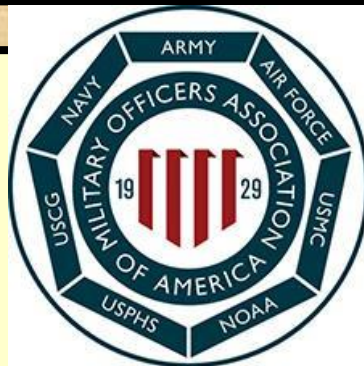


CAPITAL DISTRICT CHAPTER, NEW YORK MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

VOLUME 9, ISSUE 4

SUMMER 2018

Visit us at cdnymoaa.org



4-Star Chapter – 2016, 2015, 2009



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPTER PRESIDENT

I was very pleased to announce that both our Newsletter Editor Al Memole and our Webmaster Ralph Folger had received the MOAA Colonel Marvin J. Harris Communications 5 Star Level of Excellence awards, MOAA's highest award in each category. It is now my extreme pleasure to announce that **our chapter has received the MOAA 5 Star Level of Excellence Award**. To put this in perspective, of the over 400 MOAA Chapters nationally, 139 submitted themselves for consideration for the award, 85 were given the 5 Star award, 40 Chapters received both Colonel Harris Awards, *only 30 swept all three Awards as did we*. These awards would not be possible without the contributions of our Board of Directors and our active members. Congratulations all!



Nationally, the thing that MOAA does best is advocacy for all who have served or are serving in the military. The contribution of individual members is crucial in the accomplishment of this mission, as evidenced by 15,000 members contacting their Congress Person about the proposed Tricare fee increases that were defeated because of this groundswell of opposition.

Locally, what we do best is provide the sense of camaraderie and mutual friendship with military professionals. If you are among those who attend our luncheons, you are well aware of this and look forward to seeing the people with whom you have developed friendships. If you enjoy these times, why not consider running for one of the open positions on the Board of Directors? It requires three to four 2 hour meetings per year at the NYS Military Museum in Saratoga. If you are a chapter member who has not been to a luncheon lately or have never attended, why not come out and see what you are missing? If you know of a fellow officer who is either not a member or the chapter nor MOAA, why not encourage the officer to check us out?

Another way to enhance this feeling of camaraderie is to attend either a Convention of the NYS Council of MOAA Chapters or a MOAA National meeting. This year's Council Convention is being held 10-13 Sep in Western NY. The National meeting is 1-2 Nov in Phoenix, Arizona.

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Ernest "Skip" Bebernitz 🇺🇸

Sep 20 is the deadline for submitting news articles, photos, bio's, or stories for the *next* issue. Please e-mail your input to newsletter editor Al Memole at amemole1@nycap.rr.com

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

WHAT MEMBERS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CHAPTER DINNER MEETINGS

1. All Chapter members are welcome and encouraged to attend our meetings and bring guests.
2. By tradition, our Chapter has been meeting usually five times per year, in Feb, Apr, Jun, Oct, and Dec – with summers off – on Sunday afternoon at a formal restaurant or club (we've met at the *Edison Club* exclusively for a long time).
3. With rare exception, all meetings have a theme and/or a guest speaker. Our guest speakers have all given fascinating first-class presentations on a very broad range of topics, usually related to military issues, history, or our local community.
4. Several meetings each year provide opportunities to donate items for charitable organizations that help veterans, actively serving military, or the local community.
5. The Edison Club charges us for meals ordered, not meals actually served. For example, if members order and submit checks for a total of 30 meals, but only 26 people show up for the meeting, the Chapter must still pay for 30 meals. So, if you commit to attend, please attend.
6. Because of #2, above, we need reservations and payments *no later than Tuesday before the Sunday meeting*. We have to give the Edison Club a final count by Wednesday before our meeting. The Club requires a minimum of 21 guests to reserve a room. Our last five meetings have ranged from 24 to 35 guests. We'd love to see more members attend.
7. Except for point #1, above, which will never change, *all of the other points are subject to change* based on what YOU, the members, want. It is YOUR chapter. So, if our meetings are not meeting your needs, or you have other ideas, please let our Chapter leadership know.

2018 UPCOMING CHAPTER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON MEETINGS

October 14 – Guest Speaker: *Melody Burns*, Veterans Miracle Center

Reservation/order form for the October 14 meeting will appear in the Sep-Oct newsletter.

December 9 – Annual Business Meeting and Christmas/Holiday Party, Guest Speaker: *COL Terri Coles*, MOAA Chapter Affairs

Dates, speakers subject to change.

HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY for this edition → VETERANS MIRACLE CENTER



The Veterans Miracle Center (VMC) offers veterans and active-duty military personnel “real solutions that will enhance their lives.” These include clothing, personal care and hygiene products, houseware items, ambulatory equipment, and toys for their children, as well as specialists to provide counseling for personal needs, jobs, housing or financing. Everything is free-of-charge to veterans and their immediate household, available by appointment-only to veterans certified through reputable veteran organizations. *Our Chapter can help by volunteering time to sort and prepare the products for the store, donating new-condition products, or giving a one-time or recurring financial gift.* Melody Burns from the VMC will speak at our October meeting.

CHAPTER NEWS & OTHER EVENTS

At our last meeting in June, guest speaker **Jim Ketcham** delighted attendees with his phenomenal **impersonation of Mark Twain** ... in authentic-looking get-up. Humor and deep insight about our country and human nature from more than a century ago!

OUR CHAPTER LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

WOW! Labor Day is just around the corner. Another glorious and often sweltering summer is nearing its end. Our Chapter won't be meeting again until October, although several of us will be attending the NYS Council of Chapters annual convention in September – this year in Niagara Falls. But until we gather again as a Chapter, there are several important “matters” to mull over that will impact our future.

- **Members Matter.** Each of us matters. Our Chapter exists *only* because we are members, and it exists primarily for our benefit, but also for the benefit of the military, other veterans, and our community. A large and robust membership means:
 - **Legislative Clout.** MOAA has an impressive record defending the rights and benefits of actively serving military in all services and components, veterans, and the families of both. (See page 6.) But it is dialog with elected representatives by local Chapters like ours that maximizes the effectiveness of MOAA's annual Storming the Hill and follow-up lobbying. (See page 5.) To attract and maintain the attention of our legislators, we really need *every* MOAA-eligible officer in the NY Capital region to be a Chapter member. Numbers count! And let's not forget the need to weigh in on State legislation that impacts the military, veterans and their families.
 - **Local Impact.** The NY Capital region has a long and rich military history to preserve, a significant number of veterans (many in need), a significant number of Reserve and National Guard units, a few small but important active military bases and units, and a large number of youth who could potentially contribute to all three of the above. As former and current military leaders, we need to lead the way in meeting these needs, or at least contribute to them.
- **Money Matters.** It's a fact of life that there is no free lunch. Just to exist, the Chapter needs funds. If we want to contribute to causes, we'll need more. Chapter leaders are in the process of preparing a budget that we will share with you in an upcoming issue of this newsletter. In the meantime, here are a few things to think about:
 - **Operating Expenses.** Our Chapter is a lean not-for-profit machine: We are led by a small cadre of unpaid volunteers who provide their own office supplies. The Chapter neither owns nor rents any space for offices, meetings, or storage, and we own only a few items, such as flags, flag stands, and a small portable PA system and projector. The biggest operating expense is printing and mailing this newsletter six times per year. We also pay dues to the NYS Council of Chapters and MOAA national, pay for ROTC and JROTC medals, and incur fees for our bank accounts and website services. Try as we do to keep expenses under control, costs tend to rise over time.
 - **Worthy Causes.** Our Chapter has helped many causes over the years, including the sponsorship of MOAA awards for cadets at West Point and local ROTC and JROTC programs. Funds permitting, we would like to do something as a Chapter to help the NYS Military Heritage Museum in Saratoga Springs, where we hold our Board meetings. But we are already committed to help other causes. A couple years ago, the Board of Directors decided to focus efforts on five, and now six local charities, which we would like to continue to help:
 - **Stride Wounded Warrior Winterfest:** Members *and the Chapter* donate money, principally by attending a welcome banquet that funds the participation by wounded/disabled veterans and their families for a weekend of snow sports that help restore the vets' self-confidence.



- **Guardian House and Vet House**, under the Veterans & Community Housing Coalition, Inc. of Saratoga County: Members donate personal items for homeless veterans residing temporarily in transition housing.
 - **Books For Troops:** Members provide books and games through a local organization to actively serving military, which reminds them that folks back home care.
 - **Veterans Miracle Center (NEW):** Members *and the Chapter* are invited to donate products, donate money, or volunteer to prepare products for the store. The center helps certified veterans, active military, and their families with free clothing, personal care and hygiene products, houseware items, ambulatory equipment, and toys, as well as counseling for personal needs, jobs, housing or financing.
 - **Wreaths Across America:** Members purchase Xmas wreaths *under Chapter sponsorship* and may also participate in placing them on the graves of veterans interred at Solomon National Cemetery, Saratoga, in December to remember and honor their service.
 - **Toys For Tots:** Members provide new toys through this longtime USMC Reserve charity for needy children in the greater Capital region at Christmastime.
- **Sources of Revenue.** The bulk of the Chapter's revenue comes from annual member dues. A small amount trickles in from 50-50 raffles held at our dinner meetings. MOAA also generously provides a few monetary incentives to the Chapter for meeting specified goals and standards. But we find ourselves cash-strapped with little or no financial flexibility to do much more than get by.
- **Leaders Matter.** ...as all officers should already know. Following MOAA chapter guidelines and our own Chapter by-laws, every two years at the annual business meeting in December, Chapter members elect five Chapter officers (President, 1st VP, 2nd VP, Secretary, Treasurer), and eight Directors (Board members). The 13 elected leaders and the immediate past-President, *along with volunteer Committee chiefs*, comprise the Board of Directors who make business decisions and direct all Chapter activities.
- 2018 CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS**

November 3 – 1000 hrs., NYS Military Heritage Museum, Saratoga
- This is an election year, and a Nominating Committee will be canvassing members for interest in serving in one of the elected 13 positions. But, **we have an immediate need for a volunteer Treasurer** to fill this key vacant position.
 - We are also looking for committee members and chiefs among the general membership, including auxiliaries. You are not required to be one of the elected Board members to head or work on a committee. *We also encourage spouses to participate and share their skills and experiences.* Listed *alphabetically*, below, are the committees we have and the help we need to handle all Chapter business and activities effectively and efficiently, so that no one is overburdened:
 - **Historian:** We've had one volunteer but a team would work better to reconstruct our Chapter's history – before, out of ignorance, we are doomed to repeat it.
 - **Legislative Affairs:** We are blessed to have an aggressive committee of four, only two of whom are elected officers, who have been doing a bang-up job on this most important mission. But additional participants are most welcome.
 - **Membership:** This most critical committee has been left to the Chapter President in recent years. We desperately need help and many hands will make the work lighter.
 - **Newsletter:** A committee of one – the Editor – with no back-up. Anyone can help with articles, editing, photos, and graphics to maintain our award-winning means of communication. Fear not: The Editor is not a grumpy old curmedgeon – not yet anyway.

- **Personal Affairs:** Whenever a member or member's family needs assistance, guidance, or consolation— our Chapter has *no one* dedicated to help or lead the effort to help. Help!!
- **Program:** Probably the busiest committee *and with only two people*. The Program committee organizes all of our dinner meetings and other social activities. We should offer a greater variety of options, but we need help. The more the merrier (and easier).
- **Public Relations:** MIA, so far. Small wonder that no one in the region has heard of us or knows what we are doing for our community. Do any of you have a Public Affairs background? Would anyone like to have the experience working with the 4th Estate?
- **ROTC/JROTC Support:** Two Board members have been providing MOAA recognition to deserving cadets in ROTC (RPI/Siena) and JROTC (Albany HS, Amsterdam HS, and CBA). Other members have also stepped up to present awards. Our Chapter could do more to support these vital leadership programs. The youth are our nation's future. Again, with more participants we can do more with just miniscule time commitment on any single individual.
- **Surviving Spouse Liaison:** This would be a wonderful service, if we could only get at least one volunteer, preferably, a surviving spouse – someone who has been through it all.
- **Transition Assistance Program:** It's a shame that we have no one dedicated to helping fellow officers who are ending their military careers and transitioning to civilian life and/or moving to the Capital Region.

CHAPTER LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

On June 6, 2018, Committee members *Pat Piccirilli* and *Skip Bebernitz* met with **Congressman John Faso (19th Congressional District)** and his Constituent Representative, **Michael Hicks**. This was the second meeting with Congressman Faso since he replaced Chris Gibson. The Committee's objectives for this meeting were to:

1. Continue a relationship with the Congressman and his staff;
2. Review with him the major issues indicated by MOAA's fact sheets and/or website;
3. Discuss the possibility of cosponsoring a bill(s) as well as reviewing associated issues, time permitting.

Pat and Skip gave the Congressman and Mr. Hicks, folders that included a summary of the bills on the MOAA website requiring action and Dana T. Atkin's letter to the leaders of the House and Senate Armed Services committees. They then proceeded to discuss the impact of the Tricare rate hikes on retirees and moved onto each of the bills being supported by MOAA. Pat and Skip reiterated the objective of each bill and the negative consequences of not passing the bill. The aim as always was to have the Congressman either sponsor his own bill or sign up as a co-sponsor for a bill(s).

Congressman Faso listened intently and calmly and asked a number of questions to help him understand the issues. He stated that he would review the issues identified by MOAA, and that *he will submit his name as a sponsor for HR-1384*, which deals with active duty orders issued under title 10, 12304a and 12304b. Many Guard and Reserve service members have been denied benefits because these type orders limited their eligibility for certain benefits or affected deadlines for applying for certain benefits. He said he would consider voting for the House version of the "Military Widows' Tax Elimination Act of 2017" which is currently in the Senate Committee on Armed Services.

While Congressman Faso may have been visited by a MOAA rep during "Storming the Hill", Skip once again reiterated information about the MOAA organization and focused on the New York chapters. We may need to continue to illuminate the Congressman on the total MOAA picture including the alliances we have with other veteran advocacy organizations, but *all of this meeting's objectives were achieved*.

(Chapter Legislative Committee Update continued)

Future Actions and Considerations:

- Meet with the Congressman and/or his staff as appropriate;
- Maintain a list of bills that he should consider co-sponsoring;
- Consider forming a local alliance with other veteran organizations to increase the impact on this Congressional District office, and
- Continue to emphasize the MOAA organization and its impact.

MOAA LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES!!



On August 13, in front of huge crowd at Fort Drum, right in our own “backyard”, President Trump signed H.R. 515, the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2019.

Some wins in the NDAA that align directly with MOAA's key legislative goals are:

1. **A full 2.6-percent military pay raise**, the largest in eight years, consistent with private sector wage growth, as determined by the Employment Cost Index. (This raise only keeps pace with current wage increases; those currently serving still have a residual pay-raise gap of another 2.6 percent left over from reduced pay raises in FYs 2011, 2012, and 2013.)
2. **Increased end-strengths for the armed services over FY 2018 levels**, putting the armed services in a better position to deal with ever changing and challenging global mission requirements as outlined in the new defense strategy. Authorized new end strengths are: Army - 485,741; Navy - 331,900; Marine Corps - 186,100; Air Force - 325,720.
3. **No reduction in Basic Allowance for Housing.**
4. **No new TRICARE fees.**



MOAA's success at achieving these important goals in the final legislation came from working closely with congressional leadership and staffs, support at the grass roots level from our membership in answering our calls to action, and a concerted effort with our partners in The Military Coalition. The NDAA also includes:

1. Progress on modernizing the 38-year-old Defense Officer Personnel Management Act to provide more flexible options to the services.
2. Authorization for \$40 million in DoD supplemental impact aid and \$10 million in impact aid for severely disabled military children.
3. Eligibility expansion for Special Victims' Counsel services to victims of domestic violence and other aggravated violent offenses.
4. Establishment of a new punitive article on domestic violence in the Uniform Code of Military Justice; and authorization for military judges and magistrates to issue military protective orders.

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.



2018 Soldier Recognition Event (Click the link below to print the event flier & RSVP)

[2018cdnyreception.pdf](#)



**Please Join
The Capital District
of New York Chapter**

**Association of the United States Army
for our**



2018 AUSA RECOGNITION RECEPTION

When: Saturday, 22 September 2018

Cocktail hour 1800 hours (6pm), Ceremony 1900 hours (7pm)

Where: AEON NEXUS Corporate Office

138 State Street, Albany, NY 12207

Dress: Military - Formal Civilian - Business

Guest Speaker: SMA(R) Kenneth O. Preston
13th Sergeant Major of the Army

Purposes: -To recognize the Outstanding U.S. Army Soldiers and NCO's of the Active, Reserve and National Guard of New York.

-To recognize our Chapter Corporate Members for their continued membership in AUSA.

Cost: \$40.00/person – Heavy Hors D'oeuvres
Beer/Wine/Soft Drinks

Detach and return with payment no later than

15 September 2018

Attendee(s): _____

Would you care to sponsor a Soldier / NCO? If so please complete below and enclose payment for each person.

I would like to sponsor _____ or please select a Soldier for me to sponsor _____

Mail to: Mrs. Debbie Van Pelt, ATTN: AUSA Reception, 59 Meadow Rue Place, Malta, NY 12020

Please make checks payable to CD-NY AUSA

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 9, 2018

Mr. Richard H. Anderson, President and CEO
National Passenger Rail Corporation
1 Massachusetts Ave., NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Letter to Amtrak from
our Congressional
representatives in
support of the Toys For
Tots train

Dear Mr. Richard Anderson,

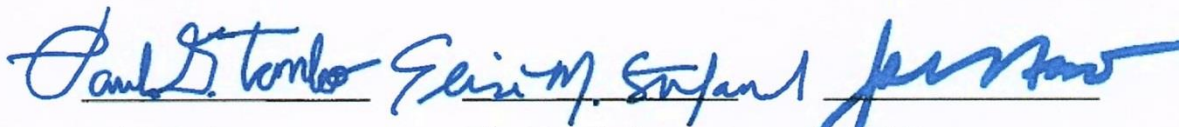
We are writing to express great concern that Amtrak is planning to end its support for the annual Toys for Tots Train. This is a beloved and endearing resource that many of our region's neediest families rely on. Discontinuing this train service will mean approximately 40,000 children and their families will not benefit from donated gifts and much needed winter hats and gloves. We implore you to reconsider.

We are aware that Amtrak has established a new policy for the operation of charter trains and believe it has every right to do so. However, ending this important holiday charter service will negatively affect the neediest in our communities and discontinue a positive charitable action that has brought great recognition to Amtrak's reputation in the eyes of many.

The benefit that the Toys for Tots charter brings to families in our region is immense. This program is about supporting our community and remembering people who are less fortunate during the holiday season. We ask you to consider the special circumstances involved here and act to preserve this unique and deeply valued Toys for Tots charter.

This holiday season would mark the 20th year of this longstanding and generous service. We have been deeply moved by the spirit of community and love for our children that are expressed through this program and we sincerely hope that the tremendous good it does will not be lost this holiday season.

Sincerely,


Paul D. Tonko Elise M. Stefanik John J. Faso



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

2019 UPCOMING CHAPTER GENERAL MEMBERSHIP SUNDAY DINNER MEETINGS AT THE EDISON CLUB, REXFORD

February 10

April 7

June 9 – Guest Speaker: *Daniel Way*, Adirondack Vets – “We Were There – WWII”

October 13

December 8 – Annual Business Meeting and Christmas/Holiday Party

Dates, speakers subject to change.



Col. Robert Smullen, USMC (Ret.), MOAA award recipient cadet Michael Morales, and SgtMaj Rod Wilday, USMC (Ret.) MC JROTC, Amsterdam HS



2019 CHAPTER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

March 9 – 1000 hrs., NYS Military Heritage Museum, Saratoga

August 10 – (tentative) 1100 hrs., Ed Scheiber’s house, Bolton Landing (Lake George)

November 2 – 1000 hrs., NYS Military Heritage Museum, Saratoga

NEVER STOP SERVING