

# CAPITAL DISTRICT CHAPTER, NEW YORK MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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New York State Capital District Chapter  
Military Officers Association of America  
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Chapter – 2017 & **2018**



*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.*

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## CHAPTER **NOT** HAPPENINGS

**THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING/LUNCHEON  
SCHEDULED FOR  
SUNDAY, APRIL 19 IS CANCELED!!**

The Edison Club has canceled all events through April due to *you-know-what*, but we probably would have canceled the meeting anyway to comply with the Governor's directives and protect you, our members.

## CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

**HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY for this issue → GUARDIAN HOUSE**

We highlight this charity every spring, but in case you may have forgotten, the *Guardian House* for females and the *Vet House* for males in Saratoga County provide transitional housing for veterans in need. Both homes are supported by the **Veterans & Community Housing Coalition (VCHC)** of Saratoga County that serves veterans in Saratoga, Warren, Washington, Fulton, Montgomery, Schoharie and Schenectady Counties. They offer help to veterans and their families for: temporary financial assistance, obtaining/maintaining housing, and securing VA benefits, health care, employment, and other public aid. Guardian House and the Vets House provide transitional housing for homeless veterans including a program of peer support (veterans helping veterans). *(Continued on page 2)*

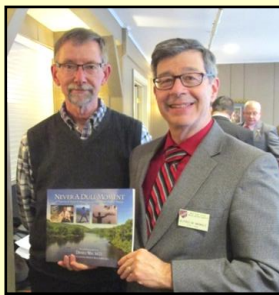


Normally, we support the Guardian and Vet Houses by bringing donations to our April dinner meeting. **This year, however, we will collect your donations at our next meeting – hopefully in June.** The houses need and will accept

clothing, furniture, household items, cleaning supplies, personal care items (*yes, this includes highly coveted toilet paper*), pillows, twin-size comforters, twin-size sheet sets, towels and washcloths, and also financial donations, which go toward repairs and purchases of clothing and other essentials. If you prefer not to wait until June, you may always donate directly to the VCHC. Please see the VCHC website (<http://www.vchcnyc.org/transitional>) for more information. Thanks!

### Chapter News and other items of interest

- **WELCOME NEW CHAPTER MEMBER:** Marsha Himler!
- **AT OUR LAST MEETING, February 9:** Our guest speaker, North Country physician, photographer and author, **Dr. Daniel Way**, continued the World War II theme where he left off at last year's meeting: Dr. Way gave a slide presentation on how the B-29 bomber helped



*Dr. Way with Al Memole*

to end WWII. He covered the history of the B-29 in detail: how it was rushed through testing so it could be deployed, and how the bloody capture of Iwo Jima saved thousands of lives of crews returning from missions over Japan. Fittingly, Dr. Way tied the bomber's story to home, recalling his father's service with a cartography unit on Guam that created 3-D maps for B-29 crews. Dr. Way made history come alive, and it was a special privilege for us to have him speak a second time.



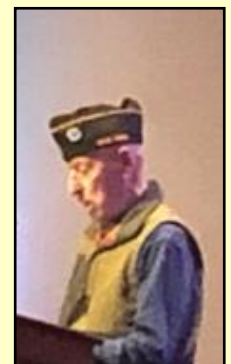
*The Brockmans, the Milbanks, and Tony Ficara enjoy a hearty conversation before the meal.*

- **STRIDE ADAPTIVE SPORTS WOUNDED WARRIOR SNOWFEST.** This year's Welcome Banquet for recuperating combat veterans was magnificent, as always. The event took place at the Hilton Garden Inn in Troy on Friday, March 6, the eve of their weekend of winter sports challenges on the slopes of Jiminy Peak. Present from our Chapter to honor these veterans and support the wonderful work of STRIDE Adaptive Sports were Marty and Milena Leukhardt, Ralph and Vicki Folger, Chris and Mary Costigan, Pat and Eileen Piccirilli, Al and Mary Memole, and Skip and Mary Lou Bebernitz. Skip is member of the Warrior Snowfest Planning Committee. Also, BG Barry Hartman, along with CSM Robert Van Pelt, had a key role in the ceremony to introduce the 13 veterans and their families or guests, and later call them forward to receive



*Mary Lou & Skip Bebernitz enjoying the festivities; Chris Costigan is probably checking work emails from Albany Med on his phone.*

recognition from local dignitaries. The Color Guard unit from La Salle Institute posted the colors. The Schenectady Pipe and Drum Band and the Mendelssohn Choir (a capella) entertained the audience with their outstanding performances. The keynote speaker, retired Navy SEAL Senior Chief Petty Officer **Donald Shipley**, gave a fascinating account of his ongoing aggressive efforts to unmask



*CPL Bernard McGarry (Ret.) reads a WWII Army veteran poem "Freedom"*

*(Continued on page 3)*

Navy SEAL imposters and others who falsely claim to be veterans for prestige or to obtain veteran's benefits illegally. Toward this goal, he created the popular "Phony Navy SEAL of Week" website, and has thus far exposed close to 10,000 lying imposters! His talk added to this annual event that is always deeply inspiring, as is the program that the event supports financially.

- **LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE REPORT.** On February 26, our Chapter's entire Legislative Liaison team (Chris Costigan, Kathy Gates, Skip Bebernitz and Pat Piccirilli) paid a visit to the local office of **Congresswoman Elise Stefanik, 21st District.** Unfortunately, she was in Washington DC at the time, but they met with her District Manager, Mr. Michael Ostrander. Our Chapter team asked Mr. Ostrander to thank the Congresswoman on our behalf for supporting the elimination of the "Widows Tax", which has been a MOAA goal for decades, and to let her know that she will be receiving a Certificate of Appreciation for her support during MOAA's Storming the Hill event last year.

Our liaison team provided a folder describing all the issues and bills MOAA deems important: **H.R. 333** - Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act, **H.R. 303** - the Retired Pay Restoration Act, **H.R. 413** - Hire a Hero Act of 2019, **H.R. - 847** Protecting Gold Star Spouses Act of 2019, **S. 2216** - The Transparency and Effective Accountability Measures (TEAM) for Veteran Caregivers Act, **H.R. 2094** - CHAMPVA Children's Care Protection Act of 2019, and **H.R. 5610** - Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act. As of January 3<sup>rd</sup>, the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress entered the second session, which requires those bills to be reintroduced or co-sponsored again. Consequently, the team expressed gratitude for Congresswoman Stefanik's co-sponsoring **H.R. 303** (Retired Pay Restoration Act bill that addresses the concurrent receipt of VA disability compensation and either retired pay or combat related special compensation). The team asked that she either reintroduce this bill or co-sponsor it again. The team went over each of the bills citing existing inequities and pointing out the outcomes advocated by MOAA.

The team also covered the importance of monitoring MOAA goals included in the **FY2020 NDAA** (National Defense Appropriations Act) passed in December 2019. These goals included preserving MWR resources and subsidies essential to family readiness, decreasing military spouse unemployment and underemployment rates, protecting and improving the quality of life and health of military families, and improving oversight and decreasing hazards to health and safety in military base housing. Chris and Kathy shared personal stories about their service experiences regarding military healthcare, relating to the Congresswoman's expressed concern over the centralization of healthcare services under the Defense Health Agency. The team reviewed a chart which laid out the changes at 50 different military treatment facilities (MTFs). The table revealed the restriction of MTF healthcare to Active Duty only while still providing base support functions and pharmacy services to beneficiaries. The issue of credentialing family members, especially in the healthcare field, was discussed, and all agreed that if it is not resolved at the federal level, it must be resolved by each state. Overall, our Legislative Liaison team considered this meeting very beneficial.

- **STORMING THE HILL.** This year's event, originally scheduled for March 21-26, was canceled – *in a sense*. Due to health concerns prompted by the spread of the corona virus, MOAA decided not to gather together representatives from the state councils for its board meeting and annual Storming the Hill. But, undaunted, MOAA simply implemented "Plan B", and moved the events to *virtual platforms* to replace the traditional face-to-face on-site meetings in the Washington, D.C., area. A prime example of MOAA's slogan, Never Stop Serving!

**NEVER STOP SERVING**

**May 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 [ammemole@gmail.com](mailto:ammemole@gmail.com).

- **DUES!** At the end of January 16 members had paid Chapter dues for 2020. Since then, we received dues from 17 more members. **Thank you ...**

Dana Berntson, Raymond Clark, John Dupier, Michael Favata, Tony Ficara, John Foley, Ralph Folger, Barry Hartman, Marsha Himler, Marty Leukhardt, Vince Memole, Floyd Milbank, Mary Morreale, Joseph Peck, Bill Potts, Anthony Russo, and Carl Thurnau.

This brings the total payments to 33 out of 78 dues-owing members listed on our Chapter roster. If you are a MOAA member (not a surviving spouse or auxiliary), are receiving this newsletter, and haven't paid dues yet, please do so. Dues support Chapter operations and our outreach efforts to deserving military and veteran charities in the Capital Region.

*[These "delicate reminders" are what you get when your Chapter newsletter editor is also Chapter Treasurer.]*



## WHAT IF I NEED LONG-TERM CARE?

*EDITOR'S NOTE. Our Chapter has many accomplished members who have a wide variety of experiences, talents and skills. We are fortunate to have as one of our members, **Jim Cameron**, COL, USAR Ret. Jim has been in the "nursing home" business for years and continues to serve, currently as the CEO of **Teresian House**. He is very passionate about his mission, so, I invited him to offer an article for the newsletter on long-term care, Teresian House, and other options. It is a subject highly relevant and beneficial to all of us regardless of our current life situation, because, sooner or later, we may face that choice for ourselves or our loved ones. A member of Jim's staff at Teresian House, **Sue DelVecchio**, composed the following article for us. I also want to take this opportunity to compliment the staff at Teresian House for the excellent reception and care for my father who was terminally ill and went there from the hospital for end-of-life care. It is a very nice facility!*

### **Navigating Long-term Care** by Sue DelVecchio

As we or our loved ones get older and medical needs increase, the task of maneuvering the long-term care system can be daunting. What level of care do I need – home care, adult day care, assisted living, skilled nursing? Do I need temporary rehabilitation to get back on my feet again after illness or injury? If I am a caregiver, what are my options if I need time away from care-giving?

The first step in navigating through the long term care maze is to establish what level of care the person requires, and that is determined by an assessment called a Patient Review Instrument (PRI) completed by a registered nurse. If at home, a nurse from the Visiting Nurses Association in your area can come to your home to do the assessment. If in the hospital, the discharge planner will arrange for the PRI to be done and forwarded to facilities/ programs appropriate to meet your needs.

Some organizations serving the elderly have multi levels of care; others are licensed to provide one level of care but may have various programs within that one level. Teresian House Center for the Elderly in Albany is one such facility. Teresian House participates in the Medicare and Medicaid programs and provides 24-hour nursing care to people over the age of 65. Other services offered include optometry, podiatry, dental, physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, housekeeping, laundry, meals, recreational activities, social services, and nutritional monitoring. The facility has a 50-bed **memory care** unit tailored to the unique needs of residents with dementia. *(Continued on page 5)*

★★★★★★★★★★

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In addition to long term care, Teresian House also offers **short-term rehab** for those who need additional recovery time and/or therapy following a health event that negatively impacts daily functioning. Intense physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, and interdisciplinary case management are all part of short term rehab at Teresian House.

What is available for the family who chooses to care for their elderly loved one at home? A number of facilities in the Capital District provide **respite care** –temporary placement that frees caregivers to go on vacation or attend family events with the peace of mind that their loved one will be cared for while they are away. Teresian House is committed to helping the community in caring for the aged and infirm. Our respite program helps the caregiver as well as the ones they are caring for. Additionally, Teresian House has been fortunate to be the recipient of a grant through the Troy Savings Bank Charitable Foundation allowing those unable to afford the daily respite rate (and who meet other income criteria), to have their loved one's stay paid in full. Having the stay fully paid for those who qualify is an additional stress reliever for the caregiver who is already facing what may seem like insurmountable challenges. [For additional information visit the Teresian House website at <https://teresianhouse.org/>]

## BOOK REVIEW

### **To Hell and Back: The Classic Memoir of World War II by America's Most Decorated Soldier**

**Author:** Audie Murphy; Ghost-written, by David "Spec" McClure (Friend and WW II Veteran Army Signal Corps)

Originally published in 1949, again in 1977 and a third time in 2002, an autobiographical movie under the same title was released in 1955.

**Reviewed by:** *Vincent Memole Jr., LTC. Infantry, USAR Retired*

If you have not yet watched the movie "To Hell and Back Again", at least three times or more, then all I can ask is "Why not?" Because I have probably watched the movie at least a dozen times, I found myself hearing Murphy's voice as I read his descriptions of his days in combat from Sicily in 1943 to Germany two years later, all with the famed 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division.

This 274-page book begins after a two page foreword by Tom Brokaw and starts on day one of the invasion of Sicily with Audie Murphy's rifle company still on the beaches. As with all books turned into movies, the book goes into more detail, including more gritty discussions typically found in combat arms units which movie producers could not include in a movie back in 1955.

Murphy describes the combat he lived through for two years, the patrols he led and how he was successful, working his way up from Rifleman to Non-Commissioned Officer, a battlefield promotion to 2LT, and command of a Rifle Company. He also writes about all the soldiers in his platoon, describing them in great detail with all their quirkiness. Interestingly, he never mentions any of his promotions, and only a reader who served in an Infantry unit could know he was promoted based upon the details of his missions and the number of soldiers under him. I also enjoyed that his story continues where the movie left off. Yet, nowhere in his book does he ever mention being awarded The Medal of Honor: I guess Audie Murphy REALLY was the humble person portrayed on screen.





## CHAPTER OFFICERS

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rocco D. Acquilano, CDR, USNR, RET	Ernest "Skip" Bebernitz*, MAJ USA, RET
Anthony J. Ficara**, COL USA, RET	Kathy E. Gates, COL USA, RET
VACANT	Martin Leukhardt**, RADM USNR, RET
VACANT	Edmund M. Scheiber, Jr.***, Lt Col USAF, RET

\* Immediate Past-President \*\* Former President

### 2020 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON MEETING DATES and GUEST SPEAKERS

Jun 14 @ Edison Club – (tentative) Ms. Ellen Keegan, Director and founder of Books for Troops

Oct 4 @ TBD – (tentative)

Dec 13 @ TBD – Christmas/Holiday Luncheon and Annual Business Meeting

### 2020 Board of Directors Meetings

August – Date TBD; Scheiber's home on Lake George, Bolton Landing (tentative)

Nov 7 – 1000 hrs, NYS Military Heritage Museum, Saratoga Springs

**As you can see from the tables above, we have four vacant positions. We'd like to fill at least two of them at least for the remainder of this year. The main time commitment is two meetings – and one of those might be held on the shores of Lake George! The Chapter belongs to us members, so pitch in and make your voice (and your ideas) heard!**