

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
PO Box 373
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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 STILL NOT HAPPENINGS

THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING/LUNCHEON SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY, JUNE 14 IS CANCELED!!

The Edison Club is unable to accommodate our luncheon meeting on June 14th due to continuing restrictions as part of our State's "Pause". Also, the club will not be accepting reservations for rest of this year as they anticipate beginning the renovations they had planned.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPTER PRESIDENT

I hope this current newsletter finds every one of you safe and well during the current COVID-19 pandemic. It certainly has been a difficult and unsettling past three months as we make many adjustments to our daily lives (my kingdom for a barbershop!!). Hopefully, we here in the Capital District have reached a level where discussions are occurring to consider opening the economy and our social lives back up slowly and rationally. To this point I regret to inform all that it is necessary to cancel our next Chapter luncheon meeting scheduled for Sunday, June 14th. Unfortunately at this writing the Edison Club is uncertain that the proposed timeline/phases for reopening will allow for a meeting by June 14th. While this is certainly disappointing it is however, I think prudent under the circumstances. Our *next* Chapter luncheon meeting is scheduled for Sunday, October 4, 2020. I hope to see as many of you there as possible. *(Continued on page 2)*

August 17 is the deadline for submitting news articles, photos, bio's, book reviews, or stories for the *next* issue. Please e-mail your input to newsletter editor Al Memole at ammemole@gmail.com.

A reminder also that **Monday May 25th is Memorial Day**. I ask that you spend just a moment or so remembering those men and women who lost their lives and could not come home, and reflect on their service and why we have the luxury and freedom that we enjoy today. Have a good summer; take care of yourselves, your families and your shipmates!!!

V/R,

Chris Costigan



CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY for this issue → BOOKS FOR TROOPS

We have been highlighting this charitable service for many years. Books For Troops (BFT) is a local operation begun and still headed by Ms. Ellen Keegan. Their mission is to provide reading material, primarily, but also puzzles and similar items for intellectual stimulation and diversion to deployed troops worldwide and patients at VA hospitals. BFT will accept **SOFT COVER** books in very good to excellent condition in the following genres: *Biographies, Comics, Westerns, Science Fiction, Fantasy, Horror, Puzzle Books, Historical Fiction, Military Fiction, Military History, and History*. The **only** site available to leave books is that at their office. If you wish to drop books off, please put them in plastic bags (no singles, no boxes) and place the bags in the collection bins outside the office.

Office Address: 688 New Loudon Road Latham, NY 12110 (*cannot* received mail here)

Office Hours: Open Monday 1pm-4pm; other days by appointment only

Mailing Address: 152 Oak Brook Commons Clifton Park, NY 12065

Email: ekeegan3@nycap.rr.com

Our Chapter has included a \$60 donation to BFT in this year's budget, *made possible by our dues*. You can also support BFT by paying for postage at the rate of \$15.00 per box ("Adopt a Box"). Just make a check out to Books for Troops, 152 Oak Brook Commons, Clifton Park, NY 12065.

Chapter News and other items of interest

- OUR CHAPTER WEBSITE has been down temporarily for repairs. It seems to have been hacked again, right about when we learned that it *earned MOAA's 5-Star Col. Marvin J. Harris Communications Award for 2019*. Might the hackers' motive be envy? Well, our webmaster, Ralph Folger, will make the site even better, as he has done consistently in the past.
- CHARITABLE DONATIONS. We had planned to collect items for the **Guardian House** transitional housing for needy female veterans run by the Veterans & Community Housing Coalition (VCHC) of Saratoga County, and **Books For Troops** at our April and June luncheons. With both meetings cancelled due to the "Pause", we will arrange to collect donations for both at our October luncheon. The Sep-Oct issue of this newsletter will include a reminder. You may also make individual donations to these worthy causes. If you do, please make known your MOAA and Chapter affiliation. See the previous article for contact info for BFT; contact info for the VCHC is:

Address: 20 Prospect Street, Bldg 2, Suite 313, Ballston Spa, New York 12020

Phone: 518-885-0091

Email: info@vchcn.org

- NEW YORK STATE COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS 48th ANNUAL CONVENTION. Given our State Council’s determination to maintain our *unbroken* string of annual conventions and given the uncertainty of reopening from the “Pause”, the Council made a tentative plan for “an abbreviated program.” The tentative plan envisions a 3-day event: Day 1 arrival/check-in; Day 2 (full day) with the annual business meeting with MOAA presentation and options for virtual attendance, in the morning, free time in the afternoon, and a banquet that evening; Day 3 check-out/departure. The venue will probably be mid-state, such as the Carrier Circle in Syracuse, right off the Thruway. Details including dates/prices TBD.
- DUES! Three additional payments have brought the total payments to 36, surpassing last year’s participation of 34. **Thank you to Ed Scheiber, Julia Holcomb, and Robert G. Conway Jr.** We are still 42 payments shy of maximum participation, so if you are a MOAA member (not a surviving spouse or auxiliary) who is receiving this newsletter, and haven’t paid dues yet, please do so.
- CHAPTER OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS. So, far, one intrepid member has stepped forward to fill one of the four vacancies, **Mike Favata**, LCDR USN Ret. Thanks Mike! We could use three more volunteers. What about you?

MOAA NEWS

Please make a habit of visiting the MOAA website at www.moaa.org for up-to-date information on the Association and its activities. For your convenience, here are just a few highlights gleaned from the national website:

- PANDEMIC NEWS. Twenty Veterans Administration (VA) medical facilities have reopened for **non-COVID** services, and among them is the **Syracuse VAMC** here in NY. Also, if you have been impacted by the corona virus pandemic or the response, MOAA wants you to share your story to enable MOAA understand better the needs of the uniformed services community. The website has further information.

OUR FUTURE DINNER MEETINGS

We have two more Chapter luncheons scheduled for 2020: Oct 4 and Dec 13. But we do not yet have a venue for either. As Chapter members, you have a say in Chapter business. If you know of places that you think would be a great (not just adequate) locale for our meetings, please tell one of our Officers or Board members. The venues must ...

- Be centrally located in the Capital Region: roughly southern Saratoga, eastern Schenectady, central-eastern Albany, or western Rensselaer counties.
- Accommodate up to 40 people comfortably and apart from the public or other parties;
- Accept reservations (so we don’t get bumped);
- Have ample parking and be accessible to older and disabled persons;
- Be clean;
- Consistently serve delicious food, with options for beef, chicken, seafood, and vegetarian dishes;
- Charge a reasonable price, preferably around \$30 per person including gratuities;
- Have friendly and responsive service;
- Have flexibility for accommodating last-minute changes.

Other considerations:

- Access to bar and/or hot beverages
- Attractive ambience
- A la carte pay-as-you-go option in lieu of set meals

(Continued on page 4)

- **TRICARE NEWS.** Effective May 12, changes to *telehealth* coverage are allowing more beneficiaries to access health care services through the end of the COVID-19 national emergency. The changes are:
 1. TRICARE will cover audio-only telehealth visits, consistent with Medicare's coverage expansion during COVID-19. This allows beneficiaries to consult providers who typically don't offer telehealth services and expands access for those beneficiaries who don't have video capability or broadband internet service.
 2. TRICARE has eliminated out-of-pocket costs for covered telehealth services. This copay/cost sharing waiver applies to all covered in-network telehealth services, not just services related to COVID-19. If you have any questions about covered telehealth services, please consult your managed care support contractor. It will take some time to update claims processing, so you may have to pay a copay/cost share up front and submit for reimbursement.
 3. TRICARE has expanded the number of providers able to offer telehealth services by allowing reimbursement for interstate care as long as the care is permitted by federal or state licensing laws.
- **VIRTUAL STORMING THE HILL.** Representatives Bill Posey (R-Fla.) and Kathy Castor (D-Fla.) circulated a congressional letter urging House Armed Services Committee (HASC) Chairman Rep. Adam Smith (D-Wash.) and Ranking Member Mac Thornberry (R-Texas) to ensure the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) includes language to **stop planned cuts to military medical capacity**. *Their letter clearly articulates the MOAA position that the COVID-19 pandemic demands a reassessment of the medical readiness requirements, updated with lessons learned from our nation's response to the current health emergency. (The deadline for signatures was May 21, so stay tuned.)*

BOOK REVIEWS

SARATOGA: A Military History of The Decisive Campaign of the American Revolution

Author: John F. Luzader, PhD in History and World War II Army Ranger

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



Original published in 2008 and republished in 2014, Saratoga is an exceptionally well written book on what many have called the turning point of The American Revolution, which Dr. Luzader expertly justifies. His obvious love of history and his employment as a Historian for the National Park Service, stationed initially at Saratoga, enabled him to research and write a fine and detailed narrative.

This 495 page book starts slowly as the author sets the stage with details on how “[t]he war from the side of the Canada” was devised, from General Washington’s retreat across New Jersey in 1776 to General Burgoyne’s convincing the King of England to place him in command of a 7,000 man army in Canada. The operation was to be in two phases: move south and capture Albany by the end of Summer 1777 then move east the following Spring and recapture New England, cutting off the New England rebels from those in Virginia.

Dr. Luzader goes into detail on Burgoyne’s Army. He also goes into finite details about the acrimonious relationships between General Horatio Gates, General Benedict Arnold, and General Philip Schuyler and the backbiting that was common during the Revolution among many of those in Congress

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and those serving under arms. He covers Burgoyne's movement south out of Canada, British operations at Ft. Ticonderoga, Crown Point, and Ft. George, as well as the battles at Ft. Stanwix and Bennington, the two battles at Saratoga, and General Burgoyne's attempted retreat and eventual surrender.

Dr. Luzader's decision to quote many original letters from the officers of each side's army made reading this book a challenge. The original thoughts and different perspectives from the men (and one woman) who were at Saratoga 243 years ago were interesting. However, the English language has changed a bit over 243 years, believe it or not, and reading old diary entries was tiresome. Overall, **I highly recommend this book**, especially to anyone who loves history and wants to know more about this pivotal battle. This book is perfect for any history buff's personal library.

CHURCH OF SPIES: The Pope's Secret War Against Hitler

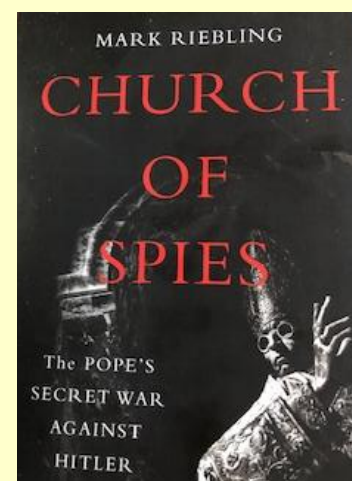
Author: Mark Riebling, author of *Wedge: The Secret War Between the FBI and CIA*

Published by: Basic Books, © 2015

Reviewed by: Al Memole, LTC USA Military Intelligence (Retired)

My oldest son gave me this book for Christmas; the fourth book I've been able to read this year, thanks to the "Pause." And, it is a thriller. Before becoming Pope Pius XII on March 2, 1939, Eugenio Pacelli had been Papal Nuncio in Munich (1917), Papal Nuncio in Berlin (1920-29), and Vatican Secretary of State (1930). He had strong ties to Germany and many friends there. Pacelli extended all the usual diplomatic courtesies to Chancellor Hitler, although he was openly critical of the Fuehrer and the Nazi Party. But, as Pope, he ceased his criticism after the bullets started flying and remained silent until the end of the war. Allied leaders were appalled that he did not speak out to condemn Hitler and Germany as news of atrocities against the Jews leaked out. The Pope's background and his silence led some historians to conclude that he was "Hitler's Pope". Yet, several Jewish leaders praised and thanked him after the war for his efforts and those of the Vatican to save many Jews. So, what in God's name (literally) was going on? Author Riebling did some serious exhaustive research to find out.

The list of the author's sources is 28 pages long (no breaks). Endnotes in small print span 72 pages! Nearly every paragraph in the 250 page story is annotated, drawn from one or more sources. Riebling exposes the actions of a hidden and largely unknown "theater of operations" of the Second World War in Europe. I am not an expert on the war, but I have solid knowledge of its major aspects. Yet, never in my life had I heard or read anything about any of this. It is quite a revelation, and much of it so farfetched to be unbelievable if it weren't confirmed by sources. Its telling is far from dull or pedantic. It is a compelling tale full of suspense. The narrative occasionally jumps back in time to bring parallel storylines together at crucial points. Otherwise, it flows well and is easy to read. I loved the plot twists and many surprises. The actors themselves, minor as well as major, were fascinating. The reader encounters despicable villains and honorable heroes, the highly competent and the unimpressive, and mostly regular people with their flaws and virtues. Clearly the author's favorite, and mine as well, is "Joey Ox." So, what was this "secret war" and how did it come about? How did it turn out, and what overall effect did it have on the war, if any? How was the Pope involved? What was Hitler's involvement? Well, I'm not telling you, because that would spoil the surprises that make this book so exciting to read. See for yourselves.





CHAPTER OFFICERS

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* Immediate Past-President ** Former President

2020 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON MEETING DATES and GUEST SPEAKERS

Oct 4 @ TBD – (tentative)

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

DON'T FORGET: If you know some establishments that meet the criteria listed in a side bar earlier in this newsletter, please let one of the Officers or Board members know!

NEVER STOP SERVING

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 have one volunteer, but would like at least one more 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!