

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

Volume 8, Issue 4

Summer 2017

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4-Star Chapter - [2015](#) & 2009



## MOAA DEFENDS EARNED BENEFITS

No time to rest: MOAA needs Chapters and all members to communicate MOAA's goals to our elected representatives. Here are a just a few key points for us to drive home:

1. **WHITTLING AWAY MILITARY BENEFITS SENDS THE WRONG MESSAGE (MOAA Featured Alert):** With so few volunteering to serve, we must preserve the idea there is value in service. Repeated legislative proposals to cap military compensation, benefits, and support programs, even in times of austerity, are inconsistent with our responsibility to care for those who serve our country.
2. **PASS A DEFENSE BILL APPRECIATING MILITARY SERVICE:** Our servicemembers need Congress to have a thorough understanding of the challenges they face and the sacrifices they endure. They likewise deserve a commensurate compensation and benefits package that is reliable and consistent, not one that is tweaked from year-to-year for the purpose of seeing how much money can be extracted and applied elsewhere.
3. **PREVENT STEEP TRICARE FEE HIKES:** Don't repeal the grandfathering clause. The FY2018 national defense authorization bill negotiations are underway. The Senate's budget request includes large increases to TRICARE fees across the board. These fee increases are a direct result of the repeal of the 2017 National Defense Authorizations grandfathering clause. The intention of the grandfathering was to keep fees where they currently are for beneficiaries in the service prior to 1 January 2018. These fee increases are disproportional and do not reflect the service and sacrifice of the beneficiaries who have earned the health care benefit. Please send your legislators this MOAA suggested message to prevent these hefty fee increases from negatively impacting servicemembers and their families

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## ATTENTION ALL VIETNAM ERA VETERANS!



At our *October 15 luncheon*, Nick Laiaconia, LTC USA (Ret), will be **presenting lapel pins** commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War to **Vietnam Era Veterans** in attendance. You don't need to be a combat veteran to qualify for a pin, but *you must show documents that you served on Active Duty sometime between 1955 and 31 December 1975*. If you qualify, plan to attend the luncheon, and would like a pin, send a brief bio (2 or 3 sentences) to Skip Bebernitz at 11 Freemont Lane, Troy, NY 12182-1428.

# CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

- At our last luncheon meeting on June 11, Chapter member, **Merle Schreckengost** (in photos below), updated members on important aspects and developments regarding **Terrorism Counteraction** as it affects our safety and security.



- Chapter members **Pat Piccirilli** and **Joe Peck** (in the photo below) participated in a foursome in the **2017 Toys for Tots golf tournament fundraiser** on July 31 at the Edison Club.



- The Chapter Officers and Board of Directors held the second **Board meeting** of 2017 on **August 19** at the Scheiber's in Bolton Landing. After a "grueling" 90 minutes handling MOAA and Chapter business, members and spouses enjoyed a lakeside picnic by beautiful Lake "Gorgeous". (See photos below.)

Wow, Ed! This is like 942.6 calories.

Who cares? It's all about the taste, Brother.



## CHAPTER PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope that your summer has been enjoyable so far and that the rest of it is even better for you!

**WOW! Our Chapter has received the 4 Star Level of Excellence again this year.** That is three years in a row. There are several contributing factors for our achieving such success not the least of which are the Board of Directors and all that they do to make this Chapter GREAT and you the member for both being a member and your participation.

**Ralph Folger has received the 5-Star Level of Excellence for his outstanding work as our webmaster.** This has been a challenging year for him. As I have previously noted, the website has been hacked twice this year. Each time Ralph has made it bigger and better. Ralph was the recipient of the 4-Star Award last year. Thanks Ralph!

**Al Memole has received the 4-Star Level of Excellence Award for his fantastic newsletter.** In this past year he has both made the on line version colored, but has provided much more useful information in the on line version. This is the second straight year that Al has received the award. Good job, Al!

Everyone involved in these awards deserves our thanks!

Congress is in their August recess. Both houses have passed generous versions of the National Defense Authorization Act. When they reconvene, there will be negotiations as to the joint version to send to the President. **MOAA is still very concerned about their three key issues for the year: Eliminate Sequestration and End Harmful Defense Cuts, Prevent Disproportional Tricare Fee Hikes, and Eliminate the Widow's Tax.** *Please contact your Congress Person and our Senators to voice your support for these items.*

The **State Council of Chapters 45th Annual Convention** will be held at the Fort William Henry Hotel and Convention Center 19-22 September. It will be really nice to see old friends from other parts of the state again!

*Skip Bebernitz* 🇺🇸



## 2017 NYS COUNCIL of CHAPTERS ANNUAL CONVENTION

...and while many of you are reading this newsletter, MOAA members across New York State are preparing for the New York State Council of Chapters annual convention. Sad late-breaking news: Admiral Doran and his wife, Ginny, will not be able to attend this convention. Admiral Doran is an Albany native who worked aboard the Lake George tour boats in his youth. It was such a great pleasure to meet the Dorans at last year's convention. BUT ... Lieutenant General Atkins, THE MOAA President, will attend in place of the Admiral!

Many of you reading this article have never been to a Council of Chapters annual convention. You might be wondering what is the big deal. Well, MOAA members from the various NY chapters come together to share ideas for their chapters - what is working, what is not - and to map out strategies to advance MOAA's goals in New York. But we also share friendship, camaraderie, some good eats, fine drinks, entertainment, fun and laughter. *If you are missing this year's event, shoot for next year.*

## FEEDBACK FROM A FEATURED CHARITY

The May Newsletter highlighted the local charitable organization, BOOKS FOR TROOPS, INC., a volunteer organization that "sends "care packages for the mind" to our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq by providing a variety of books that help ease their fears, loneliness, boredom, stress and to allow them a temporary escape from the daily horrors of war." BFT's Director, Ellen Keegan, shared with us some feedback that BFT received from the front. We thought you'd like to see the huge difference these modest donations have made.

And thanks to all our members who made donations. We will accept them for BFT at every Chapter meeting.

# Thank You!

## FROM THE TROOPS!

From Paul K, Commander of US Navy

"While at the hospital of Yongsan American military base in Seoul, Korea, I received a book with your yellow bookmark in it. I can't express to you enough my profound gratitude on what Books for Troops is doing. I served over 34 years. And I tell you from experience, when serving in a foreign country especially, but in general any base away from home, books keep me sane. It allows us to pass the time and forget our loneliness, even fear.

Books have saved many a soldier from going nuts or exploding emotionally. They are literally the best psychological tool out there for us.

I am extremely happy to see soldiers going through the books available, selecting one and reading it. I smile knowing that he would spend the near future, relaxed and stress free, ignoring for that time his loneliness away from his family and friends back home.

My simple thank you carries the deepest of meanings."

From Edmundo, Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar

"Thank you so much for the thoughtful and awesome care package of books you sent us. It came at just the right time when morale was very low. Reminding us that people back home want to make our lives better and care about us was a real morale booster, as well as all your kind words in your card. Your books will bring a lot of hours to take away the stress, loneliness, fears and missing home.

From: David W. Air Force

"Thank you so much for books. My flight loved it and had a great time sorting through the box. We all will enjoy many stress-free hours of escape into a place other than here thanks to your organization. Thank you so much.

## Thank You Excerpts from the Troops

"Thank you so much for your incredibly generous gift and for supporting our troops! Take pride in knowing what a great and positive impact that those books had on our unit's morale. Reminders of home from kindhearted citizens like you do wonders for our spirits. To be able to escape for a while into the comforts of a good book provides solace and maintains morale." MAJ Todd D.

I just received your boxes of books that you sent. All I can say is "Thank you, thank you, thank you.! You guys are truly making a great impact in the daily routine of some truly wonderful American warriors. We are staying in great spirits because of people like you." 1LT Justin M.

**"I received my package in the mail and I couldn't be happier. I was not expecting mint condition comic books from 40 years ago. These will put smiles on my face and of many of my buddies for days to come. Thank you for caring."** Petty Officer Art S.

"My battery is currently deployed to an austere location in the country of Jordan and they are really limited on what they can do in their free time. On our site there are no portable devices or personal electronic devices because of our mission, so my soldiers have taken a great interest in reading. Thank you for providing them with such a wealth and variety of books to fill their time help them escape." First SGT. Garth C.

**"MY VA patients love the comic books. They are a smash! I have seen so many smiles for the first time. Thanks for helping to put them there."** Lisa L.

"The program that you are involved in has helped me to overcome many a restless night and mundane days. From myself and all the Marines over here that you have shared your love of books with, we thank you. You are the reason we do this job so selflessly. Knowing Americans like yourself make me very excited about getting home to see my wife and kids." Sgt. Caleb S.

"I thank you and all your volunteers who donate their time to make our time here more pleasant. We really appreciate the books. They serve as a great way to "get away" for a moment and a wonderful reminder that there are a lot of people back home who care for us. You are all the type of people who make being here worth it. I also was moved by the heartfelt letter accompanying the books. Semper Paratus! Ssgt Rob W.

"Many thanks for the boxes of comics that arrived at our hospital today. I am sure they will add a lot of smiles to our patients who need something to smile about." Eisenhower Army Hospital

**"It is with great honor and appreciation that I send this letter. The impact that deployment has on each young soldier is always unknown. Supporters such as your group provide comforts that ease this impact and make for a better deployed life. The books and comics that we received were wonderful, but knowing that someone supporting what we are doing strengthens our resolve. Stay safe and keep America true."** Cpt. Kyle M.

"MY NAME IS CAPT. TRAVIS W. I AM THE CHAPLAIN FOR THE UNIT. THE CHAPEL IS THE CENTRAL LOCATION FOR SOLDIERS TO GET BOOKS. THE BOOKS HELP TO BOOST MORALE AND HELP GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO DO DURING THEIR TIME OFF. PLEASE KEEP THEM COMING AS THEY GO FAST."

## MORE MOAA NEWS

### MOAA Launches New Web Home Page/Look

MOAA President Lt. Gen. Atkins introduced the MOAA website's new home page at [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org) on August 24. If you haven't visited the website in a while, check it out. It features "expanded content in areas of advocacy, benefits, career transition, TRICARE, and finance — all military-related and helpful to currently serving and retired servicemembers and their families. The new design highlights more articles in a new way and incorporates improved image technology, all the while making it easier for you to find the information you're looking for and enabling MOAA to bring you even more up-to-date and relevant news."

The MOAA headquarters staff talked to members over the past six months, and collected feedback from multiple focus groups, to deliver a more user-friendly and intuitive home page. This is just the beginning of a full website redesign programmed for 2018 that will continue to integrate the preferences and feedback received from MOAA members. *MOAA would love to get your thoughts on the new home page, so please consider e-mailing the MOAA Member Service Center at [msc@moaa.org](mailto:msc@moaa.org) to share your feedback.*

### Tricare/Express Scripts Mail-order Pharmacy Program

FROM THE MOAA WEBSITE/BLOG: [Lt. Col. Shane Ostrom, USAF \(Ret\), MOAA's Program Director of Finance and Benefits Information reports](#) that **beginning Sept. 1, 2017, Express Scripts need consent from patients who want to receive automatic refills of their maintenance medications enrolled in TRICARE Pharmacy Home Delivery.** Express Scripts will contact TRICARE beneficiaries before their prescription refills expire to determine whether they want their doctor to be contacted to renew the prescription and if they would like to continue in the Automatic Refill program. If not, Express Scripts will not refill the prescription.

When the last refill of a medication enrolled in the Automatic Refill program ships, Express Scripts will reach out to the beneficiary by telephone and/or email (depending on the preference you indicated) and ask the following:

- Would you like Express Scripts to reach out to your doctor for a new prescription?
- Do you want to keep your medication enrolled in the Auto Refill program?

Express Scripts will not re-enroll your medication unless they hear from the beneficiary. Ways to respond:

- Online at [Express-Scripts.com/TRICARE](http://Express-Scripts.com/TRICARE)
- Via the automated phone call from Express Scripts
- By calling an Express Scripts Patient Care Advocate (PCA) at 1-877-363-1303

*If Express Scripts does not receive consent within 10 days of reaching out to the beneficiary, they will remove the medication from the Auto Refill program.*

### MOAA Invites All Members to MOAA's Annual Meeting



MOAA' is holding its 2017 Annual Meeting on Monday evening, **October 23, at the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites Alexandria - Old Town**, 625 First Street, Alexandria, VA, 22314.

For more information and to register, please visit [www.moaa.org/2017annualmeeting](http://www.moaa.org/2017annualmeeting).

## KEEP THIS PAGE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

### CHAPTER OFFICERS

CHAPTER OFFICE	INCUMBENT	E-MAIL
President	Ernest "Skip" Bebernitz, MAJ USA, RET	pres@cdnymoaa.org
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Christopher J. Costigan, CDR USN, RET	1vp@cdnymoaa.org
2 <sup>nd</sup> 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

## Upcoming Chapter Meetings for 2016

**General Membership Sunday Luncheons:** *Edison Club, Rexford, NY; Social Hour begins at 1300 hrs, with luncheon from 1400 ~ 1600 hrs.*

- **October 15** – Guest speaker - Howard Porter, Jr., Director, Gerald B. H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery
- **December 10** – Annual Chapter Business meeting and Christmas/Holiday Party



**Chapter Board Meeting:** November 4 - *NYS Military Museum, Saratoga Springs, at 1000 hrs.*

**Chapter Events:** *Voluntary participation supported or sponsored by the Chapter*

- **December 16** - Wreaths Across America™ at the Gerald Solomon National Cemetery, Schuylerville, an event to help remember – and never forget - those who served our nation

*Luncheon reservation forms and details about these and other upcoming events will appear in subsequent issues of this newsletter. The next issue will be disseminated on/about September 27.*



**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.*

**WWII 75TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION EVENTS  
 at the World War II Memorial**

Wednesday, October 25 - Battle of the Santa Cruz Islands

Wednesday, November 8 - Operation Torch

Saturday, November 11 - Veterans Day Observance

Thursday, December 7 - Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day Observance



**WEST POINT'S EISENHOWER HALL THEATRE 2017-18 SCHEDULE**

This year's Marquee Series includes six great performances and one buffet ticket for Mamie's Buffet for each subscription purchased. Order through the web site [Ikehall.com](http://Ikehall.com) (internet fees apply). Information, is available on the website and the Box Office at 845-938-4159, open Monday-Friday, 8AM-4PM.

<b>JERSEY BOYS</b>	<b>SUN</b>	<b>September 24, 2017</b>	<b>2PM</b>
<b>A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO LOVE &amp; MURDER</b>	<b>SUN</b>	<b>October 22, 2017</b>	<b>5PM</b>
<b>STOMP</b>	<b>SAT</b>	<b>October 28, 2017</b>	<b>8PM</b>
<b>ANJELAH JOHNSON</b>	<b>FRI</b>	<b>November 17, 2017</b>	<b>8PM</b>
<b>ROGERS &amp; HAMMERSTEIN'S CINDERELLA</b>	<b>SUN</b>	<b>February 11, 2018</b>	<b>5PM</b>
<b>TRACE ADKINS</b>	<b>SAT</b>	<b>March 3, 2018</b>	<b>8PM</b>

**Chapter General Membership Sunday Meeting/Luncheon Schedule for 2018**

February 11 – Guest Speaker: Jim Ketcham (Mark Twain)

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

June 10 – Guest Speaker TBD

October 14 – Guest Speaker TBD

December 9 – Annual Business Meeting and Christmas/Holiday Party

*Dates, speakers subject to change.*

