

CAPITAL DISTRICT CHAPTER, NEW YORK MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Volume 11, Issue 5, September-October 2020



Visit us at cdnymoaa.org



5-Star 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.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- MOAA HAPPENINGS, p. 1
- CHAPTER HAPPENINGS, pp. 2, 5
- WREATH SPONSORSHIP FORM, p. 3
- WREATH SPONSORSHIP ONLINE INSTRUCTIONS, p. 4
- BOOK REVIEW: LINCOLN'S FOREIGN LEGION, p. 6
- OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS, p. 7
- SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING MEETINGS, p. 7

MOAA HAPPENINGS

- NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT (NDAA). The NDAA is still conference. Word is that Congress won't move on it until after the election. MOAA has identified four topics that need *immediate* member support: 1) helping military special needs families, 2) passing the budget on time, 3) expanding benefits for Vietnam vets exposed to herbicides, and 4) stopping cuts to military medical personnel. For information on what you can do, please visit the MOAA website at: <https://takeaction.moaa.org/moaa/?0>
- VIRTUAL/ONLINE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERSHIP, OCT 23, 2:00-3:50 PM EDT. All MOAA members are invited to attend online. *Register ahead of time*, whether you attend or not, to receive an emailed link to the recorded session after the meeting. The Lead-Off Webinar will be An Overview of Scams and Frauds, a 25-minute session on the nature of criminal activity, how to identify a problem and prevent being scammed, and what to do if you become a victim. The Annual Meeting begins at 2:30 pm and will cover MOAA's current programs and initiatives. Members will be allowed to ask questions of our association's leaders. This will be **Albany native Admiral Walter Doran's last meeting** as Chairman of the Board. Don't miss this!



CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

THE NEXT SCHEDULED GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING/LUNCHEON IS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, **IF** we can find a suitable venue both willing and permitted to allow us to gather for a dinner, **and** we have enough members who are able and willing to meet.

(As announced in the last issue, the October 4 meeting has been canceled.)

The Officers and Board of Directors of our Chapter are doing their best to make our December Annual Business Meeting (and Christmas/holiday party) happen. If successful, we will invite representatives from Toys For Tots (our next Highlighted Charity) to join us. No luck finding a venue so far. If any members have suggestions, please let one of the officers or board members know!

HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY for this issue → WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA™

Wreaths Across America™ (WAA) is a 501(c)(3) corporation whose mission is to **Remember, Honor, and Teach** Americans of all ages of the sacrifices made by those who served our nation in her Armed Forces. One of their main nationwide events is laying Christmas wreaths on veterans' graves at Arlington one Saturday in December and at veterans' cemeteries and other locations in all 50 states. This year's wreath laying event will be held nationwide on **December 19**. The organizers of the past WAA events at the *Gerald B.*

Solomon National Cemetery in Schuylerville hope to hold their traditional memorial ceremony this year prior to laying wreaths. Last year's event attracted around 3,000 participants, but if COVID restrictions preclude such a gathering this year, one option under consideration is to allow 50 volunteers per day to lay wreaths over a period of a few days. The next issue of this newsletter will include updated information about the wreath laying and possible ceremony.

With or without a formal ceremony, residents of the Capital Region will remember and honor, with wreaths, the deceased veterans laid to rest in the G.B. Solomon National Cemetery. Our Chapter has been a local fundraising group for Wreaths Across America™ for several years, for which we get a small percentage of the total amount donated through our group. Thus, **we encourage all Chapter members, your families and friends, to sponsor wreaths through our Chapter**. You may sponsor one or more wreaths by mailing your payment along with the form on page 3 of this newsletter to WAA at their Maine address, or, following the instructions on page 4 of this newsletter, through the WAA website at <https://www.wreathscrossamerica.org/>. The cost to sponsor a single wreath is \$15. Our Chapter's WAA group code is **NY0087P**. We have yet to reach our goal of sponsoring **100 wreaths**. So far, 1,492 total wreaths have been sponsored for the G.B. Solomon National Cemetery, which is only 11.4% of the goal. There are still 11,608 more graves to honor. Let's do it!



Chapter News and other items of interest

- **MOAA LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE AWARD**. Our Chapter earned a 4-star LOE for 2019! Okay, so we're down one star since 2018. That is due primarily to our vacant Vice President positions, which reduce the effectiveness of our succession planning. Four-star recognition is still an honor and a tribute to our Chapter.



[Continued on page 5]



WREATHS *across* AMERICA

Wreath Sponsorship Form

Sponsored wreaths are placed on grave markers at state and national veterans' cemeteries, as well as at local, community cemeteries each December. Wreaths may also be sponsored online at www.WreathsAcrossAmerica.org. If you wish to make your sponsorship with a credit card, please visit our website for a secure online transaction.

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 Email: _____

Please make checks payable to:
Wreaths Across America
 PO Box 249
 Columbia Falls, ME 04623

Call 877-385-9504 with any questions.
 Thank you for your sponsorship and joining us in our mission
 to Remember, Honor and Teach!

Sponsorship Type	Price	Quantity	Total
Individual = 1 Wreath	\$15.00		
Mailed "In Honor" card = If you wish to send a physical honor card telling someone of your sponsorship, please see "In Honor" section below. The \$2 fee is required for this mailing.	\$2.00		
Family = 4 Wreaths	\$60.00		
Small Business = 10 Wreaths	\$150.00		
Corporate = 100 Wreaths	\$1,500.00		
		Grand Total	

GRAVE SPECIFIC REQUESTS ARE NOT ACCEPTED ON THIS FORM

In Honor of:

Below, please provide email or mailing address of "In Honor of" recipient so we can notify them of your sponsorship in their honor. If you have a specific message please write it on the back of this sheet.

Email address: _____
 Mailing address: _____

In Memory of:

This name will be listed on our online memory wall. Below, please provide name, rank, branch of service and state resided.

Branch of Service: _____
 Rank: _____
 State: _____

Please note, ALL sponsored wreaths are shipped directly to the location and NO wreaths are sent to the individuals purchasing sponsorships.

Location ID: NYGSNS Fundraising Group ID: NY0087P

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

Cash: _____ Total: _____ Date Received: _____

Total No. Checks: _____ Reconciled: _____

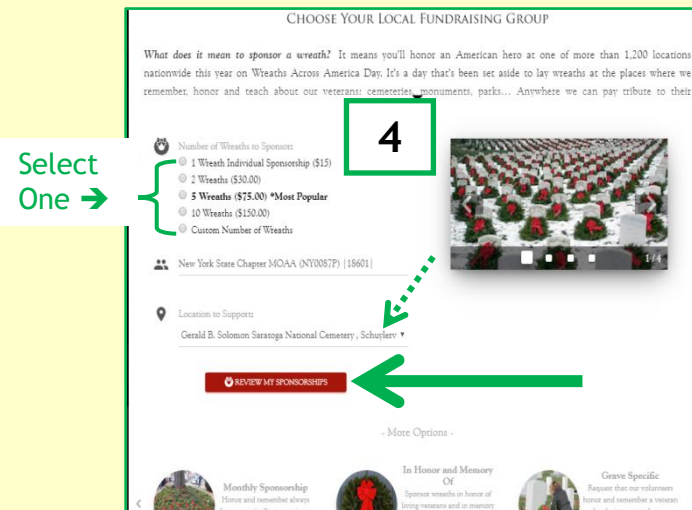
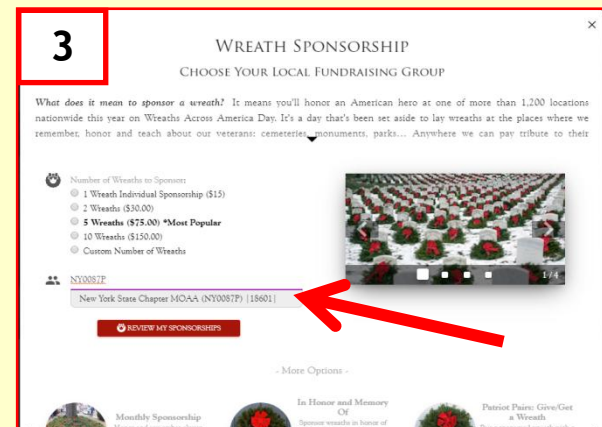
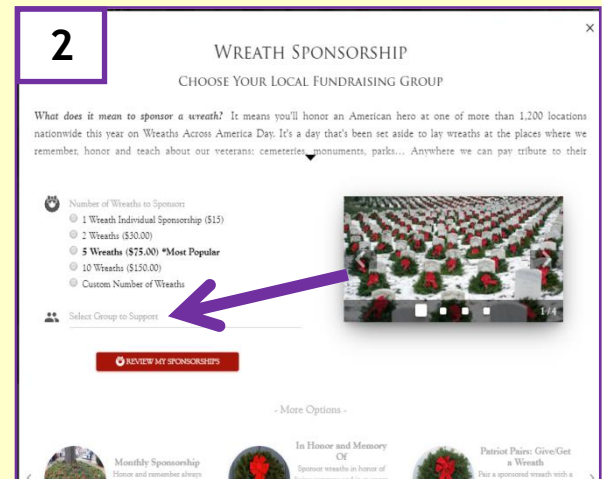
MO: _____

Entered: _____

GEN: _____

Wreaths Across America™ - Guidance for Sponsoring Wreaths Online

1. On the home page, under the red “SPONSOR WREATHS” button, find and click on the tiny heading labeled “or Local Fundraising Group”. That opens a box titled “Wreath Sponsorship; Choose Your Local Fundraising Group”
2. Click on the button for the number of wreaths you wish to sponsor. Then, in the box just above the red button labeled “Review of Sponsorships”, click on the space to the right of the icon of two people labeled faintly “Select Group to Support.”
3. With your cursor in the space, type in our group code **NY0087P**. The entry “New York State Chapter MOAA (NY0087P) (186010)” will appear *below* the space.
4. Click on “New York State Chapter MOAA (NY0087P) (186010)” The location “Gerald B. Solomon National Cemetery, Schuylerville” will appear below, to confirm you have the correct fundraising organization. *Select the number of wreaths you wish to sponsor*, and click on the red “Review of Sponsorships” button to be able to complete the transaction.



Chapter News and other items of interest [Continued from page 2.]

- **CHAPTER OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS.** The Board held its meeting online through Cisco WebEx on Saturday, September 26 from 1000-1130 hrs. The Board resolved to identify a venue or venues for future meetings. Chapter Officers/Board Members agreed to stay in their positions for 1 year until a formal Nominating Committee can be formed next year. Two members have expressed interest in filling vacant positions, but we would still like at least two more, because we have two vacant Board positions and four vacant committee chairs (*see next bulleted section*). Our Legislative Affairs Committee continues to monitor the status of key legislation, but has paused holding direct meetings with our Representatives who are occupied with the upcoming election.
- **VACANT COMMITTEE CHAIRS.** Our Chapter could serve our members and the community more effectively if we had a few more members willing to take on any one of four key functions. **THE DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THESE POSITIONS REQUIRE A VERY SMALL TIME COMMITMENT; NO MORE THAN YOU CAN AFFORD TO GIVE,** and MOAA has guidance for volunteers. The committee functions include:
 - **Personal Affairs.** Serve as the main point of contact for Chapter members in need, and notify Chapter leadership when members move or pass away.
 - **Public Relations.** Interact periodically with local news media – and ideally social media – to provide Chapter contact information and publicize events, so that prospective members and the Capital District community in general can learn who we are and what we do.
 - **Surviving Spouse Liaison.** Reach out to surviving spouses to provide comfort and assistance whenever one of our members dies, inform them of benefits, and let them know that the Chapter and MOAA have not forgotten them.
 - **Transition Assistance Program.** Serve as the point of contact for active and prospective MOAA members in the Capital District who are leaving military service in the active or reserve component, many needing help with contacts and leads for a second career or transitional employment.
- **CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES.** The Board voted not to raise dues for 2021, so dues will remain \$30 per year. Thanks to the 38 members who paid this year:

Rocco Acquilano, Ernest Bebernitz, Arthur Benoit, Dana Berntson, Harold Brockman, James Cameron, Edward Choiniere, Stephen Cipperly, Raymond Clark, Robert Conway Jr., Christopher Costigan, John Dupier, Michael Favata, Anthony Ficara, John Foley, Ralph Folger, Jr., Kathy Gates, Barry Hartman, Marsha Himler, Julia Holcomb, Jeffrey Hughes, Martin Leukhardt, Charles Marshall, Jerome Meader Jr., Alfred Memole, Vincent Memole Jr., Floyd Milbank, Mary Morreale, Alfred Paris, Joseph Peck, Patrick Piccirilli, William Potts, Frank Quinn, Anthony Russo, Edmund Scheiber, Merle Schreckengost Jr., Carl Thurnau, Thomas Walsh

If you are a dues-owing Chapter member, that is, a MOAA member who served as an officer in one or more of the uniformed services (not a surviving spouse or auxiliary), AND you are not among the members listed above, please consider supporting our Chapter by paying your dues for 2020. To be a member in good standing, you need only to pay the current year's dues. If you haven't paid dues in several years for any reason, you do NOT owe back dues. Chapters are important to MOAA – just take a look at the latest Military Officer magazine!!

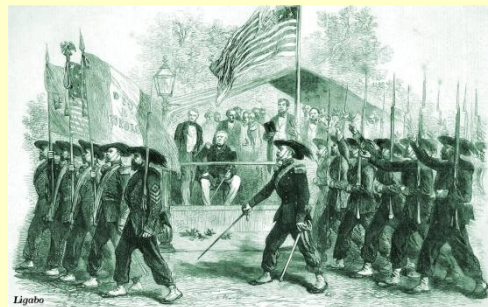
BOOK REVIEW

LINCOLN'S FOREIGN LEGION: The 39th New York Infantry – The Garibaldi Guard

Author: Michael Bacarella, © 1996

Publisher: White Mane Publishing Company, Inc., Shippensburg, PA; 296 pp., including appendices

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



I found this book among my late father's possessions. I remember him showing it to me when he got it years ago, and I finally got around to reading it this September. The author is not an academic or a military historian, but a professional actor who became interested in the 39th NY Volunteer Infantry while researching history for period films. He spent about 10 years studying English, Italian, and French language sources on the unit. My chief criticisms are: 1) the book has some great old photos, but absolutely NO maps. So, the detailed accounts of each battle could confuse a reader who doesn't have Civil War battle maps handy or can't mentally visualize battle geography and topography; 2) there were a few distracting editing errors and a decision to spell names in different ways as they appear in original documents. For example, the soldier Killiam Van Rensselaer (probably a descendant of our famous patroon), is identified in different places as William Von Renssalaer, and other spellings. Despite those two negatives, the story itself is very interesting, and the author tells it well, maintaining a good flow. I definitely recommend this book, but concede that it probably would appeal mostly to die-hard Civil War buffs.

The author, Bacarella, begins the tale with accounts of the unit's namesake, Giuseppe Garibaldi. His exploits and worldwide reputation explain the origin of the 39th and the spirit that drove recruiting and motivated its officers and soldiers (well, most of them), a number of whom had served under Garibaldi in battle. Also, the US federal Government actively courted Garibaldi to accept a commission to command a division. Garibaldi, who detested slavery, was strongly tempted to accept, but didn't, as we know from history. Bacarella explains why in a fascinating side story. The idea to form the unit named for him came from a flamboyant polyglot Hungarian immigrant in New York named Frederick D'Utassy (*at left*; not his real name). D'Utassy's is a story unto itself: He was a complete fraud! Yet, he hoodwinked a lot of influential people, successfully raised the regiment and led it to war. He also finagled a multitude of ways to enrich himself at the expense of his soldiers and the government. He lasted quite a long time, but did finally get his comeuppance, and that episode will make you laugh out loud. (I won't tell and spoil it – you'll have to read the book to find out.)



D'Utassy adopted the name "Garibaldi Guard" (GG) for the regiment to attract and recruit members of the diverse immigrant communities in and around New York City. The original 10 line companies were organized by nationality and primary language: 1st (A) Italian; 2nd (B) Swiss; 3rd (C), 5th (E), 6th (F), 8th (H), and 9th (I) from the various German states (pre-unification); 4th (D) Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American; 7th (G) Hungarian, Slavic, and Prussian; and 10th (K) France and French Canadian. Many of the soldiers spoke English poorly or not at all. The GG participated in many important battles, including Bull Run, Harpers Ferry, Gettysburg, The Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg, right up to Lee's surrender. The unit had its share of problems with discipline, poor leadership, intrigue, and even murder, but managed to distinguish itself in most of its engagements. Bacarella routinely included bland recitations of daily report type information (sick call, reassignments, desertions, promotions, transitions, arrests, demotions, etc.) Some readers might see that detracting from the story, but, dull as it might be, it gave a clearer sense of reality – the changes and organizational turbulence that units typically experience and the fact that, throughout most of its existence, the regiment was occupied by activities other than combat (training, marching, recuperating, watching, guarding, patrolling, etc.) This book presented the full story: the glory, the shame, and commonplace.

CHAPTER OFFICERS

CHAPTER OFFICE	INCUMBENT	E-MAIL
President	Christopher J. Costigan, CDR USN, RET	pres@cdnymoaa.org
1 st Vice President	VACANT	1vp@cdnymoaa.org
2 nd Vice President	VACANT	2vp@cdnymoaa.org
Secretary	Ralph Folger, LCDR USNR, RET	secr@cdnymoaa.org
Treasurer	Alfred M. Memole, LTC USA, RET	treas@cdnymoaa.org

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

Oct 4 IS CANCELED

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

DON'T FORGET: If you know some establishments suitable for our meetings, please let one of the Officers or Board members know!

NEVER STOP SERVING

2020 Board of Directors Meetings

Nov 7 – 1000 hrs, – Online/Virtual, unless we find another meeting location

November 16 is the deadline for submitting news articles, photos, bio's, book reviews, or stories for the *next* issue. If you know of a military or veteran event in our area, have a "war story" to tell, a "shout-out" for a volunteer helping veterans, or a review praising or panning a military-themed movie or book, please e-mail your input to newsletter editor Al Memole at ammemole@gmail.com. THANKS!