

CAPITAL DISTRICT CHAPTER, NEW YORK MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Volume 11, Issue 6, November-December 2020



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4-Star Chapter – 2019
5-Star 2017 & 2018



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPTER PRESIDENT, pp. 1-2
- CHAPTER HAPPENINGS, pp. 2-4
- BOOK REVIEW:, pp. 4-6
- SCHEDULE OF UPCOMING MEETINGS, p. 6
- OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS, p. 7

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.

MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPTER PRESIDENT



Greetings to all Chapter members as the Holidays are rapidly approaching. It is with much regret to report that the December 13th luncheon meeting has been cancelled. This luncheon has historically been well attended with a great display of camaraderie, cheer, and charity for the Marine Corps Reserve Toys For Tots program. Due to the increase in COVID infection rate locally and the inability to locate a new venue that can accommodate us with safe social distance practices, it was decided to cancel the luncheon. As always, the "force protection" of our Chapter members remains the number one priority.

Despite the lack of a formal Chapter meeting and luncheon I encourage all members to remain engaged and active in Chapter and MOAA national activities and issues. Here are just a few suggestions:

- read the 5-star award-winning Chapter newsletter and Chapter website for news and information;
- check out the MOAA national website and/or Military Officer magazine;
- contact your Congressional representatives to let them know you support MOAA's position on pertinent issues and legislation;
- consider attending a virtual Board of Directors meeting and maybe becoming a Board Member or Committee Chairperson;
- participate/support Chapter charitable activities such as Wreaths Across America and Marine Corps Reserve Toys For Tots program;
- perform a "buddy check" on a Chapter member you know; call, e-mail, or perhaps arrange a coffee get-together for two or three to see how everybody is holding up during these challenging times.

(Continued on page 2)

My best wishes for all for the coming Holiday Season and I hope everyone will find joy and peace. Thanks for all you do and we will try for a luncheon meeting in February 2021!

Chris Costigan

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

THE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING & CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY LUNCHEON PLANNED FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13, IS CANCELED.



HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY for this issue → TOYS FOR TOTS (TFT)



2020, the year of COVID-19, has been a challenge for everyone, but the Marines persevere, as always! Our local Toys for Tots program is pushing forward as best they can to help disadvantaged children and their families while following the appropriate health precautions. In previous years, our Chapter supported this effort coordinated by the Marine Corps Reserve by collecting toys from members at our annual Christmas Holiday luncheon and donating money from our treasury. *Due to cancellation of our luncheon this year, we will not be collecting toys, but our Board of Directors approved a donation to TFT of \$210. We encourage Chapter members individually to donate toys at local toy drop sites in your area.*

The local TFT website (<https://albany-ny.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites>) has a complete list of sites, which include banks such as SEFCU and NBT, retail stores, etc.. TFT does not publish a list of appropriate toys in order not to limit the variety of items. TFT prefers that donors consider what might be an appropriate gift as if we were giving it to our own child or relative. They do give guidance on gifts for those hard-to-shop-for pre-teens, including, but not limited to: “sporting equipment/bags/balls; books, backpacks, cosmetics, purses, watch/wallet gift sets, bath gift sets, board games, radio control cars/trucks, hand-held electronics, skateboards/helmets, curling irons, hair straighteners, and hair dryers.” *TFT will not distribute realistic looking weapons and gifts with food.* The Capital Region TFT will collect toys from toy drop locations up until Monday, December 21. Toy distribution will run from December 1 through December 22 at specific distribution events to families whose applications have been accepted. In 2019, Capital Region TFT distributed 224,624 toys to 195,999 children.

UPCOMING LOCAL TFT TOY COLLECTION EVENTS

11/27 - **Wintertime Wonderland** Opening Day holiday-themed family-friendly attraction! The Capital Region's largest indoor Christmas event located next to Vent Fitness in Latham is a drop box location! Open Thurs and Fri 3p-9p, Sat 9a-9p, and Sun 9a-8p! Get tickets at <https://wintertimewonderland.com/tickets/>

12/04 - **Ballston Spa Parade**, 6-9pm. *The tree lighting will be live-streamed on the BSBPA Facebook Page.* *For those who may choose to come to the park, New York State COVID-19 social distancing and mask requirements will be followed and attendance limited.* Santa will parade through neighborhoods in the village, along with the Ballston Spa Police and Fire Departments and Community Emergency Corps' ambulance collecting Toys for Tots.

12/05 - **Dirty Sweatshirts Paintball** (9am-4pm) at Capital Combat Zone in Troy, NY.

12/11, 12/12, 12/13 - **Rotterdam Christmas Market** (10am-9pm) at ViaPort Rotterdam.

12/18 and 12/19 - **Quick Response Lights Display and Toy Collection**, 6-9 pm.

12/20 - **Breakfast with Santa**, 9am-1pm, Albany Capital Center

Chapter News and other items of interest

- **CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES.** This year a final total of 39 members paid dues (Thank you to COL Barbara Wood, USA, Ret.) Two members have already paid in advance for 2021. Normally, we would be soliciting dues for 2021 with the December meeting/luncheon invitation, and collecting payments with the reservations and at the luncheon. **So, now with the cancelation of our December luncheon, we ask that you please mail your dues for 2021 either directly to Treasurer, Al Memole, at 8 Rose Lane, Rensselaer, NY 12144, or to our Chapter PO Box in Waterford.** All dues received after the distribution of this newsletter will count for 2021. Thank you for your support.
- **CHAPTER OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS.** The Board held its last meeting of 2020 online through Cisco WebEx on Saturday, November 7, from 1000-1130 hrs. Here are a few key topics that were discussed:
 - The Board agreed to defer decisions regarding venues for future meetings until we know more about the virus situation and precautions. You will find the schedule of our meetings for 2021 on [page 5](#). Let's hope that we can actually have these meetings!
 - While health concerns and COVID restrictions have greatly curtailed our public profile, our President, Chris Costigan, has been working at recruiting new Chapter members.
 - The Legislative Affairs Committee has been actively monitoring events and reports that all three of our Congressional incumbents won re-election, but the National Defense Authorization Act has not yet been passed. MOAA is urging all members to take action, preferably through the MOAA website. (*See LAC report below.*)
 - We recently delivered a MOAA Junior ROTC award package to Amsterdam High School for a cadet who would have received the award last spring had the school not closed for in-classroom instruction and on-campus activities. (See JROTC AWARDS report below.)
 - The Board also approved the following charitable donations from Chapter funds:
 - \$60 for Wreaths Across America
 - \$210 for Toys For Tots
 - \$100 for the NYS Military History Museum that had hosted many of our Board meetings in recent years
 - \$50 for Grant Cottage whose volunteers have been guest speakers at many of our luncheons.
 - Sad news: With the retirement of founder and president, Ellen Keegan, and the termination of its storefront lease, *Books For Troops*, one of our favorite local charities, has closed down.
 - The NYS Council of Chapters has tentative plans for its 2021 convention: a two-day business conference in the Syracuse-Rome-Utica area.
- **JROTC AWARDS.** Last spring, schools in the area had to close down and suspend all or most of the usual activities due to precautions for preventing the spread of the corona virus. Consequently, high school Junior ROTC programs had to cancel their annual award ceremonies. However, 1stSgt James Bautista, Senior Marine Instructor, Marine Corps JROTC Program (MCJROTC), who replaced SgtMaj Rod Wilday at Amsterdam HS, contacted our Chapter to obtain a MOAA award for Cadet Captain Tyler Adams who would have received the award last spring. Last school year, Cadet Adams finished in the top ten of his Junior class academically, and finished the MCJROTC program

(Continued on page 4)

with a 98 average. He is a Senior now and Commanding Officer for the program.
CONGRATULATIONS TO CADET CAPTAIN TYLER ADAMS!!

- **LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT.** (submitted by Pat Piccirilli) NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT (NDAA) FY2021. As of this writing the NDAA is still in conference. However, most DOD operations are being funded under a Continuing Resolution (CR). We are now past the election and movement on the NDAA is expected shortly. It is worth repeating that MOAA has highlighted a number of issues which require our support and action:

1) passing the budget on time so we don't depend on CRs for funding

2) expanding benefits for Vietnam vets exposed to herbicides

3) halt cuts to military medical personnel and increase Congressional oversight of the MTF restructuring and realignment process

4) expand eligibility for certain veterans to concurrently receive disability pay and retired pay or combat related special compensation.



Of immediate concern, is rendering an opinion on eligibility for burial at Arlington National Cemetery. Your opinion must be sent ASAP online only at www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/09/15

- **WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA™ (WAA).** **UPDATE** – A *non-public* ceremony at the Gerald B. Solomon National Cemetery will be held on *Friday, December 18th* at noon and streamed live *virtually* via Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/NatCemSaratoga>. For notification, visit and “like” their Facebook page. **All sponsored wreaths in 2020 will be placed on December 19th at four (4) placement times.** If you want to place wreaths, you may volunteer to place wreaths at your loved one's section, or, if you don't have family there, you might pick a less popular time such as, 8am or 2pm. Please sign up for one of the four time slots by clicking the red Volunteer button on the WAA website (<https://www.wreathsacrossamerica.org/>). If you have special requests, please contact the volunteer Location Coordinator at amartin31392cap@juno.com to make those arrangements. *Please note, masks and gloves are required for this event.*

As of November 18, a total of **6,495** wreathshave been sponsored for the **13,100** graves at the cemetery. Sponsors donating through our Chapter had contributed **50** wreaths as of Nov 7, but our Chapter is sponsoring four more, and one of our members, *COL Barbara Wood*, another two. So, if you haven't yet sponsored a wreath, don't wait.

Please follow the instructions in our Sep-Oct Newsletter. The cost to sponsor a single wreath is \$15. Our Chapter's WAA group code is **NY0087P**.

Three cheers for W.F. Bruen Hose Volunteer Fire Company of East Greenbush for donating 10 wreaths through our Chapter, recruited by volunteer fire fighter and Chapter member *Vince Memole*.

BOOK REVIEW

PEARL HARBOR: FROM INFAMY TO GREATNESS

Author: **Craig Nelson**

Publisher: Scribner an imprint of Simon and Schuster, Inc., New York, NY 10020; 498 pp including sources and index

Reviewed by: Pat Piccirilli, LTC Medical Services Corps, USAR-Retired

(Continued on page 5)

To say that there are as many books on the attack on Pearl Harbor as there are devoted to the sinking of the Titanic is stating the obvious. Most of us first read Walter Lord's "Day of Infamy" followed up by George Prange's "At Dawn We Slept" which at 900 pages is probably the most well-known and most comprehensive study of the attack. My prior read on the subject, which I picked up at a garage sale was "And I Was There" written by retired Rear Admiral Edwin Layton the fleet intelligence officer to Admiral Nimitz. His approach was more of a compilation of his memoirs which focused on the ongoing feud between the Army and Navy intelligence services. He also exposed the built-in biases and faulty analysis completed by the Navy department's War Plans chief Admiral Richard Turner. Craig Nelson a New York Times bestselling author of "Rocket Men", has written a number of books and articles which portray in vivid detail the people behind an event as well as the event itself. His works have been published in "Vanity Fair, The Wall Street Journal, Salon, National Geographic, New England Review, Popular Science, Reader's Digest and a host of other publications". So, for \$2.99 at Ollie's I gave it a shot.

The book is divided essentially into three main parts with chapters assigned to each part. The first part is entitled The Roads to War and has four chapters. Beginning in 1914 the earlier chapters delve into the evolving and ever changing Japanese national psyche, as well as the reinterpretation of the Japanese Army military code or Bushido. According to an Asian scholar by the name of Robert Edgerton, this change in the code meant that no soldier would be held accountable for crimes committed against an enemy. This reinterpretation, coupled with the radical nationalistic ideals espoused by the Japanese military, particularly the army, pushed the civilian leaders to accept war as a solution to its imperialistic entanglements. The fourth and last chapter in this part encompasses the attack related events that occurred on December 6, 1941. As mentioned in The New York Journal of Books Nelson shows how the attack was nearly inevitable, yet never expected; this premise is also described fully in the first part of the book.

Part two which has five chapters describes the attack and ends with a chapter illuminating the reader about the experiences of the survivors and the efforts made to raise the sunken ships. The magazine Foreign Affairs states that Nelson aptly describes the "palpable shock that the bombing produced in civilians, the confusion of US commanders, and the horror of sailors being thrown by the explosions on burning ships into the water".



Part three has chapters respectively entitled Vengeance, Triumph and Legacy. The Vengeance chapter starts with the details of our first victory the Doolittle Raid and ends with the stunning U.S. Navy victory at the Battle of Midway. The author offers minimal information concerning the activities of HYPO the Hawaiian branch of the Communications Security Section of the Office of Naval Communications. Their leader was Joe Rochefort Jr., who for all intent and purposes, forecasted Japanese intentions and strategy which enabled our Midway victory. In the Triumph chapter the author relates how the Doolittle POWs were treated, mentions the bravely fought and won battle for Guadalcanal, the "island hopping" campaigns and the air war against Japan ending with the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In the Legacy chapter we see the quality of redemption in real terms. The formation of the Pearl Harbor Survivors Association gave impetus to plan annual ceremonies at Pearl Harbor to remember the dead and to reconcile. The zeal for lasting peace saw the formation of the United Nations and alliances like NATO, and SEATO. The last sentence of the chapter asks "what could be a greater legacy to those who served and died in World War II, beginning at Pearl Harbor?" The book also contains two appendices; the first appendix tries to explain the various Pearl Harbor investigations while the second lists the names of all of those awarded the Medal of Honor for their valor during the Pearl Harbor attack along with their rank, military branch, DOB and citation text.

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In summary, I found the book enlightening and even handed in its approach to the tragedy. The author laid out the facts without complicating it with minutia. I counted only 2 illustrations but 4 pages of black and white photos. If one reads this book I'd suggest also reading "I Was There" which I mentioned earlier, and then follow that up with Joe Rochefort's "War: The Odyssey of the Codebreaker Who Outwitted Yamamoto at Midway".

Interesting factoids derived from this book:

-Jacob DeShazer a Doolittle Raider held captive for 3 ½ years by the Japanese converted Mitsuo Fuchida, who led the Japanese attack force at Peral Harbor, to Christianity.

-A record number of war bonds were sold on the day that the public was told the Japanese executed three of the Doolittle Raiders.

-Everyday a flag is raised and lowered on the Arizona. While the battleships Utah, Arizona, and Oklahoma were permanently lost after the Pearl Harbor attacks, seven combat ships that were sunk in the raid went on to fight Japanese and German forces around the world, and at least three non-combat ships saw further service in the war.

-Francis Gabreski, top U.S. Ace in the European Theater, was a Pearl harbor survivor.

Reviewers note: *The USCGC ship Taney (soon to be renamed) now a museum ship in Baltimore's Inner Harbor is the last warship floating that fought in the attack on Pearl Harbor.*

2021 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON MEETING DATES

Feb 7

Apr 11

Jun 13

Oct 3

Dec 12

Sunday has been the traditional day for our luncheon meetings, beginning with a social hour at 1300 hrs followed by a sit-down dinner from 1400 until around 1600 hrs, usually featuring a guest speaker. (In the past, we've also had summer buffets/outings on other days and times using different venues, such as the Saratoga Harness Track on Friday night and the Dutch Apple Cruise on the Hudson River on Saturday afternoon.) We had been meeting at the Edison Club almost exclusively for more than a decade, but renovations at the club and COVID restrictions have closed that venue for us into the foreseeable future. Thus we are on a search for suitable alternatives. *This is a great opportunity for all members, especially those of you who have been unable to make it to the Sunday meetings at the Edison Club to let our Chapter Officers or Board your thoughts and ideas for Chapter meetings. We look forward to hearing from everyone.*

2021 Board of Directors Meetings (times & locations TBD)

Jan 23

Aug TBD

Nov 13

All members are welcome to attend Board meetings, but only elected Chapter Officers, Board members, and Committee Chairs may vote on issues. We have been holding these meetings on Saturdays normally beginning at 1000 hrs and running for 1 ½ to 2 hours. The January and November meetings have been held at the NYS Military History Museum in Saratoga Springs; the August meeting at Ed Scheiber's home on Lake George (RSVP requested), however, the museum has been closed due to COVID restrictions, so we are not sure if we will be able to use that venue in 2021. We might have to continue to meet online via Cisco WebEx.

NEVER STOP SERVING

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 |
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| Secretary | Ralph Folger, LCDR USNR, RET | secr@cdnymoaa.org |
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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

January 19 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!