

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

Volume 12, Issue 2, March-April 2021



Visit us at [cdnymoaa.org](http://cdnymoaa.org)



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



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- CHAPTER HAPPENINGS, pp. 1-5
- ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR MEMBERS, pp. 5-6
- BOOK REVIEW: CONQUESTS AND CULTURES, pp.6-7
- UPCOMING MEETINGS, p. 7
- OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS, p. 8

*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.*

## CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

**THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON MEETING PLANNED, FOR SUNDAY, APRIL 11, IS CANCELLED!**

**But, we are committed to holding our *June 13* meeting, so stay tuned!**

THE GOOD NEWS: President Chris Costigan has been in contact with the **Edison Club**. They are opening up and have a new set of meal options and prices. Chapter officers & Board members will review the offerings to determine if we should return to regular meetings there. However, this does not preclude considering the other venues previously identified. All venue options are on the table and we will select the one(s) that best meet our needs. We might even rotate among meeting venues as we did many years ago.

## HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY for this issue → GUARDIAN HOUSE

The *Guardian House* for females and the *Vet House* for males 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 provide transitional housing for homeless veterans including a program of peer support. They also provide temporary financial assistance, help in obtaining/maintaining housing, and securing VA benefits, health care, employment, and other public aid.



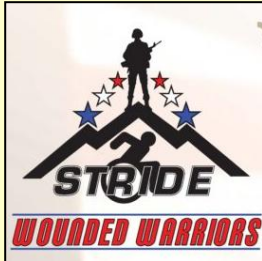
To donate directly to the VCHC, please see the VCHC website (<http://www.vchcny.org/transitional>) for more information. **We will also collect donations at our next meeting in June.** The houses need and will accept clothing, household items, cleaning supplies, personal care items, pillows, twin-size

(Continued on page 2)

comforters, twin-size sheet sets, towels and washcloths. *Gift cards for the veterans are acceptable*, as are financial donations, which go toward repairs and purchases of clothing and other essentials.

## Chapter News and other items of interest

### • **STRIDE ADAPTIVE SPORTS –WOUNDED WARRIOR SNOWFEST (WWS)**



On Friday, **March 5**, STRIDE held a virtual online welcome ceremony via Zoom to kick off this year's WWS. The Zoom live stream thanked all of the donors supporting the event, including our own *RADM Leukhardt*, our Chapter of MOAA, USAA, and others. The program introduced each honored veteran and featured pre-recorded videos of several of them, telling their stories and the impact STRIDE has made in their lives. This year's inspirational keynote speaker was *Daniel "Rudy" Ruttiger*, who strongly praised the STRIDE program and what it does to help rehabilitate veterans in need. Rudy served two years in the Navy at sea. He went to college under the GI Bill, eventually achieving his dream of entering Notre Dame. At only 5' 6", 165 pounds, Rudy earned a position as defensive end on the ND football scout team, which scrimmaged in practice against the varsity, where he earned a reputation for dogged determination and spirit. The coach (Devine) had him suit up for his very last home game, and he sacked the Georgia Tech QB on the last play. They made a movie about this in the 1990's – Rudy, which he said was 92% accurate. He still inspires others today.

- **WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA™ (WAA)**. On Saturday, **March 6** volunteers arrived at the Gerald B. H. Solomon National Cemetery in Saratoga at 8 AM to remove the wreaths placed on veterans graves in December. Skip Bebernitz, among others, would volunteer regularly. This year Al and Mary Memole were available (i.e., not visiting family in Florida) and helped out for the first time. It was COLD (!!!), but a lot of people showed up, including the Patriot Guard, AUSA, and Boy Scout Troops. Removal was completed in less than one hour!



Left: Loading wreaths into the dumpster;

Below: Frozen Al



### • **LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT.** (submitted by Pat Piccirilli)

Below is a list of MOAA's advocacy goals for the 117th Congress.

- Recognize the COVID-19 Pandemic Changed the Landscape for Many of Our Priorities

(Continued on page 3)

- Protect the Value of the Military Health Care Benefit
- Protect the MHS Pharmacy Benefit and Achieve Flexibility in TRICARE Pharmacy Co-pays
- Address Barriers to Accessing Care Within the MHS, Including TRICARE Coverage Gaps and Mental Health Care Access Challenges
- Achieve Concurrent Receipt of Service-Earned Retirement Pay and VA Disability Pay
- Protect Family Support Programs, and Ensure Military-Provided Services (Housing, PCS, Child Care) are Affordable, Readily Available, and Meet Quality Standards
- Reform the Presumptive Process to Support Veterans Claiming Service-Connected Disabilities for Toxic Exposures
- Achieve Equity of Benefits, Protections and Administrative Support for Guard/Reserve Members Consistent with Their Active-Duty Counterparts
- Sustain Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Foundational Missions and Services
- Through Expansion, Protect Arlington National Cemetery as an Option for Those Currently Eligible to Receive Full Military Honors
- Sustain Pay Raises for Service Members and COLA Raises for Retirees
- Improve Survivor Benefits
- Ensure the Coast Guard Receives Pay During a Government Shutdown

Chris Costigan, Skip Bebernitz, Kathy Gates and Pat Piccirilli will be participating in the **Advocacy in Action** (which has replaced the “Storming the Hill” moniker) initiative. During the week of *April 19th through the 22nd* they will reach out to certain New York state Congressional offices to confirm appointments for a *virtual* meeting in the month of May. This year’s Advocacy in Action outreach will concentrate on three issues: *Comprehensive Toxic Exposure Reform, Tricare for Young Adult Parity, and Basic Needs Allowance*.

**The Legislative Action Center requests all chapter members contact their representative and senators and urge them to support The Major Richard Star Act, which would provide concurrent receipt for service members unable to complete 20 years of service due to combat-related injuries.** Help ensure these men and women get their full service-earned retirement, as well as their disability compensation from the VA. You can begin this process by going to the following link: <https://takeaction.moaa.org/?0>

- **CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES.** Thus far, **25** members have paid dues for 2021. We will collect dues payments with mailed-in luncheon reservation forms and at the *June* luncheon. Until then, you may pay dues for 2021 either directly to Treasurer, Al Memole, at 8 Rose Lane, Rensselaer, NY 12144, or to our Chapter PO Box in Waterford. Annual Chapter dues are **\$30**. **Please make checks payable to NYS CDC MOAA.** Thanks to all who have paid:

*Rocco Acquilano, Art Benoit, Manny Biondi, Jim Cameron, Ed Choiniere, Steve Cipperly, Ray Clark, Robert Conway, Jr., Chris Costigan, Michael Favata, BG Hartman, Jeffrey Hughes, Charles Marshall, Al Memole, Vince Memole, Floyd Milbank, Mary Morreale, Alfred Paris, Joseph Peck, Anthony Russo, Alden Saddlemire, Ed Scheiber, Merle Schreckengost Jr., Carl Thurnau, and Thomas Walsh*



- **NEVER STOP SERVING.** Dues cover Chapter operating costs and also enable us as a unit to promote MOAA's mission serving the troops, veterans, and their families, and preserving our nation's and our state's military and historical heritage. Below are thank you notes that we received from The Friends of Ulysses S. Grant Cottage and the Marine Corps Toys For Tots for our modest contributions. They represent just a couple of the needs that our Chapter addresses.



### The Friends of Ulysses S. Grant Cottage

PO Box 2294, Wilton, New York 12831  
(518) 584-4353  
www.GrantCottage.org

#### Board of Trustees

Tim Welch  
President

Joyce Musco  
Vice President

Michael Lesser  
Treasurer

Mary Flanagan  
Secretary

Reed Antis  
Michael Lesser  
Sen. Roy McDonald  
Dr. Jack Myers  
Diana O'Brien  
Kathleen Smith  
Melissa Trombley-Prosch  
David Waghorn  
Jeannine Woutersz

#### Staff

Steve Porto  
Executive Director

Ben Kemp  
Operations Manager

Colette Broestler  
Marketing/Development

Patricia Porto  
Visitor Center Manager

Mr. Alfred M. Memole, Treasurer  
Nys Cdc Military Officers Association  
PO Box 373  
Waterford, NY 12188-0373

February 1, 2021

Dear Mr. Memole,

Thank you for your \$50 donation to The Friends of Ulysses S. Grant Cottage made during the winter of 2020. Your contribution continues the Cottage caretaker's legacy while helping us spread the story of Ulysses S. Grant. We would not be able to operate without supporters like you.

Grant Cottage may be closed for the winter season, but we aren't hibernating. The Friends are pleased to announce that Ulysses S. Grant Cottage Historic Site is officially a National Historic Landmark! Visit us starting this May to celebrate recognition as a National Historic Landmark, enjoy new exhibits, Visitor Center renovations, and more. View pre-recorded programs and blog posts, book your Tour of the Cottage, or reserve an exclusive Private Tour for May at grantcottage.org. Walk the Grounds to stunning views at the Overlook accompanied by our cell phone audio tour anytime the site is open. Happy history hunting!

Sincerely,

Colette Broestler  
Marketing & Development

*Thank you so much for  
your support. See you  
in 2021!  
Happy New Year*

*The Friends of U.S. Grant Cottage, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. All donations are tax-deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. No goods or services were provided in return for this donation. Please keep this letter for tax purposes.*

**GRANT COTTAGE  
OPENS IN MAY!**

From: "Lieutenant General James Laster, Marine Toys for Tots Foundation"  
To: "Ernest Bebernitz"  
Sent: Thursday March 4 2021 10:03:22AM  
Subject: Thank YOU for Your Unrivaled Support in 2020!

Dear Ernest,

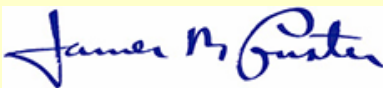
Thanks to YOU, 2020 was a tremendously impactful year! A record breaking 20.2 million toys were distributed to 7.4 million less fortunate children – an extraordinary accomplishment during “normal” times, but truly astounding during a pandemic!

Our 808 local Toys for Tots Campaign Coordinators and 26,000 volunteers across the country adapted to the circumstances, overcame the challenges, and exceeded all expectations; however, we couldn't have accomplished our mission without the unprecedented support of the American public. **We are beyond grateful.**

The following video is my brief (but heartfelt!) message to all of our incredible supporters: [General-Laster-Message-to-general-public-2021](#)

One more thing I do believe is important to mention. Your gifts make an even bigger impact than you might realize...97% of your donations go directly to our mission of providing toys, books, and games to less fortunate children – not one donated dollar goes toward salaries or any other manpower costs. Our 97:3 Program to Support Ratio is almost unheard of in the non-profit world – and we are very proud to have achieved that ratio in a year that was incredibly challenging for just about every sector of our society.

With genuine gratitude,



James B. Laster  
Lieutenant General, USMC (Retired)  
President and CEO  
Marine Toys for Tots Foundation

NEVER STOP SERVING

## ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR MEMBERS

- **DID YOU KNOW?** All Veterans, and their spouses and caregivers can get COVID-19 vaccinations from VA under the SAVE LIVES Act signed into law March 24. Covered individuals can receive a vaccine from VA due to the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, *including Veterans who are not eligible to enroll in VA health care.*
- **DID YOU KNOW?** **Staples** is laminating COVID Cards *for free* after you receive the second vaccine.
- **HELP!** The **Saratoga National Cemetery Honor Guard Association** is a local all volunteer organization that serves as an official support committee for the Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery in Schuylerville, as designated by the VA. They perform military funeral honors for Honorably Discharged Veterans at the Cemetery and **currently need volunteers**. Honorably Discharged Veterans from all branches of the Armed Forces are eligible to volunteer. A copy of your DD-214 will be required upon application. If you are interested in volunteering contact: Honor Guard Rep at <https://snchga.org/contact-us/>, or email Art Dutcher at [adutcher4@yahoo.com](mailto:adutcher4@yahoo.com) or call his cell# (518) 253-3203.

- WEBINARS THAT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST TO YOU!!
  - Tuesday, **April 6**, 2021, 2:00 - 3:00 pm EDT: [MOAA's Legislative Update](#)
  - April 5 through 9, various times, The National Museum of the US Army: [Civil War Week - Explore Military Leadership of the Civil War](#)
  - Tuesday, **April 20**, 2021 at 2:00 pm EDT AUSA: General George Joulwan discusses [Watchman at the Gates: A Soldier's Journey from Berlin to Bosnia](#)
  - Thursday, **May 6**, 2021 11:00 am: [AUSA'S Thought Leaders - LTG Chris Tickell](#), Deputy Chief of the British Army General Staff

## BOOK REVIEW – CONQUESTS AND CULTURES

**Author:** Thomas Sowell, © 1998

**Publisher:** Basic Books, New York, NY; 379 pp.

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

Conquests and Cultures is the third and final volume of a massive study undertaken by renowned scholar and commentator, Thomas Sowell, to understand how human societies (cultures) flower, grow, flourish (or languish), and fade. Titles of the of the first two volumes, Race and Culture (1994) and Migrations and Cultures (1996), reveal their topics. I have not read those earlier volumes; I picked up Conquests and Cultures by chance as a freebie at the Indian Lake transfer station, from someone's cast-aside personal library. This third book examines the impact of conquest on the transmission and development (or regression) of culture. Sowell states in the Preface:



*Cultures are not museum-pieces. They are the working machinery of everyday life. Unlike objects of aesthetic contemplation, working machinery is judged by how well it works, compared to the alternatives. The judgment that matters is not the judgment of observers and theorists, but the judgment implicit in millions of decisions to retain or abandon particular cultural practices, decisions made by those who personally benefit or ... pay the price of inefficiency and obsolescence.*

This is a serious work written plainly to be accessible to the public at large, but it is not an easy read. There are a great number of interactive factors affecting cultural changes, hence, a lot to try to comprehend. It is still very fascinating. Sowell reduces the scope of his topic of conquest by focusing on four geographic areas and their main inhabitants: Britain, Eastern European Slavs, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Western Hemisphere Indians. At first glance you might peg the British as conquerors and the other three cultural areas as the conquered. In fact, all four areas were home to both at different times in history.

We don't tend to think of Britain as a conquered land, but it was throughout the vast majority of its history: first came the Celts, then the Romans, then the Angles, Saxons, and Jutes, then Danes, the Vikings, and the Normans. All of these conquests brought brutal oppression, but the cultural influences brought by the Romans and Normans had net positive impact on British cultural development, while the other invasions did little to nothing to advance civilization. Similarly, German incursion into slavic lands eventually resulted in higher level of culture over time, compared to that in unsubjected lands. Ottoman conquest had mixed results early on that worsened over time. The study goes on to examine European colonization of Africa and the Americas, the slave trade and intra-African and intra-American conquests and rivalries.



The study viewed military conquest in relation to all factors that impact people, such as geography, topography, natural resources, technology, religion, family structures, government, ideas and attitudes. For example, Africa’s lack of ocean harbors and navigable rivers plus obstacles like vast deserts, forests, and mountains, greatly impeded long-distance travel and cultural exchange. North American natives lacked domesticated beasts to help carry goods and materials, which inhibited trade and technological development. Both Africa and America benefited much from the transfer of technology brought by the European conquerors who also oppressed them.



Sowell concludes this volume with an overview of all three books. From his in-depth examinations of cultures around the globe throughout history he draws conclusions about wealth production, knowledge, ideas, technology, diffusion/rejection of cultural capital, race and racism. He summarizes how they interact and affect the lives of people and communities. His contributions to our understanding of culture is very relevant: There are so many unsupported assertions and theories about history in circulation today that people just accept at face value. Even this one volume does much to educate its readers about the many factors and their complex interrelationships that affect culture. If you can spare the time, it would be worthwhile to read all three volumes.

**May 20** 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](mailto:ammemole@gmail.com). THANKS!

**DATES FOR UPCOMING 2021 GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON MEETINGS**

**Jun 13**, probably at the *Edison Club*, **Guest Speaker:** Pat Chaisson, LTC, USA (Ret) will talk about the NY Air National Guard in Vietnam.

**Oct 3:** location TBD

**Dec 12:** location TBD

**2021 Board of Directors Meetings (times & locations TBD)**

**Aug TBD      Nov 13**

Due to COVID restrictions, we are not sure if we will be able meet in person and might have to continue to meet online via WebEx.

### CHAPTER OFFICERS

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

Shameless advertisement: The versatile MOAA drawstring bag goes everywhere you go, even up to the snowy North Country!

