

CAPITAL DISTRICT CHAPTER, NEW YORK MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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



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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.

NYS COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS 2021 CONVENTION

UPDATE: THE 49TH ANNUAL COC CONVENTION IS UNDERWAY! EVERYONE IS INVITED! In the May-Jun issue of this newsletter we reported that this year's convention would once again be *virtual*. That has changed. This year's convention will be similar to the abbreviated one planned then cancelled for last year. The Council leadership sees this as “an excellent way for you to get current on MOAA initiatives and federal legislation concerning all veterans. This is a perfect opportunity for you to get active in MOAA. Additionally, and just as important, we can renew acquaintances, make new friends, and have some fun!” And they hope for maximum participation. **Any current COVID-19 protocols will be in place.**

WHEN: October 1-3, 2021

WHERE: DoubleTree by Hilton Syracuse, 6301 Route 298 (Carrier Circle), East Syracuse, NY 13057
(ph: 315-432-0200; Contact: Linda Benn)

[You may download Room & Meal Options/Prices and Registration Forms directly from the Chapter website at https://cdnymoaa.org/?page_id=397]

KEY DATES:

August **25**, 2021 - Registration and Minimum 50% Deposit Due.

September, **1**, 2021 – Commitment date: No cancellations unless extenuating circumstances

September **17**, 2021 - Balance Due

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CONVENTION SCHEDULE (Briefly):

Friday, 1 October 2021

1500-1800 Check-in
1830 - Welcome Buffet Dinner
Hospitality Room

Saturday 2 October

0730-0830 Breakfast
0900-1300 CoC Business Mtg
Lunch on your own / Free Time
1730 - Hospitality Room
1830 - Banquet Dinner
Hospitality Room

Sunday 3 October 2021

0800-0900 Farewell Breakfast
1100 Check Out

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

OUR NEXT GENERAL MEMBERSHIP LUNCHEON MEETING IS TENTATIVELY PLANNED FOR SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10.

We originally planned for an October 3 meeting, but are now considering the following Sunday to allow members to attend the NYS Council of Chapters annual convention in Syracuse, Oct 1-3. We will include details in the next issue of this newsletter. Target date for the last meeting of 2021, the Christmas/Holiday Party and Annual Business Meeting, is still December 12.

HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY for this issue → VETERANS MIRACLE CENTER (VMC)

The Veterans Miracle Center in Albany has taken on this important mission: *“To offer Veterans and Active-Duty Military Personnel real solutions that will enhance their lives. We seek to provide clothing, personal care and hygiene products, house ware items, ambulatory equipment, toys for their children and much more — and all goods and services are available free-of-charge to Veterans and their immediate household.”* The VMC is open by appointment-only to Veterans by presenting their DD214 or current military ID.

The VMC is always open to donations and volunteers. Volunteers are always welcome Mon-Fri 9-5. Special volunteer nights are also available. They can set up a special time for any group that would like to volunteer. Please call the VMC office to set up a time to volunteer. For more information, please visit their website at <https://www.vmcalbany.org/>.

VMC Albany

10 Interstate Avenue
Albany, NY 12205
Phone: 518.486.8398
Email: Info@VMCAlbany.org

Hours: Monday – Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm, by appointment only

NEVER STOP SERVING

Chapter News and other local items of interest

- **JUNE 13 LUNCHEON MEETING AT THE EDISON CLUB.** Our first meeting since February 2020 was a *great success!* We had a healthy turnout with 24 attendees (12 Chapter members and 12 guests). We were honored by the presence of LTC Peggy Phillips, President of the NYS Council of Chapters. Our guest speaker, Pat Chaisson, LTC, USA (Ret), who has written book reviews for MOAA magazine, gave a fascinating presentation on the little known contributions of our NY Air National Guard in the support of the troops in Viet Nam, including details about the aircraft they flew, and how their mission came about. It was a fitting tribute to the countless hours of work and miles flown given voluntarily and with unequalled patriotism by our Air Guardsmen. Chapter

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President Chris Costigan presented MOAA's Colonel Marvin J. Harris Five-Star Communications Awards for 2020 for our Chapter website and newsletter. And, several Chapter members donated bundles of paper towels and toilet paper for one of our designated charities, the Guardian House of Saratoga for homeless female veterans. We waited a long time to have a luncheon meeting, but this was a good start.



President Chris Costigan (left) presents the MJH Communications Award to Chapter Webmaster Ralph Folger (center). Newsletter Editor Al Memole looks on (right).

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

Your legislative team has been pretty busy this past spring. MOAA's Advocacy in Action initiative required us to contact a number of Congressional representatives to request them to co sponsor three pieces of legislation. The legislation included the Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act (VBPORA) H.R. 2436, The Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Act H.R. 2127, and Basic Needs Allowance H.R. 2339.



While some progress has been made on the above issues MOAA then requested in late June that we contact our local representatives regarding the Major Richard Star Act H.R. 1282. Once again the aim was to request that they cosponsor this particular piece of legislation. As of 8/2/21 the act has 113 house co-sponsors. MOAA asserts

that by gaining co-sponsors, we increase awareness and commitment to resolving this inequity for those who were retired early due to combat or combat-related injuries or illnesses.

The Major Richard Star Act will authorize DoD retirement pay, earned by years of service, and VA disability payments for those forced to medically retire from service as a result of an injury incurred in a combat zone. This legislation is part of the incremental approach toward achieving the goal of concurrent receipt for all retirees.

- **CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES.** Annual Chapter dues are **\$30**. This year, **32** members have paid dues for 2021. Last year, 40 members paid, so we can do better. Our Chapter now offers **THREE** options to pay annual dues: (1) Include your payment as part of your luncheon reservation or pay at the door when you attend a luncheon; (2) Mail a check, *payable to NYS CDC MOAA*, either directly to Treasurer, Al Memole, at 8 Rose Lane, Rensselaer, NY 12144, or to our Chapter PO Box in Waterford; and **now** (3) **Pay by credit or debit card online through the MOAA website**

2021 Board of Directors Meetings

Aug 14 (Lake George) **Nov 13** (Times and Location TBD)

- **MOAA R.O.T.C. AWARDS PRESENTED.** Our Chapter provided MOAA ROTC awards (medals and certificates) for two exceptional students from local colleges enrolled in ROTC programs coordinated through the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI), Troy: **Sarah Canfield**, Naval ROTC, and **Nina Macagnone**, Army ROTC. The awards were presented to these students in on-line ceremonies in May. (RPI's Air Force ROTC program elected not to hold an awards ceremony this year.)
- **ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL J.R.O.T.C. AWARDS NIGHT.** Albany High School's Sgt. Henry Johnson Battalion, Army JROTC, held their Promotion and Leadership Awards Ceremony on June 14 (birthday of the U.S. Army) at the Zaloga American Legion Post in Albany. Chapter member **MAJ David Erickson**, the Senior Army Instructor for the program, has been doing a phenomenal job serving these fine young men and women, and made an exceptional effort to keep the program thriving during the pandemic and obligatory remote (online) learning. Chapter ROTC/JROTC Awards Coordinator, Al Memole, presented the MOAA JROTC Award (Medal & Certificate) to **Cadet Jesus Castillo** for academic achievement and exemplary leadership. So high is the regard for Cadet Castillo's performance and potential, that he has been entrusted with command of the Sgt. Henry Johnson Battalion in his upcoming senior year! It was a wonderful ceremony, fitting for such a successful, beneficial program for youth.



LTC Al Memole presents the MOAA JROTC Award to Cadet Jesus Castillo



MAJ David Erickson (at right end) and his Albany High School JROTC Cadets



Cadet Jesus Castillo receives the Battalion Colors to take command (above), then addresses the cadets and guests (below)



- **PROPOSED POSSIBLE POST PANDEMIC PLACES TO VISIT.** (contributed by Skip Bebernitz)

We have all spent way too much time cooped up. Let's get out and experience life and see real people in 3D. Here is a list of places to visit as we put our Hermit selves in the rearview mirror. Some of which you may have gone to in the past, but why not go again? Every tour Guide has a different point of view. Some you may never have seen: no time like the present!

In the Immediate Capital District:

- The USS Slater
- The 9/11 Exhibit at the State Museum on Madison Ave, Albany and the Memorials around the State Museum
- The Monuments to the Emergency Services on the Empire State Plaza
- The Aquarium at the Rotterdam Mall
- Peeble's Island [*Editor's note: beautiful views of the Mohawk and Hudson confluence*]
- Guided walking tour of Lansingburgh by the Lansingburgh Historical Society (see the lot where once stood the house in which Aaron Burr hid after the duel).

Within 1 Hour of Albany/Schenectady/Troy:

- Olana
- The Norman Rockwell Museum
- The Shaker Museum.
- Grant's Cottage
- The Saratoga National Battlefield Park
- The Solomon National Cemetery (*there will be a ceremony on 9/11 at 1000 hrs to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of 9/11*)

- Saratoga Springs: the Horse Racing Museum, the Museum of Dance, the NYS Military Museum



STRIDE Brewfest

With a Twist...

FREE ADMISSION!!!

Saturday, August 21, 2021

Enjoy a fun afternoon with STRIDE veterans and "Ride 4 STRIDE" participants who end at S&S Farm Brewery to raise funds for STRIDE Adaptive Sports programs!!!

Join the Ride—or just the after party!

Ride 4 STRIDE 'Brewfest'



S & S Farm Brewery

174 Middle Rd, Nassau, NY 12123

Everyone Welcome!!



Starts 1 pm! Drinks, Food, Live Music & Raffles

Proceeds support adaptive sports and fitness programs for youth & veterans with disabilities

www.stride.org

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Within 3 hours of Albany/Schenectady/Troy:

- Fort Ticonderoga
 - The American Heritage Museum in Hudson, MA,
 - The Springfield Armory Museum,
 - The Basketball Hall of Fame
 - The New England Aircraft Museum
 - Mills Mansion in Staatsburg
 - The Vanderbilt Mansion
 - FDR's Hyde Park
 - Guided Tour of West Point, the West Point Museum, the Purple Heart Hall of Fame
 - The New Windsor Cantonment Site
 - Fort Stanwix in Rome, NY.
- **2021 FEDS FEEDS FAMILIES APPEAL AT THE ALBANY V.A. MEDICAL CENTER.**

2021 FEDS FEED FAMILIES

The Albany Stratton VA Medical Center encourages participation and reminds us about the opportunity to support Veterans facing food insecurity. The FEDS FEED FAMILIES theme focuses on Veterans and Hunger. This theme goes to the heart of our mission, and we appreciate all efforts to ensure food pantries and food banks are well supported this summer so that Veterans facing food insecurity can find the support they need.



2021 FEDS FEED FAMILIES

- Please Donate to our Veteran's Food Pantry!
- DONATION DROP ZONE AT THE EMPLOYEE ENTRANCE
- **Donate now thru August 31st**

DONATION ITEM IDEAS

- CEREAL
- SNACKS (COOKIES, CHIPS, PRETZELS, ETC) IN SINGLE SERVE PACKAGING
- CANNED VEGETABLES AND FRUIT
- OATMEAL
- RICE
- CANS OF TUNA AND CHICKEN
- CANS OF SOUP
- PEANUT BUTTER IN PLASTIC CONTAINERS
- GRAPE AND STRAWBERRY JELLY IN PLASTIC CONTAINERS

Pension Poaching Scam -- How Can You Avoid It?

[This article was copied from the June 22, 2021 MOAA Newsletter, by Kevin Lilley, and submitted by Robert Riccardo and Skip Bebernitz. You can read articles like this and more by signing up for the MOAA Newsletter at <https://www.moaa.org/content/tmn/the-moaa-newsletter/>.]



Veterans, especially older veterans, are prime targets for “pension poaching,” where scammers use any number of methods to either swindle targets out of earned benefits or convince them to apply for benefits they haven’t earned ... often after paying fraudulent application fees. A VA blog post covered the issue last month, while the Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs sent out a warning June 15. Here’s some basic information about pension poaching from those pieces and others.

Warning Signs. Steer clear of individuals or organizations with financial or benefits pitches that include:

- Requesting you move money into different accounts or reallocate investments to qualify for a VA pension payment.
- Asking for money to handle your claim – especially upfront – or charging for application forms. While some attorneys or claims agents may receive compensation for help with a pension claim, they must be accredited and the claim must be approved before that fee can be charged.
- Promising “guaranteed eligibility” for a particular benefit, or a lump-sum payment upon approval for a benefit.
- Seeking personal information over the phone, to include credit card or other billing information.
- Offering to send benefits directly to a caregiver’s account.

In some cases, the scammer’s main goal may be to solicit an “application fee” without any intent of applying for any benefits, or to obtain your personal information. In others, unaccredited individuals may apply for VA benefits on your behalf ... and per the VA, you may be required to repay those benefits if it’s determined you are not eligible.

Filing a Complaint

If you believe you’ve been targeted by scammers regarding your VA benefits, you can file a complaint via the VA’s national call center at (800) 827-1000, or by visiting the department’s Office of Inspector General online. For other types of pension fraud, contact the Federal Trade Commission or find your state attorney general’s office.

BOOK REVIEW – Mosby and his Rangers: The Adventures of The Gray Ghost

Author: Susan Beller, © 1992; 88 Pages

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

A quick, easy to read book glamorizing Colonel John Singleton Mosby and his band of raiders, officially known as the 43rd Virginia Cavalry; which for the last two years of the American Civil War (1863 to 1865) harassed, raided, attacked and greatly frustrated Union troops from the commanders all the way down to the lowest Union soldier. Mosby was “a man who frustrated Union Leaders...fighting a war Union troops could not even begin to understand or stop”...who in the process became a legend to the Confederacy...a legend that still persists more than 150 years later.

The book written by Susan Beller is obviously written by someone who absolutely admires Mosby and his men. She goes into just enough detail for the reader to learn who Mosby was, where and how he grew up, and the formation of his “Rangers”.

She writes about some of his missions and does mention and discuss those Union Officers/ Northern residents who felt that Mosby’s attacks were illegal. However nothing in the book mentions anything that today’s Officer Corps would consider a war crime - unlike reactions where Union forces tasked with capturing or killing Mosby and his Rangers did indeed conduct war crimes by burning down houses, destroying crops and stealing live stock in retaliation for Mosby’s raids.

In the end, after General Lee’s surrender at Appomattox, Mosby, instead of surrendering his forces, simple chose to disband them and disappear into the country side until they were assured they would not be arrested by Union Forces. Mosby’s Rangers would occasionally gather for reunions up until the early 1900’s. However, Colonel Mosby, never one to be in the “lime light”, never attended. Colonel Mosby passed away in Washington, DC on Memorial Day, 30 May 1916 at the age of 82. (May 30 was designated as Memorial Day between from 1868 until 1970.)

September 14 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!

REMEMBER THE
VICTIMS AND HEROES
OF THE TERRORIST
ATTACKS OF
SEPTEMBER 11, 2001,
THIS YEAR ON THE
20TH ANNIVERSARY.



