

CAPITAL DISTRICT CHAPTER, NEW YORK MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

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.



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5-Star Chapter –
2020, 2018 & 2017

VOLUME 13, ISSUE 1, JAN-FEB 2022

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CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

Our next luncheon meeting is **FEBRUARY 13**, at **MARTEL'S RESTAURANT** at Capital Hills Golf Course, **65 O'Neil Road, Albany**

The luncheon reservation form is at the [very end](#) of this newsletter. **PLEASE NOTE:** The per-person rate for luncheons is **\$35**. The new rate enables the Chapter to cover meal prices and an 18% - 20% gratuity, depending on the venue.

REMINDER: *If you plan to attend our meeting, please get your reservation and, preferably, your payment to **CHRIS COSTIGAN** NOT LATER THAN **Saturday, February 5th**. The restaurant needs a final count and meal selection a week in advance of our meeting. If you plan to pay "at the door," please at least send Chris your reservation by the due date. Thanks!*

PROGRAM:

1300 hrs: MIX & MINGLE

1400 hrs: SIT-DOWN DINNER; the menu choices are:

- NY Strip Steak
- Herb-Stuffed Chicken Breast
- Grilled Salmon

INCLUDED: rolls & salad (The Costigans are bringing a cake for dessert.)



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Guest Speaker: Avero “AJ” Howard, Cadet Captain at the USMA, and a running back on the Black Knights Football team will discuss the life of a modern Cadet at the Academy, with a little about academy football.



Installation Of Chapter Officers and Board Members for 2022-2023:

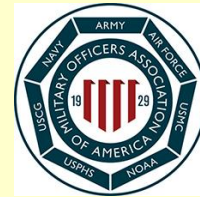
CHAPTER OFFICERS

President – *Alfred M. Memole, LTC USA Ret*
 1st Vice President – *Kathy E. Gates, COL USA Ret*
 Secretary – *Ralph Folger, LCDR USNR Ret*
 Treasurer – *Patrick J. Piccirilli, LTC USAR Ret*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rocco D. Acquilano, CDR USNR Ret
Ernest “Skip” Bebernitz, MAJ USA Ret
Christopher J. Costigan, CDR USN Ret (Immediate Past President)
Anthony J. Ficara, COL USA Ret
Vincent Memole Jr., LTC USAR RET
Edmund M. Scheiber, Jr., Lt Col USAF Ret

NEVER STOP SERVING. ®



HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY for this issue → STRIDE WOUNDED WARRIOR SNOWFEST WELCOME CEREMONY, March 4

17 YEAR ANNIVERSARY!!!

Please Join us in Recognizing our Region's Heroes

**STRIDE WOUNDED WARRIOR SNOWFEST
WELCOME CEREMONY**

Friday, March 4, 2022 • 6:00 to 10:00 pm
 Hilton Garden Inn, Troy, NY

Tickets available at www.stride.org/ww2022

Questions? Contact Patrick Hayslett
 phayslett@STRIDE.org or 518-598-1279

For new Chapter members who might not be aware, and as a reminder for all, **STRIDE Adaptive Sports** is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization providing adaptive sport and recreation lessons to individuals with disabilities, *with a focus on youth and “wounded warriors”*, veterans who were wounded or injured in combat in any way. (One of STRIDE’s ingenious approaches is to engage wounded vets in helping disabled children, which has proven to be very therapeutic!) The annual **Snowfest** event allows wounded warriors to experience four days of skiing or snowboarding and family activities at the Jiminy Peak Mountain Resort in Hancock, Mass. These veterans learn how to overcome their challenges and enjoy independence and freedom through sport. Total cost for four days of lodging, instruction, equipment, clothing, food and transportation for 20 warriors and their families is over \$40,000, and is funded by donations.

The annual STRIDE Wounded Warriors Snowfest **Welcome Banquet** is a major fundraising event, which our Chapter and individual Chapter members have supported for many

years. Last year’s Welcome Banquet was held virtually (online) due to COVID restrictions. But STRIDE wants to hold this year’s event *in person* on **March 4, from 6 to 10 pm at the Hilton garden Inn, 235 Hoosick Street, Troy**. The admission fee (dinner ticket) is **\$45 per person**. You may register through the STRIDE website at www.stride.org/ww2022. When registering, be sure to indicate a seating preference with our Chapter (NYS CDC MOAA) so we can sit together at a common table (or tables). The banquet is an unforgettable experience!

Chapter News and other local items of interest

- **GREAT NEWS:** Our own **Pat Piccirilli has been nominated to receive the Four Chaplains Brotherhood Award.** Pat has participated in many, many volunteer activities within the community, to include: Regional Food Bank of NENY, Catholic Charities AIDS Services, Boys and Girls Club, United Way, Patriot Flight Honor Flight, American Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces (SAF), the Albany Airport Rotary Club, the Walkill East Rotary Club, and the Colonie Senior Services Center. He was an Outreach Assistant, Military Programs, at SUNY Empire State College and recently assisted in conducting an SBA Boots To Business class at Fort Drum for the soldiers there. Dianna Rios, former American Red Cross Eastern NY SAF Program Director sent the following comments about Pat's volunteer work:



Pat Piccirilli, photo by Ed Balaban

I am honored to have been asked to support the nomination of Pat Piccirilli for the Four Chaplains Brotherhood Award, honoring a person who emulates the spirit of the Four Chaplains by encouraging cooperation among all people without regard to race, creed, ethnicity, or religious beliefs. Pat is devoted to his volunteerism with the American Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces (SAF) programs. As an American Red Cross SAF volunteer, Pat works with the program to help members of the military, veterans and their families prepare for, cope with, and respond to the challenges of military service. Pat was also instrumental in developing and maintaining relationships with key community partners by volunteering in many SAF events to support veterans and their families within our communities through the American Red Cross programs.

The presentation is scheduled for 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, February 27, 2022, conditions permitting.

- **SAD NEWS:** **R.I.P. Martin "Marty" Leukhardt, RADM USNR, Ret.** We lost our Admiral. Marty passed from this life on January 16. Marty had a great military career and was a pillar of this Chapter, serving in many roles, including Chapter President. We do not have information about memorial services at this time, so we advise members to look for his obituary. We commend our deepest sympathy to his lovely wife, Milena, and his family in their time of sorrow. We will include a formal tribute to Marty in the next issue of this newsletter.
- **R.I.P. Carol A. Hervieux-Potts**, December 29, 2021. Her funeral was held on January 12. Burial will be in the Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery in the spring. Carol was the loving wife of Chapter member **William R. Potts**, CW4 AUS Ret., who served on our Board of Directors for several years. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Bill and his family.
- **WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST CHAPTER MEMBER!** When we lose a both great member/friend *and* a spouse, it's comforting to welcome a new family to our ranks: **Thomas Bennett, COL USA (Ret)** and his wife, **Denise**, of Ballston Lake! We look forward to meeting and getting to know the Bennetts at future gatherings.
- **LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT – Jan 14, 2022.** (*submitted by Pat Piccirilli*)
Congress and your chapter legislative committee have been busy. Here are some of the highlights:
 - The National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) was signed into law by the president on December 27th. The law authorized \$768.2 billion in military spending and *included a 2.7% pay raise for service members for 2022*. But the really good news is that House lawmakers will look at boosting service members' pay "significantly" in coming years as part of their annual defense budget discussions in 2022, according to the top Republican on the House Armed Services Committee.

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- In addition to the pay increase, the Act contained sweeping changes in the way the military justice system will prosecute sexual assault and related crimes, launches an independent commission to review the 20-year war in Afghanistan, allows troops to take 12 weeks of parental leave and specifies that service members discharged for refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccine can get no less than a general discharge under honorable conditions. The law also extended paid bereavement leave, as well as expanding the in-house child care pilot, while authorizing the establishment of 7 new Child Development Centers (CDCs) as well as providing for enhanced inspections of CDCs.
- *Left out of the compromise NDAA* was a provision that would have required women to register for the draft and another that aimed to provide the military with more tools to root out extremists from the ranks.
- **It should be noted that the NDAA is a policy bill, not a spending bill, meaning the funding in the NDAA won't become a reality until Congress passes a separate defense appropriations bill.** Currently, the Pentagon and the rest of the federal government are operating under a stopgap spending measure known as a continuing resolution, or CR, that essentially keeps the government on autopilot by extending the previous year's funding.
- ***On the local front*** our legislative committee sent letters to Congressional representatives Delgado, Stefanik, and Tonko as well to Senators Schumer and Gillibrand concerning *the lack of VA funding to cover services to dependents of homeless veterans*. Special thanks to **Skip Bebernitz** for highlighting and following up on this topic.
- Chapter members are asked to write to their representatives on a host of issues. These issues can be found on the following link <https://moaa.quorum.us/>. Once you are on this website you can click on the particular issue which will bring you to a page that presents information about the issue and also asks you to join the MOAA advocacy network.

There have been changes made to the "Take Action" section of the MOAA website. The next time you go to send a "take action message", you will have to *reenter* your information to include your cell phone number. The redesign is supposed to make the function easier to use.

- **OUR LAST LUNCHEON MEETING, DECEMBER 12.** Christmas/Holiday Party and Business Meeting at Wheatfields Bistro & Wine Bar was a big success! We had **22** attendees. Many attendees praised the quality of the food and the excellent service provided by Brielle and her staff. The only drawback was that we were in a relatively open section which allowed significant ambient noise from other customers and a TV in the adjacent area. It would have been difficult to hear a guest speaker. However, we managed to conduct our annual business meeting, providing an overview of our Chapter (membership, finances) and activities over the past year. We also had a table full of toys brought by attendees to donate to Toys For Tots.
- **CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES for 2022.** Annual Chapter dues are still **\$30**. There are *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*, to our Chapter PO Box in Waterford; and *now* (3) **Pay by credit or debit card online through the MOAA website.** You can find instructions for paying online in our May-June 2021 newsletter on page 7. Quick link to the newsletter here: https://cdnymoaa.org/CDC-MOAA_Newsletter_2021-06_WEBversion.pdf
- **TOYS FOR TOTS - Update:** This past Christmas season, 2021, Capital Region TFT distributed **237,907 toys to 237,000 needy children!** Thanks to all members who donated toys!

• **WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA™ – Update.** (Submitted by Skip Bebernitz and Al Memole)



Our Chapter sponsored **102** wreaths – not as many as we did in 2020, but more than other years. The final total number of wreaths for the Gerald B. H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery as of December 1, 2021, was **13,482** or **95.6% of all the graves**. The shortfall was only 618. However, *there appears to have been a surplus on hand by December 18*, the date of the official wreath-laying. It was cold and snowy that day, as you can see by the photos to the left and below. Yet, there was quite a crowd of volunteers there to lay wreaths – so many that they had to limit each person to **FOUR** wreaths,

unless you were able to get back in time for a second load before the section was completed. Skip Bebernitz received thank-you notes from WAA for our Chapter's participation as a sponsorship group. One of the notes thanked us for our "...support of the Mission to Remember the fallen, Honor those that serve and their families, and Teach the next generation the value of freedom. As Wreaths Across America founder Morrill Worcester told the audience at our recent Appreciation Rally "we've just barely scratched the surface" of honoring every veteran as they so deserve, but we have done so much and touched so many lives, and we could not have done any of it without your support. During this year's National Wreaths Across America observance, more than two million dedicated volunteers placed more than 2.4 million veterans' wreaths at 3,136 participating locations across the country."



NYS COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS NEWS

The NYS Council of Chapters has **openings in the key positions listed below**. Contact *Skip Bebernitz* or *Chris Costigan* if you are interested.

- 1) Legislative Liaison - Monitors MOAA Legislative priorities and assists chapters with making these priorities known to elected officials; Maintains contact with the Regional Defense State Liaison Office Representative; Attends MOAA National Advocacy events in normal years.
 - 2) Surviving Spouse Liaison - Monitors events, legislation and topics of interest to surviving spouses.
 - 3) Web Master - Establishes and maintains a Council website which will feature an amalgamation of information from member chapters; maintains an events listing of all Council and Chapter events within the State.
 - 4) Social Media Manager - Establishes and maintains a Council presence on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn with the goal of attracting new chapter members.
 - 5) Newsletter Editor - Establishes and publishes a digital Council Newsletter that features a collection of articles that have appeared in chapter newsletters.
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WINE REVIEW

(Submitted by Al Memole) At every annual NYS Council of Chapters Convention, attendees from each chapter bring gift baskets and other items to be raffled off. The proceeds from the raffle go into Council treasury to be used as seed money for the next convention. These gift baskets offer an array of interesting items, sometimes practical, sometimes whimsical, and often representative of a chapter's region.

At this last convention, my lucky ticket was drawn for a basket of NY wines (with corkscrew) donated by **LTC Jack Carlson, President of the Mid-Hudson Chapter**, from Viscount Wine & Liquors of Wappingers Falls. So, I thought it might be fun to give you

newsletter readers a completely *amateur* review of these wines, in case the connoisseurs among you might like to give one a try. So, the first one I tried was the **Whitecliff Vineyard "Awosting White"**

table wine (on the left in the photo). The Whitecliff Vineyard and Winery is located in Gardiner, NY. White Awosting is a blend of Vignoles and Seyval Blanc grapes, of which I know nothing. The label describes it as being dry and fruity, light and zesty with citrus

and apricot notes. Recommended pairings include spicy Asian cuisine to fried chicken. Well I tasted it with chicken parmesan and later, pulled chicken tacos – and it held its own without overpowering the flavor of these dishes. It feels very smooth initially, but when it hits the back of the tongue, before heading "down the pipe", you

feel a sharp "burn" or tangy sensation, which I like. I call it a "kick". I would definitely drink this wine again. Next up was the **Millbrook 2019 Chardonnay** (on the right in the photo). Millbrook Vineyards & Winery is located in, *uh*, Millbrook, NY, east of the Taconic Parkway, northeast of Poughkeepsie. It's a straightforward chardonnay with the typical delicate feel and fruity notes. This was the lightest chardonnay that I've ever tasted, as best I can recall. It was almost like drinking flavored water, by itself. However, once I started sipping it

between bites of chicken and rice, it seemed to take on body. Somehow, the food enhanced the wine and vice versa. I came around to it pretty quickly, and would like to try it again sometime. Well, that's it for now. When I get around to opening the Warwick Valley Cabernet Franc, I'll write up another review for y'all.



BOOK REVIEW

DESTINY OF THE REPUBLIC: A Tale of Madness, Medicine, and the Murder of a President

Author: Candice Millard, © 2011

Publisher: Anchor Books, a division of Random House, Inc., New York; 380 pp., including Notes and Bibliography

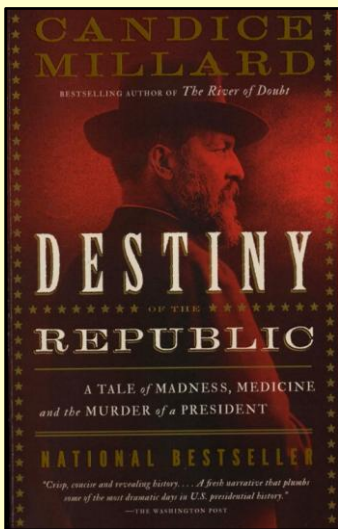
Reviewed by: Al Memole, LTC Military Intelligence, USA Retired

Nothing pairs as well with a smooth white wine as a thrilling story. And this book will hold your interest, for sure. One of my daughters gave it to me this past Father's Day. I was hooked from the Prologue. I convinced my wife, Mary, to read it, and *she* loved it. So, what makes this non-fiction history book such a compelling read? Four things: the writing, the characters, the story itself, and the utter surprise that this topic could be so fascinating! Let's take these in reverse order.

This is the story of the assassination of President James A. Garfield. Who today cares about Garfield? What did he ever do to merit our interest now in the 21st century? Garfield seems to be inconsequential. Although, it was a huge event at the time, it seems so unlikely to be a riveting topic now ... but it is! The story line, or, more accurately, the interconnected story lines themselves are interesting: how Garfield became President and the

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political intrigue surrounding the election, what drove Charles Guiteau to shoot him, the efforts to save Garfield’s life, Alexander Graham Bell’s desperate efforts to help, and the aftermath of it all. As interesting as these episodes are, the characters are even more so.



James A. Garfield was far more complex and interesting than most history books allow. In setting the stage for the assassination, the book presents a condensed but rich biography of the President. Born in a log cabin in Ohio in 1831 and fatherless before he was 2, James grew up with poverty, hard work, and struggle. Yet, he was determined to learn and grow. He earned his way to attend Williams College (not far from us) and returned to Ohio to teach, then was elected to the Ohio Senate. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he was commissioned as a lieutenant colonel, then promoted to full colonel in command of the 42nd Ohio. Despite having no military experience, he led his regiment to a stunning victory over a larger Confederate force at the Battle of Middle Creek, Kentucky, saving Kentucky for the Union ... which got him elected to Congress, extending his unintended political career. Garfield earned a reputation for level-headedness and fairness. He was an upright and moral person, a devoted family man, though not without failings, including an uncharacteristic moral lapse. He was a die-hard abolitionist and fought consistently for the rights of Black Americans, winning their allegiance (and Frederick Douglass’ endorsement).

But Garfield wasn’t the only colorful character in this tale, which also featured a mini-biography of the strange and frightening Charles Guiteau. Just as an all-star supporting cast can make a movie great, the people in Garfield’s life and those surrounding the events of his presidency and assassination made this book a thriller. Without lengthy detail or spoilers, the host of heels and heroes include: Garfield’s wife Lucretia, political opponents Roscoe Conkling and Chester Arthur of New York, James Blaine, Dr. D. Willard Bliss (representing “The Science” of his day), doctors Susan Edson and Charles Purvis, Alexander Graham Bell, Dom Pedro II the Emperor of Brazil, Joseph Stanley Brown (Garfield’s secretary), and the most amazing person you never heard of, the mysterious Julia Sand.

Author Millard writes history like a crime novel. She skillfully changes scenes, characters, and moods from chapter to chapter, but the narrative flows and is never disjointed or choppy. The story draws the reader in and invests the reader in the outcome. Millard does not use footnotes or mark endnotes, which removes all distractions from the reading. Yet, you know all along that she researched the history thoroughly, and, sure enough, there are 57 pages of notes ordered by chapter and page, as well as a 14-page bibliography. It makes you wish that all history books would be written like this.

The New York State Military Museum, 61 Lake Avenue, Saratoga Springs, is hosting presentations in the museum conference room (except Mar 29). All attendees must wear masks. Attendance is limited to 40 persons.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Jan 29 , 2 pm | “Wings of Victory: Aircraft Manufacturing in NY State during WWII” |
| Feb 19 , 2 pm | “Valor: the Medal of Honor” <i>presented by Edward Lengel, Chief Historian, MOH Museum</i> |
| Feb 26 , 2 pm | “No Greater Calamity for the Country” (<i>mobilization of the NYS Militia in the Civil War</i>) |
| Mar 5 , 2 pm | “Sully’s Squad” (<i>the history behind the young adult novel</i>) |
| Mar 16 , 7 pm | “George Washington’s Long Island Spy Ring” |
| Mar 19 , 2 pm | “Battle of Valcour Island” |
| Mar 29 , 7 pm | “Vietnam War 50 th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony” <u>at Saratoga Elks Club</u> |
| Apr 2 , 2 pm | “Hellmira” (<i>camp at Elmira for Confederate POWs, presented by Derek Maxfield</i>) |
| Apr 30 , 2 pm | “42 nd Rainbow Division and the Liberation of Dachau” <i>by COL Richard Goldenberg</i> |

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING INTERESTING TO DO?

CHAPTER MEETINGS PLANNED FOR 2022

*** PRINT AND SAVE THIS PAGE FOR FUTURE REFERENCE**

Meeting dates, times, and locations are always subject to change. Changes will be posted in newsletters.

| | |
|---|---|
| MARCH – none | SEPTEMBER – none |
| APRIL | OCTOBER |
| 3 – Chapter Luncheon Meeting, TBD | 9 – Chapter Luncheon Meeting, TBD |
| MAY – none | NOVEMBER |
| JUNE | 5 – Board Meeting, 1000-1200 hrs., NYS Military Museum, Saratoga Springs |
| 12 – Chapter Luncheon Meeting, TBD | DECEMBER |
| JULY – none | 11 – Annual Xmas/Holiday Party & Business Meeting, TBD |
| AUGUST | |
| TBD– Board Meeting, tentatively at Scheiber’s house on Lake George | |

March 3rd is the deadline for submitting **news articles, photos, bio’s, stories, or book/movie/food/wine reviews** for the *next* issue! Please e-mail your input to newsletter editor Al Memole at ammemole@gmail.com. THANKS!



Luncheon Reservation Form

Date: **FEBRUARY 13, 2022**

Location: **MARTEL’S RESTAURANT, Albany, NY**

Time: **1:00PM** - Social Mixer
2:00PM – Dinner

Price: \$35 per person (Please make checks payable to: **NYS-CDC MOAA.**)

*To also pay your Chapter dues for **2022**, you may add **\$30** to your total.*

*Please make your reservation **Not Later Than Saturday, February 5***

Send reservation form and check to: Chris Costigan
153 Paisley Road
Ballston Spa, NY 12020
OR call Chris at: 518- 884-2943 (h) or 518-755-5697 (c)

Qty Menu Choices

Your name: _____

___ NY Strip Steak

Number of persons attending: _____

___ Herb-Stuffed Chicken Breast

___ Grilled Salmon