

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 –
2021, 2020, 2018 & 2017

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CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

OUR NEXT CHAPTER LUNCHEON MEETING IS APRIL 16,



at VETERANS of LANSINGBURGH, Inc.

777 1st Avenue, Lansingburgh, Troy



(on the east bank of the Hudson River)

Something **different** this time!

A HOT & COLD BUFFET-STYLE LUNCHEON that features:

COLD CUTS and ROLLS: Ham, Turkey, Roast Beef, American and Swiss Cheeses

BUFFET CHOICES: Sausage & Peppers, Italian Meatballs, Baked Ziti, Potato Salad, Tossed Salad

DESSERT: Cookies from Bella Napoli Bakery

DRINKS: Coffee and Tea (*For wine, beer, or spirits, there is a bar available in an adjoining room.*)

GUEST SPEAKER: **Peter Bedrosian**, Program Director of **The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor** located in New Windsor, NY. The Hall of Honor is part of our State's Department of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. From the Hall's website:

"The Hall of Honor is the first in the nation dedicated to commemorating the sacrifices of the estimated 1.8 million recipients of this award it is believed there have been since its creation in 1932. The mission of the Hall of Honor is to collect, preserve and share the stories of Purple Heart recipients from all branches of service and across all conflicts for which the award has been available."

For additional information, visit their website at: <https://parks.ny.gov/historic-sites/38/details.aspx>

PROGRAM

1300 hrs: Check-in; Mix & Mingle

1345 hrs: Welcome; Pledge of Allegiance; Prayer for Service Members; Chapter business

1400 hrs: Serve-yourself, buffet-style luncheon; Guest Speaker's presentation

1545 hrs: Announcements; 50/50 drawing; Benediction and Farewell

REMINDER: If you plan to attend our meeting, please call **CHRIS COSTIGAN** or send your reservation and payment to Chris **BY THURSDAY, APRIL 6th**. The restaurant needs a final count of attendees 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!

We ask attendees to bring items for the Guardian and Vet Houses for homeless veterans.

PLEASE NOTE: The luncheon reservation form is at the [very end](#) of this newsletter.

HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY for this issue → GUARDIAN HOUSE

We continue to support the **Guardian House** for homeless female veterans and the **Vet House** for homeless male veterans, operated by the **Veterans & Community Housing Coalition (VCHC)** of Saratoga County. The VCHC supports needy veterans in Saratoga, Warren, Washington, Fulton, Montgomery, Schoharie and Schenectady Counties with transitional housing, peer support programs, temporary financial assistance, help to obtain/maintain housing, and help to secure VA benefits, health

Continued on next page

care, employment, and other public aid. They are also in the process of establishing transitional housing for homeless female vets and their dependent children (“*Foreverly House*” - See our Nov-Dec 2021 Newsletter.) The VCHC seeks and accepts donations from the local community to support their veterans. **To help them, we will be collecting the following types of items at our April meeting:**

- Household Items
- Cleaning Supplies
- Personal Care Items
- Pillows
- Twin Size Comforters
- Twin Size Sheet Sets
- Towels and Washcloths
- Gift Cards to help veterans to purchase food, clothing, gas, and other essential items



To donate directly to the VCHC, please see the VCHC website <http://www.vchcnny.org/transitional> for more information.

Chapter News and other local items of interest

• **R. I. P.** It is with deep sadness that we inform you of the loss of one of our most active and fun-loving Chapter spouses. **NANCY MARSHALL** passed away on March 8th. Nancy was the “better half” of long-time Chapter member, **Charles W. Marshall (“Charlie”), CWO4 USNR Retired.** She loved her family and friends. Always on the go, she enjoyed outdoor activities such as camping and golfing, and also travel and volunteering. All of us who knew Nancy loved her and wanted to sit at her table at our meetings. She was a lively conversationalist with a great sense of humor. We will miss her. Her funeral service was held on March 13 at New Comer Cremations & Funerals, Watervliet. Nancy was laid to rest at the Gerald B.H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery in Schuylerville, among our deceased brothers and sisters in arms, as is fitting.

• **OUR LAST LUNCHEON – FEBRUARY 12 at THE RIPE TOMATO, Malta**

THE GOOD NEWS: The day was sunny and unseasonably warm!

THE BAD NEWS: The room we were in (the “enclosed porch”) was too warm!

THE GOOD NEWS: Our group fit in the room very comfortably, although the ceiling was too low to set up our US and MOAA flags. We did have a small US flag that we used.

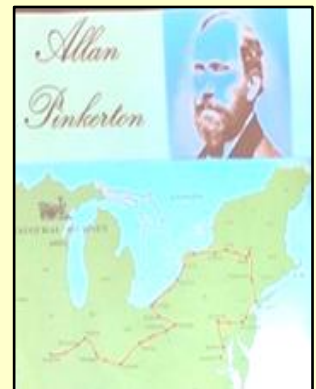
THE BAD NEWS: We set a record for the lowest turn-out for luncheon meetings: *only 15 people!*

MORE BAD NEWS: Our scheduled speaker was *not* able to attend .



BETTER NEWS: *Ralph & Vicki Folger’s daughter, Jeannette Lynn*, stepped up on short notice and gave a fascinating presentation on Civil War Spies, such as Belle Boyd and Allan Pinkerton! We learned all the juicy details about the notorious, the lesser knowns, the successes, and the failures, separating facts from myths.

Jeannette Lynn Folger, left; Allan Pinkerton slide, at right.



MORE GOOD NEWS: The food was very good, AND we got chocolate mousse!

THE BEST NEWS: *Liz Stevens* sparked a wonderful conversation that involved everyone present. She wanted (demanded) to know what all of the veterans did in the service. She asked the veterans to describe their careers telling where they served and what they did, with prompting and reminding from their spouses as required! Everybody enjoyed it. We got to know each other a little better, and

had a lot of laughs. Liz's idea worked because we were a small group in a small, private space and could have such a conversation. But, even with a bigger turnout, shouldn't that still be one of the key objectives of all of our luncheons?

- **CHAPTER MEETINGS REMAINING FOR 2023**

APRIL – 16th LUNCHEON MEETING – <i>Guest Speaker: <u>Peter Bedrossian</u>, Program Director of The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor</i>
JUNE – 11th LUNCHEON MEETING – <i>Guest Speaker: <u>Kevin Wilson</u> author of “Sully’s Squad” (WWII)</i>
AUGUST – TBD Board of Directors Meeting
OCTOBER – 15th LUNCHEON MEETING – <i>Guest Speaker: TBD</i>
NOVEMBER – 4th Board of Directors Meeting
DECEMBER – 10th XMAS/HOLIDAY PARTY & ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

- **LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE REPORT**

(Submitted by Pat Piccirilli, Legislative Affairs Committee)

Well, it's that time of the year again when our call for advocacy gets very real.

On April 26, MOAA will send teams of volunteer leaders to Washington, D.C., to meet with their legislators on the Hill. Council and Chapter leaders will be accompanied by members of MOAA's board of directors and headquarters staff — a contingent of 225 people with sights on contacting every one of the 535 congressional offices. Anyone can join MOAA's Advocacy in Action (AiA) efforts by reiterating these messages to lawmakers:

- As service members face skyrocketing rents and mortgage payments, *it's time to reverse cuts to the Basic Allowance for Housing*, restoring the benefit to cover 100% of these expenses.
- As TRICARE Pharmacy users deal with drug shortages and high drug costs, *it's time to restore the thousands of brick-and-mortar pharmacies, including many locally owned shops in rural areas*, to keep this crucial benefit strong.
- The 50th anniversary of the all-volunteer force (AVF) should be a celebration not a crisis. Since the end of the draft in 1974 the AVF has protected our nation at home and abroad. But now, DoD finds itself in a war for talent. We are struggling to recruit and retain the force we need to defend our country and support our allies when called upon.

Our own *Skip Bebernitz* will be one of the 225 volunteers descending on the Washington D.C. congressional offices on April 26 to advocate for the above three issues. The New York State delegation will be rounded out with two other Council of Chapters members: *Norma Weissend* and *Tim Vaughan*.

Closer to home our chapter legislative committee will act as an advance party and call on the congressional offices of **Elise Stefanik** and **Paul Tonko** and in addition the Senate office of **Senator Gillibrand**. This will take place during the first two weeks in April since the House of Representatives is not in session. As always we are grateful for the volunteer time and effort expended by *Skip Bebernitz*, *Kathy Gates*, and *Chris Costigan*. Without their dedication the local effort would not be possible.

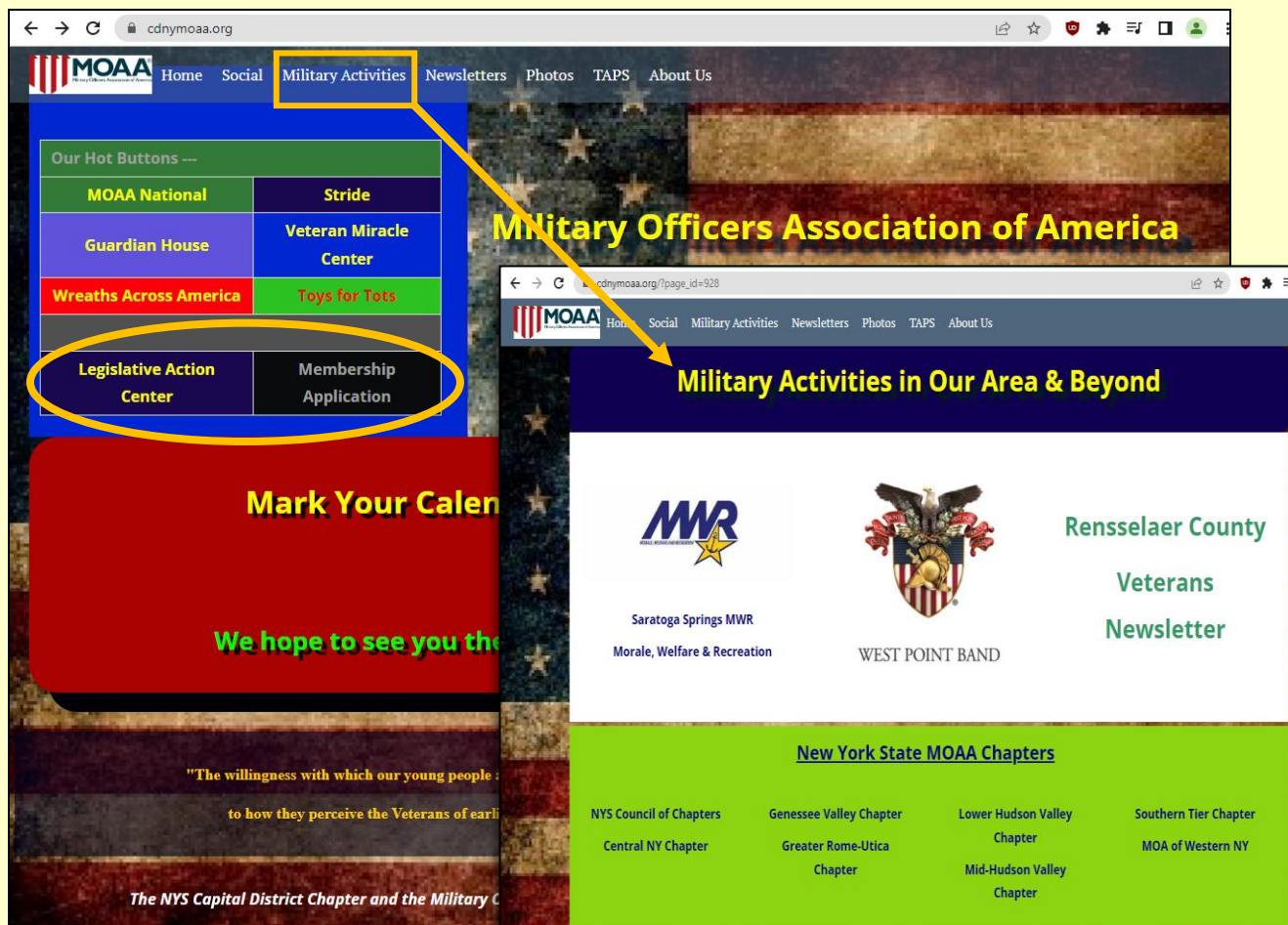
- **CHAPTER MEMBER DUES (Last reminder)**

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, and send to CDC MOAA, PO Box 373, Waterford, NY 12188-0373 or;
- (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.

- **CHAPTER WEB PAGE ENHANCEMENTS!!**

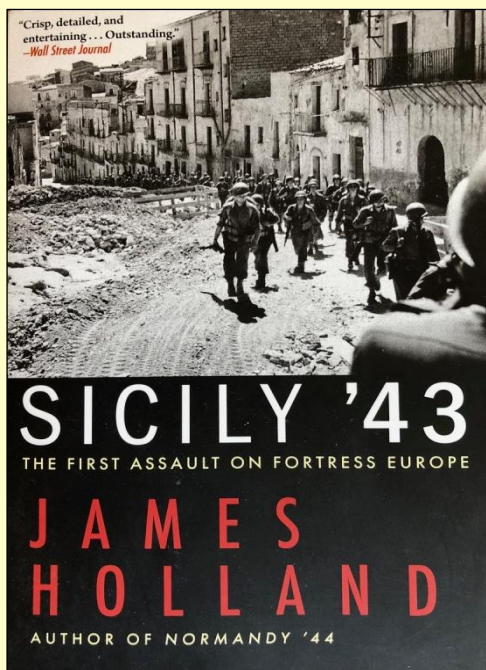
After you finish reading this issue of our Newsletter, please take a little time to check out our website if you haven't done so recently. Our Chapter Webmaster, *Ralph Folger* has added some new features. From our home page, you can now link *directly* to MOAA's **Legislative Action Center** and to our new **membership application form** for officers who want to join MOAA and our Chapter. Plus, we have a new menu item, "**Military Activities**", which opens a new page with links to websites for Saratoga Springs Morale, Welfare, and Recreation, the West Point Band, the Rensselaer County Veterans Newsletter, and all of the MOAA Chapters in NYS that have websites! So, if you're bored and looking for something interesting to do, start here! There's no excuse now for not knowing what's happening regarding military-related activities and issues.



SAVE THE DATES: SEP 17-21, 2023

... because, those are the dates planned for the 2023 New York State Council of Chapters annual convention at the Tioga Downs Casino Resort in Nichols, NY. We will have more details in the next issue of this newsletter, but we can share the tentative plan now. Council is looking to offer at least three options: a complete package (all four nights and all group tours), a 3-night option including all tours, and a one night option for those who wish to attend the meetings only. These package options allow flexibility to accommodate different needs, circumstances, schedules, and budgets. ALL MOAA MEMBERS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND, not just Council and Chapter officers and board members. These conventions offer great opportunities to learn more about MOAA, meet new people, make new friends, explore different regions of our beautiful state, and just relax and have a good time. Enjoying your money while it lasts at the casino is not the only entertainment. The planning committee is working to set up local tours: a Wine Trail tour and a tour of the Wings of Eagles Air Museum. There will also be free time. So, mark your calendars and start saving your money!

BOOK REVIEW – SICILY '43 The First Assault on Fortress Europe



Author: James Holland, © 2020

Publisher: Grove Press, New York, NY; 499 pp.,
excluding appendices, timeline, endnotes, sources, and the index.

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

OK, I'm on a roll now with books on WWII. After reading a detailed account of 90th Infantry Division in the war ("War From The Ground Up"), which I reviewed for the last issue, one of my daughters gave me this book for Christmas about the invasion of Sicily. I picked it up after the holidays and couldn't put it down until I finished it. I highly recommend this book for anyone interested in history in general, WWII in particular, military operations, leadership, and human nature.

This account of history was very similar to "War From The Ground Up" in that both books chronicled the events of war from the personal perspectives of those directly

involved. Thus, both books revealed the unvarnished truths of war: the horrors, the tragedies, the heroism, and even the humor. The main difference between the two books is the scope. "War From The Ground Up" was intentionally focused on only one US Army division. Although it presented the strategic and operational contexts for the division's activities, perspectives of the top brass and the enemy were peripheral to the combat-level first-hand reports from soldiers primarily at and below regimental level. "Sicily '43" presented a complete chronicle of the invasion of Sicily. Author James Holland's thoroughly researched and well-written tome introduces all the actors in the cast from the top generals and admirals to privates and seamen, on *both sides* of the conflict, and to civilians caught in the middle.

Continued on next page

Like many well-known histories of military campaigns, “Sicily ‘43” presents the thoughts, actions and interactions of the top decision-makers. So, we learn what Eisenhower, Bradley, “Tooe” Spatz, Patton, Montgomery, RAF Air Marshals Tedder and Coningham, Sir Harold Alexander, and Admiral of the Fleet Cunningham were thinking, planning, and how they reacted to events. (Author Holland sets the record straight about the “race to Messina” between Patton and Montgomery, for which the movie “Patton” took some artistic license.) But we also get an interesting Axis perspectives from Feldmarschall Kesselring, Generalleutnant Warlimont, and General Guzzoni. The strategic and operational decisions of the flag officers, tempered by weather, terrain, and the friction of combat, certainly set the stage for the violence.

But, the most interesting parts of this book, in my humble opinion, were the first-hand accounts by the combattents themselves, from the lowest ranks to the colonel/captain level, and also the poor civilians. These are the most compelling stories of sailors, pilots and crews, grunts, tankers, engineers, and townspeople. We see (and can almost feel) the invasion through the words of Germans, like Luftwaffe pilot Major “Macky” Steinhoff and Leutnant Poepel; Canadians, like infantry lieutenant Farley Mowat and Flight Lieutenant “Hap” Kennedy; British combattents, like Corporal Cheall, Midshipman Hay, Sgt Phillips, and Lieutenant Davis; Americans like OSS officer Max Corvo, USN Lieutenant Brown, USA Sgt Carl Rambo (yes, a real Rambo), USAAF pilot Charlie Dryden, and various Rangers and Airborne leaders and troops; Italians, like Tenente Livio Messina, and civilians Mario Turco and Vincenza La Bruna. After reading their stories, you thank God that you weren’t there. There were also “special guest” appearances by “swashbuckling” USN Lieutenant Douglas Fairbanks, Jr. and combat hero and future movie star Audie Murphy. Dishonorable mention goes to Don Calogero Vizzini and Vito Genovese for aiding the invading Allied Forces by making sure there was no trouble for the Allies during the occupation (wink, wink).

James Holland tracked the invasion every bloody step of the way and he presented this huge and complex story chronologically in a way that readers can follow easily. He included numerous maps (up front) showing major troop dispositions and movements during key periods of the campaign. He also included a detailed order of battle, a glossary of abbreviations used throughout the book, and illustrative photographs. I have a fairly good knowledge about the major events of WWII, but I never gave close attention to the invasion of Sicily. This book was an eyeopener. The reader can understand how the Allies learned a lot about massive amphibious operations and the value of both strategic and close air support that they would employ on D-Day in Normandy in ’44. Too bad the British didn’t learn the lesson about gliders. The other interesting aspect of the Sicily campaign, which might be overlooked, is the critical importance of robust logistics operations. Reliable logistic support in a combat zone is never a given. The US forces, air, sea, and land, seemed to do quite well; the British, did okay but not quite as well; the Germans’ logistic support was lacking; the Italians even worse. There were some fierce and determined warriors on both sides, but armed forces also need fuel, ammo, food, transport, and medical support to prevail. Sicily proved that once again.

MAY15th is the deadline for submitting **news articles, photos, bio’s, stories, or reviews of books, movies, food, or wine** for the *next* issue! Please e-mail your input to newsletter editor Al Memole at ammemole@gmail.com.

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* Immediate Past-President ** Former President

LUNCHEON RESERVATION INFORMATION

Date: **APRIL 16, 2023**

Location: **VETERANS of LANSINGBURGH,
Lansingburgh, Troy, NY**

Time: **1:00 PM** – Check-in; Social Mixer // 1:45 – 4:00 PM – Buffet/Guest Speaker

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

You may pay Chapter dues for **2023** by adding **\$30** to your total.

Please make your reservation **Not Later Than Thursday, April 6th**

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)



Luncheon Reservation Form

Your name: _____

Number of persons attending: _____