

# NEW YORK STATE CAPITAL DISTRICT CHAPTER OF THE 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 – 2024**

5-Star Chapter: 2021, 2020, 2018 & 2017

## VOLUME 16, ISSUE 6, NOV-DEC 2025 // THIS ISSUE CONTAINS:

### • CHAPTER HAPPENINGS:

- Our next Chapter meeting SATURDAY, DEC 6, at NORRINE'S RESTUARANT, p. 2
- Our last Chapter meeting, Oct 26, p. 3
- 2026 Chapter Due\$, p. 3
- Our last Chapter Board of Directors Meeting, Nov 22, p. 4
- Chapter Meetings for 2026, pp. 4-5
- Wreaths Across America<sup>™</sup> Update, p. 5
- Legislative Affairs Committee Report, pp. 5-7
- Chapter Members Join Fight Against Breast Cancer, p.7
- Chapter Members Attend MOAA Training Workshop, pp. 7-9

### • HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY: CAPITAL REGION TOYS FOR TOTS p. 9

### • OTHER NEWS & EVENTS OF INTEREST, p. 10

### • CHAPTER OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS, p. 11



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## CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

**Our next Chapter meeting is our Annual Business Meeting & Christmas Holiday Party**

**SATURDAY, DEC 6, at NORRINE'S RESTUARANT**

**405 Hudson River Rd, Waterford, NY 12188**

*(a.k.a. Routes 4 & 32, in the town of Halfmoon)*

*Please invite officers whom you know who are not members of MOAA or not Chapter members. Tell them about MOAA and our Chapter and hand them a membership application (or send them this link): [Joint MOAA-Chapter Membership Application](#)*

**DRESS CODE:** Business attire (*jacket & tie or suit, dress or pantsuit*)

**COST:** **\$40 per person**, members and guests.

**PROGRAM:**

*1300 hrs: Check-in; Buy your 50/50 tickets; Mix & mingle*

*1330 hrs: Welcome; Pledge of Allegiance; Prayer for Service Members*

*1345-1400 hrs: Entrées served*

*about 1445 hrs: Board of Directors report to our membership*

*1545-1600 hrs: 50/50 drawing; announcements and farewell*

*We are also collecting toys for  
TOYS FOR TOTS*

**ENTRÉE SELECTIONS (choose one):**

*You can park on the side lot near the entrance which also has a couple of Handicap Parking spaces, or behind the restaurant. The lots are not paved. The entrance has a wheelchair ramp.*

**STEAK** w/potatoes & veggies w/garlic bread

**CHICKEN PARM** over pasta

**HADDOCK** (lightly breaded & seasoned) w/linguini and white wine buttery lemon sauce

***With the meal:*** Salad, dessert, coffee, tea, and soft drinks

***Also available:*** Wine, beer, adult beverages are available at the bar. You may pay as you go or ask for an individual tab.

**RESERVATIONS AND ENTRÉE SELECTION(S) REQUIRED NLT **Friday, NOV 29<sup>th</sup>**** because we owe the restaurant a final count of guests and entrée selections one week in advance. You may ...

Make your reservation *before* the deadline by selecting your entrée(s) and paying through the Cheddar Up online payment platform, which you can access here: <https://treas-4444.mycheddarup.com>. Or,

Email your reservation and entrée selection(s) to AL MEMOLE at [pres@cdnymoa.org](mailto:pres@cdnymoa.org) or [ammemole@gmail.com](mailto:ammemole@gmail.com), or call Al at 518-641-8664 *before* the deadline (please leave a voice message), and pay when you arrive at the meeting.

## Our Last Chapter Meeting – Oct 26



We were honored at our last meeting to have Chapter member **John Andonie, MG USA RET**, accompanied by his wife, Kathy, as our guest speaker. MG Andonie retired a few months ago. His last assignment was Commanding General of the Army National Guard for the District of Columbia. It was great to welcome him home to the Capital District after a long and interesting military career. He appeared in “full retirement mode”, sporting a beard fitting for a general officer ... of the Civil War era. General Andonie talked about his career with modesty and humor, highlighting the lessons he learned. He focused on his recent and final assignment with the DC National Guard. His two big takeaways from that experience were: the value and importance of doing what is right and not backing down from it, and the great authority and leverage that Congress has over the military, as established in the US Constitution. He emphasized that the clout that Congress has regarding military affairs bears directly on MOAA’s legislative advocacy mission, of which he is great proponent.



*Above left:* MG Andonie drives home his point;  
*At Left:* Chapter President Al Memole thanks our guest speaker, MG Andonie;  
*At Right:* President Memole presents Chapter Webmaster Ralph Folger, LCDR USNR RET, with MOAA’s 5-Star COL Marvin J. Harris Communications Award for 2024.  
 (Photos by Ed Balaban)



## Chapter Due\$ for 2026

As the year 2025 comes to a close, we remind all Chapter members that our dues for 2026 are due on January 1, per Chapter by-laws. Annual dues are **\$30**. All regular Chapter members *under the age of 85* are required to pay in order to remain a member in good standing. Members who are 85 and older and surviving spouses of regular members do *not* pay dues. We will notify members who haven’t paid their dues by March 31<sup>st</sup>.

We have *three* options for paying dues:

1. Paying by cash or check at a Chapter meeting,
2. Mailing a check to the Chapter PO Box, or
3. THE EASIEST OF ALL – paying online using **Cheddar Up**, a portal provided through MOAA by which Chapter members may pay dues. Cheddar Up resides on the provider’s site and Chapters have our own accounts and pages that we maintain. MOAA handles all fees. You can access Cheddar Up through the “Pay Your Annual Dues” link our Chapter website’s Homepage, or directly from this newsletter by clicking on this link: [Dues - CDNYMOAA](#). Then click on the link under the first option (Online), which will open our Cheddar Up dues collection page.

**January 13<sup>th</sup>** is the deadline for submitting news articles, photos, bio’s, stories, trip reports, or reviews of books/movies/food/drink for the *next* issue! Please e-mail your input to newsletter editor Al Memole at [ammemole@gmail.com](mailto:ammemole@gmail.com).

## Our Last Chapter Board of Directors Meeting – Nov 22

The Board of Directors met at the MYS Military Museum in Saratoga Springs on Saturday, Nov 22. Nine of 12 regular members were present along with Chapter Membership Chairperson, LTC Christine Richardson. The meeting included the usual status reports from Chapter committees and covered Chapter administrative and operational matters. The Board approved a budget for 2026 designed to cover anticipated expenses and expenditures estimated at \$2,600. These expenditures include donations to the various local military, veterans, and historical organizations that the Chapter has been supporting over the years. A new beneficiary is the upcoming fundraiser for *a statewide campaign to recognize New York veterans of the Global War on Terrorism (2001-2021)*. This is an initiative of the NYS Division of Military & Naval Affairs (DMNA), the NYS Adjutant General's office, and the Friends of the NYS Military Museum. MOAA Chapters in NY and the NYS Council of Chapters have been invited to assist the effort. A representative from Council will attend the kickoff meeting on December 6 at the museum.

The Board also approved a schedule of meetings for 2026 after a lengthy and productive discussion about the traditional five annual luncheon meeting versus a variety of get-togethers. The Board agreed to go with the five luncheon meetings established at the August Board meeting, with a couple of amended dates, and *also* try to integrate other types of meetings and activities around the five luncheons throughout the year. This will be explained in more detail in the section of this newsletter that follows. The Board also made note of upcoming tasks for next year: drafting a Chapter Privacy Policy regarding the protection of members' personal information, and election of Officers and the Board of Directors at the end of 2026 for the 2027-2029 term. The President will select a Nominating Committee early next year to enlist candidates for all positions. This is a great opportunity for those of you who have been thinking of participating more fully in the Chapter and the direction of its affairs.

## Chapter Meetings For 2026

We're trying something a little different this year offering a mix of our traditional weekend luncheon meetings with a variety of other activities. We set the dates for the weekend luncheon meetings to make planning easier for you. Please note that, for the first time in, maybe, forever, *we are holding some luncheons on Saturday and some on Sunday* as shown in the schedule below. Some, but not all of these luncheons will have guest speakers. We will announce guest speakers and confirm the date, time, location and menu for each luncheon in subsequent newsletters.

As for the other types of activities, Board members have been asked to nominate ideas for activities, outings, or gatherings, that *they* will set up and lead. These are due to the Chapter President by the end of this year. The President and the Board will select all or some of the proposed activities and integrate them into the luncheon schedule so that there will be no conflicts. These meetings will be promoted in our newsletters and on the Chapter website. *Now, if YOU have something in mind that fits MOAA's and the Chapter's mission, that you think our Chapter should do, and you would be willing to lead, please let the President know before the end of this year.* Be as specific as possible, especially if there are key factors that might affect your activity, such as weather, participant requirements, resource requirements, costs, or funds needed. Simple might be better for a start.

The motive for attempting this schedule of mixed activities is to offer alternatives for those of you who cannot make the weekend luncheons, or who have no interest in luncheons, but would participate in some other types of activities on other days and times. At the end of 2026, the Board of Directors will assess the popularity of these other activities and determine whether to make them permanent.

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**Below is the schedule of luncheon and Board Meetings for 2026. Please mark your calendars!**

MEETING DATE & TYPE	TENTATIVE MEETING LOCATIONS
February 7, luncheon (Saturday)	Norrine’s Restaurant, Waterford
April 19, luncheon (Sunday) April 25, Board of Directors	Norrine’s Restaurant, Waterford NYS Military Museum, Saratoga
June 6, luncheon (Saturday)	Norrine’s Restaurant, Waterford
August TBD, Board of Directors	Scheiber’s on-the-lake, Bolton Landing
October 4, luncheon (Sunday)	Norrine’s Restaurant, Waterford
November 21, Board of Directors	NYS Military Museum, Saratoga
December 13, luncheon - Holiday Party / Annual Business Mtg (Sunday)	Norrine’s Restaurant, Waterford

### Wreaths Across America™ Update

Wreaths Across America™ (WAA) was our highlighted charity in the last issue. Our Chapter set an objective to get people to sponsor **400 or more** wreaths for the graves of veterans interred at the Gerald B.H. Solomon National Cemetery in Saratoga. Last year, our Chapter sponsored a total of **222 wreaths**. So far this year, we have **147** wreaths sponsored, 36.7% to our goal with only 253 more wreaths needed to make it. Time is running out to order wreaths that will arrive in time for placement on **December 13**.

### Legislative Affairs Committee Report

*(Submitted by Pat Piccirilli, Legislative Affairs Committee)*

Here are just a couple of several legislative issues to keep tabs on:

- Military Spouse Employment Act: The Act proposes tax credits for private-sector employers who hire military spouses. It is currently still in the legislative process. The House and Senate versions have been introduced and passed on to a specific committee.
- FY 2026 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA): The FY2026 NDAA has not been fully passed into law yet. Both the House and the Senate have passed their own versions of the bill, but a final unified version has not been approved by both chambers and signed by the President. The House passed its version of the bill (H.R. 3838) on September 10, 2025. The Senate passed its version of the bill (S. 2296) on October 9, 2025. The Richard Starr Act is included as an amendment in the House version of the NDAA, but was *not* added as an amendment in the Senate version, basically because of the cost (\$9.75B over 10 years), in spite of having over 400 co- sponsors in both houses. The two different versions must now be reconciled by a conference committee composed of members from both the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

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## MOAA is proposing “3 Ways to Protect Servicemembers and Veterans from the Next Shutdown”.

Legislation ending the longest federal government shutdown in U.S. history passed the House 222-209 on Nov 12 after clearing the Senate two days earlier; with a continuing resolution set to keep the government open through Jan. 30. The president signed it into law late in the evening. It’s the first step in rebuilding a broken trust between lawmakers and the uniformed services and veteran communities. But it’s far from the last. MOAA is suggesting three moves that Congress should make to further that process:

1. Pass a budget for FY 2026 and beyond. Lawmakers haven’t passed a full slate of appropriations legislation on time since FY 1997, and the resulting continuing resolutions have lasted anywhere from a few days to a full year. Further extensions aren’t the answer: Full funding for what’s left of the fiscal year will give servicemembers, veterans, and their families, caregivers, and survivors the certainty they need after months of doubt. The current shutdown-ending agreement moves the ball a bit forward on that process, including full-year funding bills for military construction and the VA; the Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration; and the legislative branch itself.
2. Pass Protection for those in uniform. Passing a timely budget should be a top priority for all legislators, but seeing such a trend reversed in short order may be unlikely. That’s why it’s important for lawmakers to ensure servicemembers and their families are protected from future funding-lapse fallout – not through emergency bills introduced as the budget clock ticks down, but through bipartisan legislation passed outside the frenetic appropriations cycle.

As servicemembers have shown in recent weeks, and during past funding lapses, their duties don’t stop even when their paychecks do. We know they will continue to serve, so they should know we will continue to pay them what they’ve earned through service and sacrifice. This legislation should include all in uniform, not just the armed services – members of the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps missed checks while serving shoulder to shoulder with armed services personnel, and NOAA Commissioned Corps members missed checks while flying into hurricanes. They should not be neglected by lawmakers.

3. Change USPHS/NOAA Retirement Funding. Military and federal-service retirees saw their paychecks continue throughout the shutdown. Retired USPHS and NOAA Commissioned Corps members and survivors did not, even though they served honorably. USPHS and NOAA Corps retirees receive their checks from the Coast Guard Pay and Personnel Center (PPC). During the recent shutdown, the PPC noted that these retirees would still receive pay slips, which are “automatically generated as part of the overall payroll process,” but wouldn’t get paid. Adding insult to injury, they also were instructed to coordinate with TRICARE and other insurance providers to make direct payments in lieu of allotments.

This is a threat to the financial well-being of these retired servicemembers, many of whom live on fixed incomes. After the 2018-19 shutdown threatened Coast Guard retirees in the same fashion, Congress took action: The FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) contained a provision moving that service’s retirement pay under the Military Retirement Fund, ensuring it would continue during a shutdown. A similar move would protect the pay of current and future USPHS and NOAA officer retirees in the event of a funding lapse.

MOAA will continue to urge lawmakers to move forward in all three of these areas throughout this extended budget cycle and into the new year. Doing so is the definition of “supporting the troops” – words that ring hollow under the threat of missed paychecks, cuts to programs and services, last-second changes to orders and PCS schedules, and other annual budget-fueled problems.

**How can we help?** Go to the [Legislative Action Center](http://www.moaa.org/takeaction) ([www.moaa.org/takeaction](http://www.moaa.org/takeaction)), if you haven't already done so. Use the Legislative Action Center when contacting your legislators regarding military related issues. Or if you prefer, you can call MOAA's Capitol Hotline at 866-272-MOAA (6622), a toll-free line to the U.S. Capitol switchboard, to connect directly with lawmakers. Ask to speak with the military legislative assistant or legislative director. If neither staff is available, ask to schedule a follow-up call when they are available. One other resource for keeping up to date with legislation and happenings on Capitol Hill is [www.moaa.org/advocacy-news](http://www.moaa.org/advocacy-news).

**MOAA is NOT an organization of officers concerned *only* about officers. We are an organization of officers dedicated to protecting the earned benefits and welfare of ALL RANKS in all of the uniformed services.**

## Chapter Members Join the Fight Against Breast Cancer

*(Submitted by Chapter VP, Kathy Gates)*

Chapter members *Laurie Gates* and *Kathy Gates* participated in **Pledge the Pink in October**, held on the beaches of Fripp Island, SC. *Participants walk 30 miles over three days*, with shorter options available. Pledge the Pink is more than just a race; it's a festival filled with hope, laughter, and a commitment to fighting breast cancer. Founded in 2011, this event has evolved from a small local race into a nationally recognized breast cancer fundraiser. To date, it has raised nearly \$5 million for breast cancer charities. The funds support nonprofit service providers, helping patients access care and resources without delay.



*At Left:* Laurie Gates, a Physician Assistant and former LT USN, and sister, Kathy Gates, COL USA RET, an Audiologist, unfazed by a 30 mile walk;

*At Right:* The Gates sisters bring their characteristic sense of humor to the cause.

*(Photos courtesy of Kathy Gates)*



## Chapter Members Attend MOAA Training Workshop

*(Submitted by Chapter President Al Memole)*

MOAA provides outstanding support to its affiliated Councils and Chapters, part of which is training for Council and Chapter leaders. Throughout the year, every year, MOAA hosts online Roundtable discussions through which it disseminates information and facilitates the exchange of ideas among Council and Chapter leaders across the nation. It also hosts several comprehensive leader training workshops, both virtual and in-person, annually. MOAA rotates in-person workshops among different

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regions of the country. This year, the workshop for the Eastern Region was held at the Hershey Lodge in Hershey, PA, on November 14 and 15. [Chocolate lovers: eat your heart out.] The Eastern Region included leaders from the six New England states, NY, NJ, PA, DE, MD, VA, WV, OH, IN, MI, IL, and WI. Leaders representing the NYS Council of Chapters and all of its Chapters except Lower Hudson attended (*pictured below*). From our Chapter, President Al Memole, accompanied by his wife, Mary, and [cousin] Vince Memole, in his position as the East Region VP for the Council of Chapters, took part in the training.



*Standing, left to right:* Barbara Delancey, Southern Tier Chapter (STC), Suzann Hensley Lt Col USAF Ret. and Scott Wendt, Central NY Chapter (CNY), Terry Bale CWO4 USA Ret. and Evelyn Bale (STC), Al and Mary Memole, Paul Cannon Lt Col, USAF Ret., Genesee Valley Chapter (GVC), Rebecca (LTC USA Ret) and Frank Sparacino LTC USA Ret., Western NY Chapter (WNY), Barbara Green LTC USA Ret. (GVC), Matt Sprenger COL USA Ret., Mid-Hudson Chapter (MHC), Jean Vaughn (GVC), and Hily Delancey MAJ USA Ret. (STC);

*Seated in front, left to right:* Vince Memole LTC USA Ret. Council Eastern Region VP, Lucille Browning (CNY), Kathy Green (GVC), Norma Weissend Lt Col USAF (GVC) and Council President, Timothy Vaughn Col USAF Ret. (GVC) and Council VP, and Keith Harris CDR USN Ret. (GVC) and Council Western Region VP;

*(Photo courtesy of Mary Memole, taken by ... Brian Kelly, Lt Gen USAF Ret. MOAA President and CEO!)*

Friday afternoon featured three concurrent breakout sessions: Privacy Policy and Outreach Guidelines, Communications Best Practices, and Chapter Recruiting. Al attended the Privacy Policy session; Vince attended the Chapter Recruiting and Membership session. Following the sessions, the NYS Council of Chapters held a brief meeting with Chapter reps to go over some Council business. Friday evening had a buffet dinner with guest speaker, *Jim Carman*, CAPT USN RET, MOAA's VP for Council/Chapter and Member Support. Saturday morning began with a powerful presentation by Virginia "Gail" Joyce on the daunting challenges faced by surviving spouses and the assistance that MOAA can provide. Following that were three concurrent training sessions on Chapter Management, Legislative (advocacy) Training, and Surviving Spouse Liaison Training. Both Vince and Al attended the session of Chapter Management, which also covered fundraising and non-dues revenue. Mary Memole attended the Surviving Spouse Liaison session.

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All of the sessions that we attended were very well presented. While advocacy is, and will always be the heart of the MOAA mission, support for surviving spouses, and Council and Chapter administration are also vital for healthy and effective affiliates. Spouses and military families need to prepare for the unexpected, especially the loss of the service member. Recent changes to MOAA policy regarding member contact information (we're now automatically opted in for contact, unless we specifically opt out) will help Chapters with member recruiting, but also requires renewed diligence in protecting personal information. Vince reported that the session on recruiting and membership emphasized the basics: chapter members talking to non-chapter members to explain what MOAA can do for them and their families. And not just for officers, but for all who serve or have served. For example, MOAA led the way to get Congress in mid-year to pass a pay raise for those most in need, servicemembers in pay grades of E1-E-6.

The workshop helped prepare those of us who attended with ideas on how to improve the efficiency and performance of our administration and programs. The guidance from MOAA and the exchange of ideas with local and state leaders around the region made this 24-hour investment of time highly beneficial.

## HIGHLIGHTED CHARITY for this issue → USMCR Capital Region Toys For Tots

*(Submitted by Skip Bebernitz)*

The Capital District Toys for Tots is the largest Toys for Tots organization in the nation. They service 14 counties in Northern NY. Last year they distributed over 1 million toys to over 600,000 children. The NYS Capital District Chapter of MOAA supports the Capital District Toys for Tots with financial donations, toys, and volunteering at the warehouse. This year, as last year, Chapter members Skip Bebernitz and Pat Piccirilli have volunteered to help, and invite all Chapter members to join them. Skip is signed up for the shift on 29 Nov from 1300-1600 hrs. That shift is full, but if you have time available, they still need volunteers for 28 Nov 1700-1930 hrs, 29 Nov 1000-1300 hrs, 1 Dec 1400-1700 hrs, and for a few of the shifts on subsequent days out to 19 Dec. The work isn't hard but your body will make you aware that you have done something for the past three hours, but your mind and emotions will tell you that you have done something really nice for the past three hours. *You can sign up at:* <https://albany-ny.toysfortots.org/local-coordinator-sites/lco-sites/local-volunteer-form.aspx>

They always have Dunkin Donuts products for volunteers as well as donated food from area eateries. **Warning:** There is no indoor plumbing; only porta potties and an indoor hand sanitization station.



*Above: Volunteers Ernest "Skip" Bebernitz, MAJ, USA RET and Patrick Piccirilli, LTC, USA RET (Photo courtesy of Skip Bebernitz)*

## OTHER NEWS & EVENTS OF INTEREST

- REAL TIME REVOLUTION® Signature Reenactment Event: “Noble Train Begins”** A reenactment of Henry Knox’s removal of captured British cannon from Fort Ticonderoga and their transport to Boston will begin exactly 250 years from the original event on 6 Dec at Fort Ticonderoga. *[We’d like you to attend but that’s the same day as our Annual Business Meeting.]* However, “The Journey Continues” then next day, Sunday December 7<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 a.m. The “Noble Train” to Lake George will begin in the Town of Ticonderoga at the corner of Montcalm Street and Champlain Avenue, as reenactors “assemble the largest number of period vehicles since 1775, pulled by oxen and horses, to recreate the first leg of Henry Knox’s journey.” (There will be 8 instead of 80 artillery pieces drawn on sleds constructed by Washington and Warren County BOCES students to be reproductions of the originals.) They will haul the cannon to the shore of Lake George where Henry Knox loaded his cannon onto three boats to sail up the lake on their journey to aid the Siege of Boston. Knox's Train will resume its journey in Fort Edward on 13 Dec at 9:00 am. For more information go to this website: <https://fortticonderoga.org/experience/events/henry-knoxs-noble-train-of-artillery-ticonderoga-to-the-siege-of-boston/>
- STRIDE Adaptive Sports** is holding its annual **Wounded Warrior Snowfest** in December. Their program teaches veterans who were disabled physically, mentally, or psychologically in the line of duty how to cope with their disabilities through challenging outdoor activities. STRIDE also involves these veterans in mentoring the disabled children in their therapeutic program, which benefits both. Our Chapter has been donating funds to support this event for many years.



**21<sup>st</sup> Annual Wounded Warfighter SNOWFEST**

**December 12-14, 2025**  
A three day event with the Wounded Warfighters

Friday Evening: Meet & Greet/Comedy Club  
Saturday Day: Adaptive Snowsport Lessons  
Saturday Evening: Army v. Navy football game viewing  
Followed by Celebration Dinner  
Sunday Day: Adaptive Snowsport Lessons

Sign-Up HERE!



Or Visit  
<https://www.stride.org/stride-wounded-warrior-snowfest/>

Questions?  
[abrame@stride.org](mailto:abrame@stride.org)

### *Hey history buffs!*

*PBS recently aired a highly recommended series on the American Revolution. If you missed it, it is now available on the PBS app!*

**CHAPTER OFFICERS FOR 2025-2027**

CHAPTER OFFICE	INCUMBENT
President	Alfred M. Memole, LTC USA, RET
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice President	Kathy E. Gates, COL USA, RET
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice President	<i>vacant</i>
Secretary	Ralph Folger, LCDR USNR, RET
Treasurer ( <i>Acting</i> )	<i>Alfred M. Memole, LTC USA, RET</i>

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2025-2027**

Rocco D. Acquilano, CDR USNR RET	Ernest “Skip” Bebernitz**, MAJ USA RET
Christopher J. Costigan*, CDR USN RET	Anthony J. Ficara**, COL USA RET
Vincent A. Memole, Jr., LTC USAR RET	Edmund M. Scheiber, Jr.**, Lt Col USAF RET
Edward E. Balaban, LT USNR RET	Lance Richardson, MAJ USA RET

\* *Immediate Past-President*

\*\* *Former President*