



THE EAGLE



THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS

www.pa-coc.org



NEWS AND VIEWS December 2013



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Fellow council members:

It's been a very "short" two years at the PA COC helm, so short that it almost felt like 18 months (which it actually was to fix our order of succession), but it was also a very "long" two years in that lots needed to be done both operationally and strategically to fine tune our course, to keep us on the straight and narrow path.

I have firmly believed, from the outset of assuming the presidency, that our council has value. I have strived hard to convince our Chapter presidents, our fellow veterans organizations, our state legislature and MOAA national that our council's only goal is the well being of our "constituents," our fellow veterans and their families as well as those who are currently serving. You have helped me greatly in this endeavor and because of your support I believe we have

made great strides to reach this laudatory goal.

During my "short" term here's what we've accomplished:

- Created an SOP for incoming officers. This will help everyone involved in the leadership, and the council will benefit from having a current battle book.
- Created a formal budget process, approved our first financial blueprint for 2013, and approved the 2014 budget in September.
- Updated council bylaws so terms of office would begin on Jan. 1, rather than in the middle of the CY. Also incorporated electronic communication to bring council up to speed.
- Added an electronic council meeting in January due to the possibility of inclement weather.
- Created a monthly newsletter, and approved the selling of advertising to offset council expenses.

- Stood up a council website which assists Chapters in recruiting and retention, as well as with legislative initiatives.

- Revitalized our York and NE PA/PM Chapters (thanks to **Bob Kutulis**) and enlisted our Bucktail Chapter into the council.

- Formed a legislative committee and appointed a chair resulting in MOAA becoming a highly respected voice in Harrisburg on a variety of veterans-related issues.

- Raised Chapter dues to stabilize council solvency and increased our council's financial worth despite hosting a state convention.

- Conducted first state convention in 10+ years, which was a financial and operational success (started during Bob K's term of office).

- Finalized our applications for federal and state non-profit status.

- Prepared and disseminated news releases to more than 250 PA media outlets for legislative initiatives and to publicize newly elected council officers.

- Received council approval to explore possibility of standing up a State College Chapter.

During Bob Kutulis' term of office you also supported my initiatives to create the Jim Brokenshire leadership coin and council note cards. My hat is off to Bob for his superb leadership during his tenure; he started the ball rolling.

Additionally, by the end of this year I will have visited every PA Chapter, spreading the gospel about why a council is needed, i.e, what the council does for Chapters and its members. I much appreciate the warm reception I received at each and every

meeting, and only hope that I made some sense in my ramblings.

Much thanks to the following who without their support none of the above would have been possible:

- Past president **Chuck Anderson**, whose steady leadership kept our council on the even keel, and for having the confidence to draft me as the council secretary.

- Past president **Bob Kutulis**, who resurrected our York and NE/PM Chapters, and who worked so well with the council that even MOAA national took notice.

- Incoming president **Bob Gray**, who as our legislative chair has taken the reins and galloped off gallantly through the state legislature, making inroads for our council that a few years ago would have been inconceivable. Helping Bob walk the walk and talk the talk was **Alicia Blessington**, our outgoing Philadelphia Chapter president, and **Nate Kline** from our Lehigh Valley chapter.

- Incoming 1st VP **Bob Cudworth**, our long time treasurer, who put together our SOP and attends War Council and Veterans Commission meetings regularly. As a former state DAV commander, Bob brings much experience to the table and will ensure our council continues to thrive and strive.

- Incoming 2nd VP **Harold Cooney**, who made possible our electronic phone conferences for both our 2012 convention planning and our January council meeting, and whose knowledge of legislative issues and leadership will be extremely valuable as we move forward.

- Secretary **Nancy Anderson**, who elevated the position to new heights during my tenure, and who has taken the lead in applying for 501c19 and state non-profit status. I had the job for more than 3 years,

and it's not for the faint of heart. Just note taking, it's not. Underappreciated, it is!

- Outgoing treasurer **Harvie Beavers**, who deftly took over the financial chores and kept us in the black, and newly minted treasurer **Jack Whalen**, who has moved out smartly with an audit and is helping to streamline the way we do financial business.

- Eagle newsletter editor **Bob Broyles**, whose patience is understated and whose product is first class.

- Lastly but not lastly, former council president **Jim Brokenshire**, who although he is no longer with us was my inspiration to visit every Chapter and whose continuing leadership as our lobbyist parleyed the way for our legislative committee. Thanks Jim for all you did. You will never be forgotten.

Bob Gray and I have discussed what role I will play as past president and we've agreed that I will remain a delegate on the PA War Veterans Council and will continue to work with Chapters. I of course will help in any other way that our new president and council members deem fit.

And so may I again thank each and every one of you for your kind support and gracious understanding. I salute all of you, for what you do for our veterans, military and their families. And have a great holiday season!

* * * * *

NEW COUNCIL OFFICERS

Officers were sworn in for the 2014-15 term at the council's Nov. 9 meeting in State College. Congrats to the newly elected slate: president **Bob Gray** of the Keystone Capitol Chapter, 1st VP **Bob Cudworth** of the Northeast PA/Pocono Mountains Chapter,

2nd VP **Harold Cooney** of the Cumberland Valley Chapter, secretary **Nancy Anderson** of the General Greene Chapter, and immediate past president **Bill Harris** of the Lehigh Valley Chapter. Their terms begin on Jan. 1. Treasurer **Jack Whalen** of the Valley Forge Chapter could not attend due to a funeral and will be sworn in at our April 5 meeting. Also attending the council meeting were **Keith Beebe** of the Keystone Capitol Chapter, **Alicia Blessington** of the Philadelphia Chapter and **John Antonitis** of the York Chapter.



From left: Cooney, Cudworth, Gray, Anderson and Harris.

The council's financial report revealed \$5,168.28 in savings and \$2,501.06 in checking for a net worth of \$7,669.34. Secretary **Anderson** will provide the consolidated minutes based on Chapter input. The council also finalized the form for obtaining 501c19 status and will also file the form required to obtain state non-profit status for the council. In other business, the 2014 convention in Pittsburgh is moving forward, ads will be solicited for the council newsletter once a rate sheet has been coordinated with **Bob Gray**, who will take over for **Bob Broyles** next year as the editor, and a new Chapter in the State College area will be investigated.

As a reminder the Jan. 16 meeting will be electronic - a phone number and code to punch in will be provided. Meeting starts at 1 p.m. All regular council meetings are working lunches held from 11-1, with the legislative committee meeting from 10-11.



Harris affixes the council president's pin to Gray's coat while Cudworth looks on.

* * * * *

The 34th annual National Veterans Wheelchair Games will be held in Philadelphia Aug. 12-17, 2014. The event is looking for sponsors and volunteers. Information on the event is in a .pdf file accompanying this newsletter.

* * * * *

MOAA's Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee (AMAC) is seeking candidates for two seats being vacated on Jan. 31, 2014. Anyone interested in submitting a nomination package should contact COL Ana Smythe at anas@moaa.org for a nomination form. If you have any questions about serving on the AMAC, contact the committee chair, Patricia Bergquist, at 615-948-4960.

Selection criteria are shown in a .pdf accompanying this newsletter.

CHAPTER PROJECT IDEA

Looking for a Chapter project? Here's an idea that some Chapters may have already adopted:

The Library of Congress' Veterans History Project records veterans' recollections of diaries, photos, documents and letters, as well as audio and video interviews. You can download a "field kit" by clicking [here](#). This would be a good way to connect older Chapter members with prospective younger members.

* * * * *

NATIONAL AWARDS

The deadline for submissions to MOAA's 2013 Marvin Harris Communication Awards is Feb. 1, 2014. A checklist accompanies this newsletter for your use.

* * * * *

LEGISLATION UPDATE

Bob Gray

The fall session of the state legislature started on September 24th with committees meeting on liquor privatization, transportation and pension reform. Senate Bill 975, the Micro Loan Program (pay day lending bill) has not been on the front burner of the Senate leadership. It is not known how long that will last as bills move and deals are made to pass this if you want to get that passed. In an effort to remind the legislature that pay day lending is still illegal in Pennsylvania,

the Coalition to Stop Predatory Pay Day Lending stormed the Hill in Harrisburg on September 24th to distribute a one page hand out to alert the legislature that the Pennsylvania Department of Banking and Insurance Enforcement Bureau has been shutting down illegal internet pay day loans businesses that were operating in Pennsylvania. Two have been stopped in 2013 with the largest, Western Sky Financial, the most recent illegal pay day lender to be stopped. Since 2010 the Enforcement Bureau has stopped 10 internet pay day lenders from operating in Pennsylvania. The MOAA PA Council of Chapters team visited the House members of the Veterans Affairs and Emergency Preparedness Committee and all of the House veteran members. None of them were aware that any internet pay day lenders had been stopped from doing business in Pennsylvania. We were able to meet with a few veteran legislators and were glad they opposed pay day lending. Recently coalition members received word from legislators that lobbyist for the pay day lenders were back arranging meetings at the capitol. This signals a renewed effort to try to win votes for the bill. After hearing that news the Coalition sent a team to the capitol on November 12th, including MOAA, to drop off a letter thanking legislators for joining

us in opposing pay day lending. Further visits will be planned in December. Anyone interested in coming to the capitol to join MOAA's lobbying can contact your chapter legislative chair or president, who will notify Bob Gray, PACOC Legislative Chair. The PA War Veterans Council voted to put out a new letter at the October meeting to continue opposing any change to the state usury laws for interest on consumer loans. Additionally the PA State Veterans Commission has sent a letter opposing any change of the state usury laws to be sent to the governor and leadership of the House and Senate. The coalition to Stop Predatory Pay Day Loans in PA has a web site www.stoppaydayloanspa.com/ and Face book page www.facebook.com/StopPayDayLoansPA. The web site provides an updated one page summary you can download to provide legislators and for information. The site also has a link to send a suggested email to your state legislator or add your own words.

Pennsylvania Veteran Legislation

The Pennsylvania War Veteran's Council Legislative Committee reviews veteran related legislation introduced in the House and Senate. It recommends supporting or opposing the legislation to the full membership of the PA War Veterans

Council and a letter is sent to the leadership in the state House and Senate and the governor's office. The MOAA PA Council of Chapters has a member on the current legislative committee. The legislative committee also meets monthly with the legislative liaison from the PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs on military and veteran legislation. The committee determines if the council will support the bills or request changes.

Currently the governor's office is working to have the legislature pass a Veteran's Package of legislation for a signing ceremony in late November. Some of the legislation that could be included is listed below:

House Bill 107/Heffley - Considering military education and training to satisfy state licensing or certification requirements.

Senate Bill 923/ Baker – Extending and expanding the Military Family Relief Assistance program beyond January 2014. The program gives grants up to \$3,500 to needy PA active duty service members and their families.

HB 1742 (Bobeck) provides that only 50% of a VA compensation benefit shall be considered income for various state programs. HB 1742 was reported as amended from the Veterans Affairs Committee on October 22nd. Added unmarried spouses of deceased veterans that would receive veterans benefits after the veterans death.

SB 1090/ Baker – Extending Free hunting and fishing licenses to disabled veterans paid at the 100 percent disabled rate.

Senate Bill 1004 / Baker - Developing Opportunities in Veterans Education. Requires institutions of higher education to designate a single point of contact for Veterans where they can receive academic and financial assistance.

House Bill 472/ Barrar – Military Residency for Colleges provides an

exception to residency requirements for in-state tuition to the Commonwealth's colleges and universities. It will also require that the sponsor rate for each community college be extended to the non-resident Veteran, their spouse and dependent children.

House Bill 43/ Harper – “Give an Hour” to our Veterans – legislation would change current language to allow psychiatrists, psychologists and counselors the ability to obtain a volunteer license so that they may provide free mental health services via the “Give an Hour” volunteer program.

House Bill 1205/ Barrar – Establish a scratch-off veterans lottery ticket to produce a renewable funding source to be deposited into the Veterans Trust Fund to finance veterans service programs, in addition to Act 66 funding. This bill also addresses the possibility of proceeds from the lottery dropping below required levels to fund tax rebates, senior meals and transportation. This bill directs short falls be taken from the General Fund. HB 1205 was reported as amended from the Veterans Affairs Committee October 22nd.

* * * * *

DRACONIAN BUDGET CUTS

Some dire predictions follow regarding the effects of sequestration on the military, courtesy of the NG Association newswire:

The service chiefs were blunt last month (November) when they appeared before the Senate Armed Services Committee, telling the lawmakers that continued cuts under sequestration would have a serious impact on the battlefield.

Gen. Ray Odierno, the Army chief of staff,

said, "We will not be able to train them for the mission they're going to have to do. We will have to send them without the proper training, and actually maybe [without] proper equipment. ... So that always relates to potentially higher casualties." His words were echoed by Gen. James Amos, the Marine commandant, who said, "We are headed towards a force in not too many years that will be hollow back home and not ready to deploy. And if they do deploy, they will enter harm's way, we'll end up with more casualties."

Gen. Mark A. Welsh III, the Air Force chief of staff, and Adm. Jonathan Greenert, the chief of naval operations, had similar dire words for the panel. "If we're not ready for all possible scenarios, then we're accepting the notion that it's OK to get to the fight late," Welsh said. He said entire fleets of aircraft may be retired to make up for the money lost to cuts. The Air Force has said the A-10 Thunderbolt may have to be sacrificed if the cuts continue.

* * * * *

OH, BY THE WAY!

Annual Chapter dues to the council will be payable after Jan. 1 for the 2014 CY and are based on whatever number your Chapter reports to MOAA national, which is a requirement if your Chapter wants to participate in MOAA's monetary incentives and awards programs. The rate for state council dues is 50 cents per Chapter member. Please send the check, made payable to PA COC, to treasurer Jack Whalen (contact info elsewhere in this newsletter).

As a reminder, our state secretary, Nancy

Anderson, would like a copy of your roster for our records, so please copy her on your email to MOAA national.

* * * * *

A NOTE FROM NATIONAL ABOUT THE ANNUAL MEETING

Now that we are back from the annual meeting, we would like to provide our council and Chapter leaders with several presentations – ensuring what was presented and discussed in Colorado Springs is passed on to our Chapter leadership. Sharing information is one of the most powerful actions we undertake to assist you in conducting Chapter business and supporting MOAA's One Powerful Voice.

Having said that, during the Q&A at the end of the Annual Meeting of the Membership, VADM Ryan promised a video of his presentation would be made available for use at Chapter meetings. That video is now available.

There are several ways you can access the video, depending on the technology available to you. First, you can go to www.moaa.org/2013annualmeeting and scroll down to Admiral Ryan's remarks.

You can watch it directly from the embedded media player, including in a full screen mode. If you will not have a high speed internet connection available to you at your meeting place, you can also download the video by right-clicking on one of the two links directly below the embedded video player, then selecting "Save target [or link] as," and saving the .mp4 file to a folder on your hard drive or to a thumb drive or other portable memory device. As you will see when you go to download, the video file is

large, so ensure you have time and space to complete the download. A high-speed internet connection is highly recommended for downloading the video.

Once downloaded and saved, you can then play the video by simply clicking on the appropriate saved file. If you have a video projector or big screen television, you can connect your computer directly to that device when playing the presentation.

Finally, if you don't have access to the files via moaa.org, email gordonh@moaa.org and let us know how you would like to show the video and we will determine what format you need and mail you a DVD, CD, or thumb drive with the appropriate video file. Please allow two weeks to get the file.

Thanks for all your continued support.

* * * * *

Three PA State council members and their spouses attended MOAA's national meeting held Nov. 14-16 in Colorado Springs, CO. Participating under the watchful eye of Pike's Peak were council secretary Nancy Anderson and husband Chuck, Carmine DiGiacomo and wife Dottie and myself and Susan, my CinC. During the activities Carmine accepted a four-star Level of Excellence streamer for his Pittsburgh Chapter and Nancy arrived earlier to participate as a national board member.



Carmine receives the streamer from GEN JOHN Tilelli, MOAA's national board chairman, while MOAA president VADM Norb Ryan applauds.

* * * * *

HOPE FOR VETERANS

A New Jersey-based organization aimed at helping homeless veterans and their families is expanding their services into four eastern PA counties and may increase their presence across our state as time permits. Called "Hope for Veterans," they are already operating in Bucks, Monroe, Northampton and Pike counties. The outreach assistant is Kevin Cope, kcope@communityhope-nj.org; (973) 463-9600, Ext.,104. His cell is (973) 270-1103. Their website is www.communityhope-nj.org. See accompanying .pdf for more info.

* * * * *

PACOC MEETING DATES IN 2014

Jan. 16 (electronic only, will provide call-in number), April 5 (Days Inn State College), Jul 19 (Days Inn State College), Sept. 12 (held during Pittsburgh state convention, was 13 Sep) and Nov. 8 (Days Inn State College).

* * * * *

NEW TITLE FOR RETIREES

In case you have not seen the update to Army Reg 25-50, all retired active-Army, retired Army Guard, and retired Army Reserve soldiers will henceforth use the title, USA-Ret. and no longer use AUS-Ret or USAR-Ret. This is part of the blending of all components into the Total Army.

* * * * *

ONLINE HELP FOR VETS

The PA DVA has created a website called "Explore VA" that provides basic benefit information to veterans about health care, education, job services, home loans, housing, life insurance, pensions, disability compensation, memorial benefits and more. Accompanying .pdf has more details.

* * * * *

SAFEGUARDING DD214s

The Chester County recorder of deeds is archiving military discharge papers (DD Form 214 for most veterans) as a public service and maintains them as nonpublic documents. Discharge papers are extremely valuable when a service member dies because the surviving spouse cannot receive death benefits without providing documentation. And the DD Form 214 is key.

If the counties in your area do not provide this service, this would be a good project for your Chapter to undertake on behalf of all veterans, not just your Chapter members. A link to the news story on this initiative:

<http://www.dailylocal.com/opinion/20131112/veterans-should-take-advantage-of-programs>

* * * * *



**PA COUNCIL OFFICERS
2012-2013 Term**

President - Bill Harris
wthiii3@rcn.com
(610) 217-3511

1st Vice President - Bob Gray
rl_gray@hotmail.com
(717) 623-8715

2nd Vice President - Bob Cudworth
drrobert2@comcast.net

Secretary - Nancy Anderson
LeadHers@aol.com

Treasurer – Jack Whalen
whalenjohnf@yahoo.com
(610) 420-0633

Immediate Past President - Bob Kutulis
kutulis@comcast.net
(610) 321-1872

* * * * *

The Eagle is published monthly by the Pennsylvania Council of Chapters, Military Officers Association of America. Its content does not reflect the official position of the DoD, any branch of the US Armed Forces, NOAA, USPHS, nor MOAA National. Please send articles and audio-visual submissions to the Editor, Bob Gray, at pacocnewsletter@gmail.com.