



THE EAGLE



THE MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS

www.pa-coc.org



NEWS AND VIEWS June 2013



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

I'll be visiting our General Greene Chapter on June 13 and our Pocono Mountains Chapter on June 22, and my pledge to visit every Chapter during my tenure will be fulfilled when Susan and I venture to Pittsburgh on Oct. 14. Logging thousands of miles and undergoing numerous packing rituals are all worth it, and I am greatly appreciative for the gracious hospitality that was provided to Susan and me during our sojourns.

Speaking of Chapter visits, Susan and I had a great visit with our Bucktail Chapter when we met for lunch on May 21 in Olean, NY. Hey, we're expanding into the Empire State! (Only for meeting purposes, however.) Chapter president Don Smith presided; 16 attended including five spouses. They meet monthly from May-October. Membership, including both recruiting and retention was, like most of our Chapters, of vital interest. I told them they were not alone, that all of our Chapters, being in a state without a major military installation or military retirement community, are having problems. And like most Chapters, they are having difficulty replacing their leaders ...

Don agreed to stay on for one more year although his term had expired.

After my pitch about what the state council does for Chapters (as well as for our fellow veterans and their families), I was most gratified to hear that after we left the Chapter voted to rejoin the council. I told Don later that we will help them in any way we can to stay afloat, including getting help from national.

Their finances were sound and I informed them that they could obtain \$500 from USAA on an annual basis to support their programs, and MOAA national will provide up to \$250 to pay for print advertising in local newspapers. I added that the state council would help them to create or modify an ad upon request.

They passed out their Chapter newsletter, *Bucktail Briefs*, which contained articles on the defense budget, estate probate, potential DoD furloughs, a list of MOAA national's 2013 legislative goals and a biographical article by 1st VP Joan Forsyth, a retired USAF colonel, who spent 24 years in uniform in the nursing business, mostly in operating rooms. Quite an

interesting career! They also announced their summer cruise on Chatauqua Lake, on Aug. 20. Anyone interested in obtaining a copy of their newsletter please let me know and I'll ask Don if it's OK to email you a copy (I scanned it for record.)

Some discussion ensued regarding the gold bar program at Army ROTC commissioning, as some were told that the Army is phasing out the bars - with epaulets coming into vogue. They also discussed an apparent conflict with the NY MOAA folks regarding what state should support the Univ. of Pittsburgh-Bradford campus since they are affiliated with St. Bonaventure (a NY institution). Apparently the Bucktail Chapter filled a void and since then, well, guess it's anyone's guess. But it's good to see that we are not overlooking an ROTC program, albeit it created a tug of war.

Susan made a mini-presentation about survivors' benefits and how to get them - this was a short version of the pitch she made at our convention last year. "Do you know what a DD 214 is ... and do you know where it is?" was the questions she used to get things going, and a lively discussion ensued. All in all, a great meeting, and Susan and I want to thank Don Smith and his Chapter members for being so congenial.

Huge thanks to Will Conley of our Valley Forge Chapter for providing back copies of the January and February issues of The Affiliate for posting on our web site. Now we're complete for the year.

By press time we will have attended the French Creek Valley Chapter meeting on May 28 in Venango, PA - will report in July's issue, so stay tuned!

Regards,
Bill Harris

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NOMINEES WANTED!

Past council president Bob Kutulis is seeking nominees for our 2014-15 PA state council term. Anyone interested should contact Bob (see the officer contact list elsewhere in this newsletter). The officer positions that we know will be coming open are 2nd VP and treasurer, and there may be at-large council positions open as well. We will discuss nominations at our Sept. 26 meeting and at the end of the Nov. 9 meeting new officers and council members will be elected, their terms beginning on Jan. 1, 2014. Any member in good standing with both MOAA national and a PA MOAA Chapter is eligible – AND ENCOURAGED - to serve!

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REMAINING COUNCIL MEETING DATES

July 13, State College
September 26, Hershey
November 9, State College (Officer Elections)

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ARMY FIELD BAND JAZZ CONCERT

On July 2 at 7 PM, the U.S. Army Field Band Jazz Ambassadors is giving a FREE concert at the Sunoco Theater in the Whitaker Center in Harrisburg. If you order your tickets online, they will charge you a \$7 handling fee. If you pick them up at the Box Office at the Whitaker, it is totally free. Seating is general admission so no reserved seats. It's a great way to support the Army and have a free night out.

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VA HEALTHCARE VETERANS ASSISTANCE COUNCIL MTG

As MOAA representatives, Tom Tallon and Pete Bellisario of our Pittsburgh Chapter attended the 2013 VA Healthcare Veterans Assistance Council western market meeting

held at the VA Pittsburgh H.J. Heinz campus on May 5. Here's a summary of Tom's report:



Network director Michael Moreland opened the meeting.

Other presenters were William Mills of the James E. Van Zandt Medical Center in Altoona; John Gennaro, Butler VA Healthcare; Beth Brown of the Louis A. Johnson VA Healthcare System, Clarksburg, WV; Dr. Michael Adelman, Erie VA Medical Center, and Terry Wolf, Pittsburgh VA Healthcare System.



Pete Bellisario of the MOAA Pittsburgh chapter makes a point.

New construction and upgrades are underway at every facility and area. The VA is using the latest multi-communication technology to reach and care for more veterans including establishing Patient Aligned Care Teams (PACTS). Nationwide transplants are performed in the Pittsburgh facility. The VA partners with community hospitals when more expensive equipment is needed.



MOAA's Tom Tallon (left) asks a question during the VISN meeting.

Tom added that it was a good meeting, a lot of state legislators' staffers attended, but the only veterans organizations attending were MOAA and the Vietnam Veterans of WV. Thanks, Tom and Pete, for being our eyes and ears!

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PAY DAY LENDING UPDATE Bob Gray, Legislative Chairman

Senator Pat Browne has sent a sponsorship letter to all senators briefly describing the new Micro-Credit Modernization Act and asking senators to sign on as cosponsors. He has not introduced the actual bill at this time, waiting to see how many senators are willing to sign on to this new approach to Pay Day Lending. He also has to get permission from the Senate leadership before it can be introduced. They will be back in session on June 2, 3 and 4th in Harrisburg trying to put together the budget.

Our legislative team will be back on capitol hill lobbying against this pending legislation with our nearly 100 partners of the Stop Predatory Pay Day Loans in PA coalition. Along with the MOAA PA Council of Chapters, the PA War Veterans Council and the American Legion have notified senators that veterans groups are against any change to the state's usury laws which hold small dollar loans to around 28 percent, including interest and fees. The new legislation would require borrowers to take out eight (8) consecutive Pay Day Loans in order to qualify for a 60 or 90 day loan at the same interest rate. The national average for borrowers taking out Pay Day

Loans is eight loans per year, which puts them in the cycle of debt.

You may go to our PA Council of Chapters web site, www.pa-coc.org, click on Legislation and click on Stop Predatory Pay Day Loans. There is a link to take action to contact your legislators by sending a prepared message to your senator. The web link will also give you your senator's office phone number so you can call to let them know you sent the email opposing Pay Day Lending. Tell them that you are a member of the PA MOAA.

Now is the time to contact our state senators to let them know that we do not want Pay Day Lending introduced in Pennsylvania. Click this link to take action now:
<https://secure3.convio.net/pn/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=3782>

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DOD SEQUESTER FURLOUGHS

Unless Congress takes action to reduce the deficit, DoD will furlough nearly 680,000 civilian employees for 11 days during the last three months of the current FY, beginning on July 8. It will save about \$1.8 billion; about 120,000 civilian workers will be exempt because of their critical tasks.

TRICARE AND COLA SAFE!

Thanks to our national lobbying effort, Congress has rejected capping active duty pay and will not recommend TRICARE fee increases beyond normal cost of living adjustments. For the details go to:
[http://www.moaa.org/Main_Menu/Take_Action/Top_Issues/Serving_in_Uniform/Compensation/TRICARE Fees, Pay Cap Rejected.html](http://www.moaa.org/Main_Menu/Take_Action/Top_Issues/Serving_in_Uniform/Compensation/TRICARE_Fees_Pay_Cap_Rejected.html)

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MOAA MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Chapters can now use an online form to send MOAA national the info on new members. Just go to:
https://fs20.formsite.com/moaaweb/2013ChapterRecruiting/secure_index.html and fill in the data. Because monetary incentives for recruiting and retention are based on a Chapter's reporting strength, MOAA national suggests that Chapters refrain from signing up newly commissioned ROTC cadets and midshipmen for Chapter membership since they will most likely deploy away from the Chapter's location after graduation - so having these new officers on Chapter rolls will cause their retention numbers to fall, preventing them from competing for cash awards.

As a reminder, MOAA now has three levels of membership - basic (for ROTC/OCS and academy grads, who will only receive electronic communications, for four years), premium (those who pay dues annually) and life.

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WILLOW GROVE ON THE MOVE

Willow Grove Chapter president Bill Luckenbill reports that they donated \$150 to the "Fore the Troops" golf tournament that was held in Skippack on June 1. The Chapter sponsored a hole. They also supported Coast Guard families by donating \$200 during the Chapter's morning meeting on May 18 at the VE Club in Warminster. They have informed MOAA national that they have four new members. How'd they get them? "We are recruiting local Legion Post members using the list from national and from local Masonic lodges. It is amazing where you will find officers who have served and never knew there was a local Chapter," said Luckenbill.

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Chapter Achievements

From the Field:

Pittsburgh Chapter

Since 2006, the Pittsburgh Chapter has supported Operation Troop Appreciation (OTA), which provides wish-list items to deployed service-members. The chapter makes an annual donation, and members volunteer at OTA fundraisers. Chapter leaders also encourage community leaders to support OTA. At a recent ceremony, the chapter recognized OTA's leaders by presenting them with a certificate of merit signed by national MOAA President Vice Adm. Norbert R. Ryan Jr., USN (Ret).

"It's rewarding to support an organization where 98 cents of every dollar goes directly to our troops," says Col. Carmen DiGiacomo, AUS (Ret), chapter president.

Coronado (Ariz.) Chapter

Coronado Chapter members donated \$4,000 to help build a chapel at the Southern Arizona Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Sierra Vista. Chapter President Col. Tom Finnegan, USA (Ret), presented the donation to fellow member Lt. Col. Earl Devine, AUS (Ret), in January. Devine is the cemetery foundation's



(clockwise from top) From left, Brig. Gen. Peter Bellisario, USAF (Ret), stands with Amanda Thompson, Kristen Holloway Querriera, Monica Orluk, and Pittsburgh Chapter President Col. Carmen DiGiacomo, AUS (Ret). Col. Tom Finnegan, USA (Ret), left, Coronado Chapter president, poses with Lt. Col. Earl Devine, AUS (Ret). Cmdr. Tony Blankenship, USN (Ret), left, presents Maj. Timothy Davis, USMC, with the Adm. Merlin O'Neill Officer of the Year Award.

40 MILITARY OFFICERS MAY 2013



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GLORIOUS INSULTS

A member of Parliament to Disraeli: "Sir, you will either die on the gallows or of some unspeakable disease."

"That depends, Sir," said Disraeli, "whether I embrace your policies or your mistress."



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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 Broyles, at pacocnewsletter@gmail.com.