
Lancaster Chapter News

Lancaster, PA Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
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2015 dues reminder

If you have not yet sent in your \$15 dues check for 2015, our membership chair and treasurer would appreciate your sending it now while you're thinking of it. We have over 60 members who have yet to pay their current dues.

Check your newsletter-mailing label. If it shows "Dues paid thru 14", then you need to pay your 2015 dues. If you are not certain of your dues status, contact co-membership chair Tom Bender at 626-4932 or e-mail at tjbender@dejazzd.com. Please make all dues checks out to Lancaster Chapter MOAA and send to our chapter address at P.O. Box 5031, Lancaster, PA 17606-5031. Dues-reminder post cards will be mailed out in late June to members who still need to pay 2015 dues.

Our August 29th picnic

This summer's MOAA picnic will be held at Waltz Vineyards on Saturday, Aug 29th. Waltz Vineyard is located at 1599 Old Line Road, Manheim, PA, 17545. The event will begin with social time from 11:00 to 12:30. During this time, the vineyard will offer an optional tour of the vineyard and associated production facilities for a cost of \$10 for each individual.

The meal for the event will be prepared by Hess BBQ and served at 12:30. The menu for the picnic is applewood smoked pulled pork BBQ, hickory smoked beef brisket, baked beans, macaroni and cheese, dutch potato salad, cold slaw and cake. A selection of Waltz wines as well as assorted non-alcohol drinks are provided in the cost of the picnic. We are treating this event as a membership appreciation event and a

portion of the cost of the meal will be covered by the chapter.

The cost will be \$18 for each attendee (\$28 for those requesting the optional tour). As always, your check is your reservation and should be made out to Lancaster Chapter MOAA and mailed to Lancaster Chapter MOAA, ATTN: Meeting Reservations, P.O. Box 5031, Lancaster, PA 17606-5031. Be sure to write the names of your guests on your check for name tag purposes.

In the event of inclement weather, you will be notified if the event is cancelled. In this case you will be directed to pick up your meal at the home of Dan & Nancy Horting, 3287 Verdant Grove, Lancaster 17601.

The deadline for receipt of all checks is Wednesday, Aug 26th. Cancellations may be made by calling Jim Cunningham prior to Aug 26th. If you have any questions, please contact Jim Cunningham at 581-5299.

From our president's desk

It's been ten years since our long-time member, Biddle Whigham, suggested the chapter participate in a program to provide pre-paid phone cards to members of the armed forces serving in combat zones in the Middle East. Once approved by the board, Biddle set about making the program work by attending every chapter meeting and soliciting donations from members who generously gave to support this worthwhile activity. Biddle handed the program over to Dina Cerase after a few years when he could no longer attend every meeting. While detailed records were not kept for the entire period of the program's existence, it is estimated that over 1,000 cards have been provided to

junior enlisted men and women since its inception at a value of over \$9,000. These cards

enabled the recipients to call home to speak to loved ones for 30 minutes at no cost. I mention this great achievement because technology has now eclipsed our program. In as much as service members now have access to computers, tablets and cell phones in Afghanistan and favor Skype for their communications with friends and family in the U.S., it has now become very difficult to find unit commanders willing to accept and distribute the cards. Therefore, your board has decided to terminate the program with the shipment of the final 100 cards sent in June to Afghanistan. I want to thank Biddle and Dina for their dedicated efforts to make this program the success that it has been as well as thank all of you who so generously contributed to make this happen on behalf of those in uniform serving us in harm's way.

I also want to thank Brian Remmey who for the past six years has been the chapter's liaison to the Millersville University ROTC detachment. This has been another highly successful program providing support, awards and recognition to deserving cadets as they prepare themselves for service as officers in the U.S. Army after graduation. In addition, Brian selflessly volunteered to manage our Adopt-a-Kid/Adopt-a-Vet program this past year, which culminated in a very successful program for all of the fifth-grade students at the Landis Run Elementary School in Manheim Township this past May. Unfortunately, Brian has had to relinquish these duties due to conflicts with his employment, but he deserves our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for a job exceptionally well done. Therefore we are now in need of a volunteer to become the ROTC liaison and a volunteer to manage next fall's Adopt-a-Kid/Adopt-a-Vet program. Please let me know if you would be willing to accept either of these opportunities. The chapter needs you to step up as these are two of our most important community support programs and bring your chapter great recognition.

Additionally, we are still in need of a volunteer to audit last year's financial activities. This is not a difficult endeavor and our treasurer, Barry Hitchcock, is prepared to assist in any possible way. My contact information for this and any other questions or concerns is 560-1260 or dlbencho@hacc.edu. You have my thanks in advance for your support of the chapter. Dennis

Our members made news

Ryan Aument, State Senator, was one of the Lancaster County lawmakers LNP asked to comment on Gov. Wolf's 100th day as Governor. He said, "I'd give Gov. Wolf high marks for his outreach. (But) thus far, he has been unwilling to engage in a conversation on the need for meaningful pension reform."

He was reported by LNP to have been one of 7 state senators to vote against sending legislation to legalize medical marijuana to the House of Representatives.

He wrote LNP to honor "the 200 sons and daughters of Pennsylvania who made the ultimate sacrifice and gave that last full measure of devotion during Operation Iraqi Freedom." He then named each of the five such soldiers with whom he had the "privilege of serving" when he was a young junior captain serving with the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Division in central Iraq.

J.J. Bentman wrote LNP a letter that unfavorably compared the care he had received when a patient at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania with what he experienced as a patient at Lancaster General Hospital. He was cool to the plans for affiliation between the two hospitals.

Leonard G. Brown III, Lancaster County Judge, wrote LNP to say, "Whenever I think about Memorial Day, I can never forget standing at a cold, gray and wintry gravesite with the grieving wife and children of a West point classmate. He died in the prime of life when his vehicle was hit by an improvised explosive device in Iraq. It is right to pause and remember the fallen, both recent and long passed, who have died so we may enjoy the blessings of liberty."

Josh Parsons, County Clerk of Courts, wrote LNP about a serviceman he had grown close to while serving in training in the Mojave Desert and who later died in combat. He said that remembrance brought home to him the importance of the debt we owe such soldiers--- "not just on Memorial Day, but every day."

Joe Pitts, U.S. Rep., wrote a feature article for LNP on how work and compromise get things done in Washington.

He was lauded in a full-page ad in LNP by the American Medical Assoc. that thanked him for his “efforts (that) showcase Congress’ ability to come together in bipartisan, bicameral fashion to deliver real reform on behalf of America’s patients and physicians.”

He wrote a column for LNP honoring the Nigerian girls taken by Boko Haram and explaining what he is doing to try and address that horrible problem.

Paul Ripple told The Scribbler in LNP about the Lancaster drug store that displayed a large round clock above its door. It always ran 10 minutes fast, and a sign on it said, “This clock is 10 minutes fast so you will have time for that Coke before you get the train.”

Paul was recognized in LNP as historian of the Lancaster County Chapter of the Pennsylvania Society of the Sons of the Revolution..

Craig Stedman, district attorney, was pictured in LNP as he visited with youngsters attending a Head Start program in Lancaster.

He was pictured in LNP with other county leaders giving views on Baltimore. He said, “As long as the decision is made on the evidence and the law, then it is the right one. Looting and pillaging are not part of that process, have no place in an ordered society, and must not be tolerated.”

In a front-page story in LNP, Craig gave several ideas for putting teeth in drunken-driving laws.

In a report in LNP regarding an officer who was shot while attempting to serve a warrant, Craig was quoted as saying that, once the case is wrapped up, “absent the police convincing me that there is some specific threat or danger,” he would release the name of the wounded officer and the officer who shot and killed the person who allegedly fired at the policemen while the attempt was being made to serve the warrant.

He was quoted in LNP as telling a task force on ways to reduce drunken driving, “Between 2012 and 2014, there were 1,338 drunken driving crashes in the county, and 49 deaths.”

Bob Wilcox was pictured and his military career briefly described in the “Kudos” page of the May issue of Military Officer Magazine.

Say hello to our new members

LT Laura F. Dogger
USNR. 717-615-1002
604 Race Avenue
Lancaster, PA 17603
Spouse: None
Joined: June 1, 2015
Sponsor: Carl Beck

RADM William P. Houley
USN (Ret.) 717-464-6670
400 Willow Valley Square, APT GA-404
Lancaster, PA 17602
Spouse: Judith “Judy” W. Houley
Joined: June 6, 2015
Sponsor: Frank Fryburg

We actively support the ROTC program

Our Chapter gave strong support to the Millersville University ROTC Detachment’s award ceremony at the Millersville Veterans’ Park on April 24. Our president, LTG Dennis Benchoff, made a few remarks and presented each graduating senior cadet with a copy of the novel “Once an Eagle” by Anton Myrer, which were provided by the Carlisle Chapter, MOAA.

John Gareis presented the scholastic award, a \$500 check, to Junior Cadet Nicholas Van Leuven on behalf of both the Red Rose Honor Guard and our MOAA Chapter. And Tony Cerase presented the MOAA leadership medal to Junior Cadet Samantha Lewis.

Also, on May 8 Dennis participated in the MU ROTC Detachment’s commissioning ceremony held at McComsey Hall, presenting some appropriate remarks and second lieutenant insignia to four senior cadets, John Doran, Ray Golden, Joel McLaughlin and Alexander Sload, who were to graduate the following day.

Once more, the youngsters loved us...

On May 4 we made our traditional visit to a local school. This time it was to Landis Run Intermediate School, at the invitation of Mr. Christopher M. Zander, Principal. Since Landis Run Intermediate has 18 fifth-grade classrooms, other veteran organizations were invited to participate under MOAA/Brian Remyey’s coordination. Members of the Red Rose

Veterans Honor Guard and the Korean War Veterans organizations augmented the MOAA program, and a total of 36 veterans took part. We were thus able to place two veterans per classroom to discuss why freedom is not free.

On May 22, the veterans returned to the school to participate in a joyous "Thank a Vet" program where each participant received a personal card from the students.

The VA hospital thanks you

The VA Medical Center in Lebanon has written us with their thanks for the gifts we gave to their veterans at Christmas time. They said, "We would like to thank you for your donation of seven bags (full of) of Holiday gifts." They pointed out how much that meant to many of the veterans they care for and who have no one else to give them that kind of attention.

Our warriors take part in Senior Games

The good folks who run the Senior Games gave us the names of our members who participated. They apparently gave us only a partial report, but these are the contestants we know about:

Bill Honaman --age 85--won bronze in Bench Press.

Dave Huber --age 90-- competed in 25-yard Free Style Swimming and 25-yard Breast Stroke Swimming.

George Resh --age 82-- won gold in Golf and competed in Shuffleboard.

Virginia Smith --age 84-- competed in Bridge.

Craig Stearn --age 84--won gold in Darts and Bronze in Pickle Ball.

We feel sure there are others we missed. Let us know, so we can report more completely in a future newsletter. In the meantime, let it be known that we're so proud of all who represented us in the Senior Games.

We honor the memory of...

Patricia A. Mann, who died May 12. She was the wife of Harry Mann, with whom she would have celebrated 62 years of marriage in June. She received her B.S. degree with distinction

from the University of Maine in 1971 and a master's degree from the Pennsylvania State University in 1989. She retired in 1996 after 15 years of service with the Lancaster County Office of Aging, where she served as Executive Director. She served as the Salvation Army's Advisory Board chair and was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. In addition to her husband, she is survived by 2 sons, 2 daughters, 12 grandchildren and 11 great grandchildren. Pat had been a part of our chapter since February 1982.

Jacqueline Mae Lowrey Davis Nickel, who died April 19. She was the wife of George Nickel, with whom she would have celebrated 20 years of marriage this year. Jackie was a member of Alpha Phi Theta Sorority, and had kept in touch with her Sorority sisters for more than 70 years. She attended Temple University (secretarial) and University of Pennsylvania and Stenotype Institute. She was very active in the Lancaster community and became social director of Valleybrook after she and her first husband George C Davis, moved there. She sang for 17 years as a member of the AARP Chorus, and she became president of the Fulton Opera House Guild in 1994. Her husband died in 19991, and in 1995 she married George Nickel. They both stayed very active in the community. In addition to her husband, she is survived by a son, 2 daughters, 6 grandchildren and 3 grandchildren. Jackie had been a part of our chapter since July 1995.

Paul H. Wragg, who died May 29, 2015. He was the husband of Susanne B. Wragg with whom he shared 27 years of marriage. He was a graduate of Florida State University and went to seminary in North Carolina at Duke University's Divinity School. He received a Master's in Education from the University of Southern California and a Ph.D in Social Psychology from Florida State University. He entered the U.S. Air Force in 1959 as an officer and a chaplain. He retired in 1979 as a colonel after 20 years of service. In addition to his wife, he is survived by 4 daughters and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Paul had been a member of our chapter since February 2001.

An anecdote from the military days of one of our members, past or present



John J. Collins, while in aviation cadet training at Randolph Field in July 1942.



The B-36 (right) compared with the B-29 (left), the largest bomber of WWII.

If someone tried to sell Hollywood a script of the flying career that our John Collins had in the U.S. Air Force, he'd be turned down cold, because nobody would ever have believed it.

Actually John wouldn't have believed it either...until it actually happened to him.

It started routinely enough, with his getting his primary flight training in a PT-19 Cornell with its 175 hp engine that could propel it at barely more than 100 mph. He could never have guessed then that he would one day be flying the B-36 with six 3,800 hp engines, plus four Jet engines that would give it a total of 40,000 hp, able to fly missions to targets 3,400 miles

away, and stay aloft for 40 hours without refueling. It was simply the largest mass-produced piston engine aircraft ever made.

John also flew a dozen other types of aircraft, including the B-24 bomber in which he flew 30 missions in combat from his bomb base in England during WWII. He says, "Two of those missions were to Norway to bomb the heavy water facility where the Nazis were producing that essential ingredient for a nuclear bomb. An Me-110 came right up our contrail to fire his cannons at us and all but cut off our rudders. We were lucky to get back from that one."

After combat, he drew the plum assignment of being one of three pilots who flew SAC generals to where they needed to be. He often flew with General LeMay, although that was always as copilot. He says, "The general always flew himself. His motto was, "If I'm going to die in an airplane, I'm going to do it myself."

Our chapter president pens a letter to our local newspaper that's too important to miss

When we marvel at precision-guided munitions hitting a small target from miles or even hundreds of miles away, we should note that somewhere in that chain of events are highly skilled soldiers, sailors, airmen or Marines who made it happen. Just as civilian employment has become increasingly high-tech, so too has military service.

That message was the focus of a recent visit to Philadelphia by U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter, who highlighted the troubling reality that far too few of America's young adults now have the skills and attributes necessary for military service. He warned that with the retirement of many highly skilled service members, the nation faces a challenge in recruiting people with the high-tech abilities needed in the 21st-century armed forces.

The disturbing fact is that 72 percent of today's young Pennsylvanians are not eligible for military service because they are too poorly educated, medically or physically unfit, or have disqualifying criminal records. These shortfalls will continue to undermine the military's efforts to recruit high-quality individuals.

In the end, this capability gap among our youth threatens both national security and economic prosperity.

For this reason, more than 500 of my fellow retired generals, admirals and other senior military leaders have become members of Mission: Readiness — Military Leaders for Kids, in order to support targeted investments to help young Americans grow up to be educated, healthy, and fit to ensure our defense and to succeed in life.

Fortunately, this key issue is gaining traction in Harrisburg as lawmakers discuss the adequacy and effectiveness of our public education system that is in large part responsible for producing the human capital we need. Among the proposals being considered is a historic expansion of Pennsylvania's high-quality early learning programs.

Gov. Tom Wolf has proposed increasing state funding for high-quality pre-K by \$120 million; this would provide access for an additional 14,000 children.

As I maintained last week at a legislative breakfast in Lancaster, decades of research have shown this would be a sound use of taxpayer dollars.

Front-loading our education system with high-quality pre-K and other early learning programs can better prepare our children by boosting graduation rates, deterring youth from crime, and reducing obesity rates — all while providing a strong return on investment. For example, by fourth or fifth grade, children who attended New Jersey's preschool program for two years were three-quarters of an academic year ahead in math and two-thirds of an academic year ahead in literacy compared with their peers who did not. Children who attended the preschools were also 40 percent less likely to be held back in school and 31 percent less likely to need special education services.

Pennsylvania has made recent progress by expanding early learning programs like Pre-K Counts and Head Start Supplemental, but access to these programs remains very limited. Seventy percent — or more than 200,000 — of Pennsylvania's 3- and 4-year-olds now lack access to high-quality pre-

kindergarten. In Lancaster County, more than 11,000 lack access.

Pennsylvania and our nation can no longer be complacent about only roughly a quarter of our young people having the necessary skills and attributes for success in the 21st Century. Now is the time to enact a multiyear funding plan to ensure access to high quality pre-K for all of our state's 3- and 4-year-olds. We need to ensure that our next generation is academically fit and citizen-ready.

LTG Dennis L. Benchoff

We have another letter that each member of our chapter deserves to know about

This time it's to your editor, from Ken Smith, one of our newer members. In a phone conversation, he told of such important activities he's involved with that I asked him to put it on paper so I could share it with all our members. And this is the letter he wrote:

Dear Bob,

It was really good to hear from you yesterday. I'm sorry that I am not the golfer "Ken Smith" who you were looking for, but that led to a nice conversation anyway.

In the fall of 2012, my wife Deb volunteered for hospice. While doing her training with the Lancaster Hospice and Community Care, she discovered that they were looking for veterans for a new program. When Deb told me that HCC was looking for Veterans to be volunteers, I decided to look into the program. The program was still in its infancy when I applied. I completed my training in the spring of 2013, and began visiting Hospice patients who were also veterans as part of the VET-2-VET program.

On 6/21/2013 I visited my first two Vet-2-Vet patients. They were very different individuals. One was a USA MSGT and had been the head of the motor pool for Gen. Patton. The other was a supply SGT on Tarawa for a B24 squadron. Although the program does not call for the volunteers to go back to visit with the patients repeatedly, I found myself committed to these (and so many other) fine men. Being in hospice, the physical, mental and emotional needs of each patient was different; some were

weak, some tired and drowsy from their meds, some in great pain, and some alert and in great spirits; but all seemed genuinely happy to see me and happy to have a fellow veteran to talk to. I would visit "my Vets" on a weekly basis, sometimes for only a few minutes, sometimes for an hour. We would talk about whatever topic they chose, from grandchildren, to working on cars, to the Phillies, etc., but eventually, down near the end of their days, they would speak about their time in the service.

In addition to the above gentleman, I have had the honor of visiting, and getting to know a USAAF B26 pilot who wrote a book about his squadron's missions in Europe, a USA PFC who drove trucks in the Battle of the Bulge, a USN TBF pilot, a USN chief hospital corpsman, a GM3 on the USS Arkansas, a GMSC1 on the USS Ticonderoga, and a YNC on the USS New York (all three ships survived Kamakazi attacks), a USMC CPL who fought his way across the Pacific, and then again fought in Korea, a USA CPL who delivered hot meals to the front line troops along the border of East and West Germany in 1953, a USA Spec 5 and also a USMC SSGT and a USAF MAJ, all whom fought/served in Viet Nam, the Asst Commandant of the Coast Guard; and the list goes on and on. Every single veteran was extremely proud of their service.

On Saturday, 5/22/2015, I was asked to speak at the funeral service of an USA SSGT. He had been a B17 gunner who survived 37 missions. I considered it a great privilege and honor. In addition to his family, there were many veterans present to help lay this fine gentleman to rest. Since beginning the Vet-2-Vet program, I have made more than 230 visits to veterans and their families, (last year alone driving more than 2000 miles in and around Lancaster County, and receiving an award for 250 hours of service).

This program is tremendously rewarding, and HCC is still looking for veterans to volunteer. A volunteer can give as much or as little time as he or she wishes. For additional information, or to apply to the program, please contact: Jacqueline Builder, HCC Veteran Coordinator, 717-391-2441. Remember, it takes a Veteran to truly understand another Veteran.

Bob, I am so happy to hear that you are on the mend since getting your pacemaker. Hope to see you soon and often. Stay well; I will keep you in my prayers.

Kindest and fondest regards,
Ken Smith, LCDR USN (Ret.)

Benefits of getting your newsletter by e-mail

When you ask us to e-mail your newsletter to you, you get:

1. A newsletter in color. We can't afford the great cost of printing in color, but when we e-mail it to you, the cost of full color is zero.
2. Quicker delivery. It goes to you the same day it's sent to UPS to be printed, then mailed to those who still get mailed copies.

And, of no small importance, it saves our chapter much money for printing and mailing.

We know it's not practical for some of our readers to use e-mail, so we're pleased to mail hard copy to those who prefer it that way. For those who would value the benefits of e-mail and aren't already getting our newsletter that way, just send Tom Bender a note at tjbender@dejazzd.com and ask to be added to our e-mail list.

You heard, of course...

of the woman who was seeking a divorce.

"Do I understand correctly," said the attorney, "that you want a divorce on the grounds that your husband is careless about his appearance?"

"That's right," said the woman, "he hasn't made one in over three years."

Or, perhaps...

of the golfer was having the worst day he had ever had on the links, shooting about double what he normally shot. After a long and very frustrating day on the course, he was beside himself. Turning to his caddie, he said, "You must be the absolutely worst caddie in the entire world."

"No, I don't think so," the caddie replied. "That would be too much of a coincidence."