

---

---

# Lancaster Chapter News

---

---

Lancaster, PA Chapter  
Military Officers Association of America  
Editor: Bob Wilcox, 211 Willow Valley Square, Lancaster 17602, 464-2575, bob.wilcox1@verizon.net  
Chapter web site: www.moaalancasterchapt.org

Volume 22 Number 2  
March 1, 2015

## Dues reminder

In our January newsletter, we said the dues for 2015 stay at \$15, but we neglected to tell you that the special \$40 rate for a full three years was still being offered. So, if you've already sent your \$15 and would like to take advantage of the three-year deal, send your check for \$25, and you'll be paid through 2017. If you haven't yet sent a check for your 2015 dues, our treasurer would much appreciate your sending it now while you're thinking of it. Make it to Lancaster Chapter, MOAA and send it to:

Lancaster Chapter, MOAA  
ATTN: Dues  
P.O. Box 5031  
Lancaster, PA 17606-5031

## Reminder on March 5 meeting

All details were in our January newsletter, but this is a reminder that we'll meet at Lancaster Country Club on March 5. If you'd like to come but forgot to make your reservation, call Jim Cunningham at 581-5299 not later than Monday, March 2. He'll welcome your call.

## On April 16, we meet at Meadia Golf Club

Our April meeting will begin at 5 p.m. with a social hour and cash bar. The meeting will be called to order at 6 p.m. with introductory remarks by President Benchoff. Dinner will follow at 6:15 p.m. with this menu served buffet style:

California Salad with Citrus Dressing  
Steamship Round of Beef w/Bordelaise Sauce  
Risotto Stuffed Chicken w/Tomato Cream Sauce

Whipped Roasted Garlic Potatoes  
Green Beans Almondine  
Rolls and Butter  
White Chocolate Mousse w/Raspberries  
Coffee, decaf and regular

The cost of the meal will be \$29.00 per person.. 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.

The deadline for receipt of all checks is Monday, April 13th. Cancellations may be made by calling Jim Cunningham prior to Monday, April 13th. If you have any questions, please contact Jim Cunningham, 581-5299.

## From our president's desk

If January is a month for resolutions, March is a month for reminders. Here are three short ones.

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, the chapter will be presenting our Adopt-a-Kid/Adopt-a-vet program to several hundred Manheim Township elementary school students this spring. We will need many more chapter members than usual to help to effectively reach all of these students. If you would like to assist us, please contact Brian Remy at either 717-380-4191 or esignals@pasuvew.org to volunteer or get additional information. We would really appreciate your support for this important program.

We have had a tremendous response to our beginning of the New Year appeal for annual dues. However, a significant number of

members have still not sent us their \$15 check for one-year membership or \$40 check for a three-year membership. Please check the "Dues Paid Thru" date on your newsletter mailing label and send your check if the date still reads "2014."

Some of our members enjoy spending their winters in warmer climates. The post office will not forward your newsletter to temporary addresses, so please let Tom Bender know if you're temporarily away or have permanently relocated. You can reach him at either 717-626-4932 or [tjbender@dejazzd.com](mailto:tjbender@dejazzd.com).

One final note of thanks to Paul Kurisky who informed me that he knew that Doug Meints had moved to New Mexico and provided a forwarding address. We have once again established contact with Doug.

Stay warm as we await a very welcome spring.

Dennis

### **Important news of our Adopt-a-Kid program**

Brian Remy, Chairman of our Adopt-a-Kid/Adopt-a-Vet program, reports that we are tentatively scheduled to bring the program to Landis Run Middle School of Manheim Township this spring. Different from past programs, we will visit the school before and after Memorial Day, rather than in late April and late May. They are inviting us to bring 32 veterans to meet with all 16 of their 5th grade classes. We have invited the Red Rose Honor Guard to participate in this program along with our membership. As soon as we have the final confirmation of dates from the Landis Run Principal, that information will be communicated to all who might be interested.

### **Our members made News**

**Ryan Aument** made the cover of LNP in an article on the issues our county's lawmakers will face in the legislative session that began with swearing in on January 6. Ryan, who has moved from the state House to the Senate was reported to favor a natural gas tax "if it comes with savings and reform." The article then listed five other major issues he favors and quoted him as saying, "I think there's a real opportunity for the Legislature to work with the

incoming governor and come to a consensus on all these issues."

Ryan was quoted by LNP as he gave his answers to four key questions asked of eight Lancaster County lawmakers.

**Gil Bixler**, Chairman, Marine Corps Reserve Corps Reserves Toys for Tots Program, Lancaster County, wrote LNP to tell how the Lancaster City Bureau of Police had learned of 264 city children who were not going to get any toys for Christmas. He told how Lt. Bill Hickey had asked him for help and how Hickey and some of his fellow officers then went door to door delivering toys to those children. Gil added that Lancaster City officers and officers from various other Lancaster County police departments gave up a vacation day to help his volunteers collect toys from almost 500 toy collection boxes throughout the county. He then expressed how much he and his volunteers "appreciate their support of our program and dedication to our community."

**Karen Davis** wrote LNP about ways to move from fossil fuels to clean energy. She said, "A carbon-pollution fee on all fossil fuels---one that's refunded, directly and entirely to every American---is the plan that most economists agree is best."

**Joe Pitts**, U.S. Rep., was pictured in LNP in a lengthy article in which he explained how his faith guides his efforts to serve the voters he represents in Congress.

He wrote an article for LNP expanding on his thought that "Despite partisan split, action is likely on cures, Medicare and more."

**Craig Stedman**, district attorney, made the cover of LNP with a quote in the case of a school teacher who had been raped before being murdered. He said, "Words cannot capture just how shocking and dreadful these facts are."

He commented in LNP about the decision by U.S. Attorney General Holder to set new limits on the federal program giving criminals' assets to police. Craig noted that those assets help fund anti-drug efforts here.

He said in LNP that "there was no evidence of forced entry" in the case of an 84-year-old woman and her daughter, whose bodies were found in an East Hempfield home.

At a state crime panel, he said that “offenders who repeat the same crimes should serve more time.”

**Bob Wilcox** wrote LNP to correct an earlier writer who had excoriated Joe Pitts for opposing abortion “that is sometimes necessary to save the life of a woman.” Bob pointed out that in a bill Joe had written---and the House had passed ---an exception was made for abortion to save the life of the woman.

**Say hello to these new members...**

CDR Dominick J. DiBella  
USN-RET. 717-687-0216  
2 Stonington Way  
Strasburg, PA 17579  
No spouse indicated  
Rejoined: January 23, 2015  
Sponsor: Tony Cerase

CDR Warren R. Heidelbaugh  
USN-RET. 717-361-5323  
1 Truman Drive  
Elizabethtown, PA 17022  
Spouse: Helen  
Joined: January 26, 2015  
Sponsor: Dennis Benchoff

**Board meeting dates for 2015**

February 25, 2015  
April 1, 2015  
June 10, 2015  
August 12, 2015  
October 7, 2015  
November 25, 2015

All Chapter members are always welcome to attend our Board of Directors meetings! They are held at 2:00 PM at the Lancaster General Hospital Suburban Outpatient Pavilion (formally the LGH Campus), 2100 Harrisburg Pike, Lancaster in the third floor conference room. To attend, enter the main entrance, take the elevator to the 3rd floor, turn left, and proceed down wide corridor to the overhead sign for “Conference Center.”

**It’s all in the family**

LNP devoted a half page to the story of the pro football career of Charles Alcexih, grandson of **Pete and Sally Alecxih.**

It told of his starring in football for Penn Manor High School, earning a starting slot at the University of Pittsburgh after joining the team as a walk-on, to being cut twice in the NFL (with Miami and Kansas City) before latching on with San Diego Chargers, where he plays on the practice squad.

To illustrate how hard it is to play big-time football, the LNP article noted that although in high school he had been a two-way starter and had lettered in track and field, the only chance he had to play Division 1 football was as a walk-on. It recalled that at the end of his career at Pitt, he had not only earned a scholarship but had recorded 20 sacks and 127 tackles in 41 career games.

Of his time with the Chargers, he was quoted as saying, “When I got claimed off waivers, I couldn’t look at the playbook until the first day of training camp.” By the end of the season, the article noted, he had not only had the playbook nailed down, but in a pre-season 12-9 win over Arizona, he had recorded a sack and had four tackles, two for a loss.

**We salute our most senior members**

Our chapter was founded on January 12, 1975. It was discontinued in the late 70s and re-established in 1982. So, in 2015, we enter the 33<sup>rd</sup> year of our re-established Chapter. Which leads us to recognize these 33 members who have enjoyed the longest continuous membership in our Chapter. Those with the asterisk were Charter Members in 1975.

Bob Porter	12/4/81
John Schuppert	12/9/81*
Jon Waltman	1/8/82
George Steedle	1/29/82*
Harry Mann	2/1/82
June Welk	2/5/82
Bud Mearig	3/5/82*
Rosemary Snyder	3/30/82
Jim Cunningham	5/23/86
Bob Wilcox	1/5/88
Hank Kadel	1/29/88
Victor Bove	1/1/89
Lloyd Henry	7/3/89
Biddle Whigham	8/1/89
Dick Nissley	7/5/90
Gerry McOmber	8/29/90
Dick Evans	2/2/91
Craig Stearn	5/27/91

Dick Shaefer	6/29/92
Jean Spangler	3/8/93
Preston Kline	1/3/94
John Zimmerman	7/17/94
Don Smith	8/13/94
Ace Hearon	11/3/94
Barry Hitchcock	12/26/94
Bill Raines	12/31/94
Bender, Thomas J.	2/1/95
Bergeron, Clifford M.	2/4/95
Schwanger, Orville, H,	5/24/95
Ferruzza, David	6/11/95
Nickel, George W.	7/14/95
Bucher, Wilson	7/29/95
Gardner, Neil	8/16/95

**Gene Moore was robbed**

Which is to say that his entry in The Scribbler’s seventh annual Lancaster Liar Contest was a killer. It read:

“Remember the Great Wind of 1958? On a day in early March, at about 9 a.m., I teed off at Lancaster Country Club just as a blustery gust came up. It caught my golf ball in mid-flight.

“Later, I learned that at 3.45 that afternoon, I had scored a hole-in-one at Meadia Heights Country Club.”

Gene’s splendid entry didn’t place first in the contest, but The Scribbler included it in his LNP column as an outstanding entry.

**How about that headline????!!**

There it was, spread over four columns in LNP:

**Military Officers Association Offers \$1,000 grant**

A four-column article then spelled out the details of our scholarship offer and how to apply for it. Kudos to our Publicity Chairman, Dick Smith, for gaining this wonderful publicity.

**We honor the memory of...**

**Howard (Howie) Eckhart**, who died December 24. In WWII, he served aboard the *USS Blenny*, a submarine that sank more enemy vessels than any other U.S. warship in history. A more complete story of his WWII service appeared in the January issue of this newsletter. He

completed his BA degree at Franklin and Marshall College, graduating in 1949. He graduated from the University of Pennsylvania Dental School in 1953 and served as a Lt. Commander in the Naval Reserves.

He opened a solo practice in Lancaster until his son Dr. Michael Eckhart, joined him and in a few years helped found Conestoga Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Society in 1988 and practiced there until his retirement in 1991.

He was active in a host of community organizations and was an experienced pilot with 7,500 hours of pilot time. In addition to his wife Jessie, he is survived by three sons and their families. Howie had been a member of our chapter since June 1999.

**Richard E. Myers**, who died December 31. He served as an Air Force colonel during the Korean and Vietnam Wars.

In civilian life, he was an executive with RCA. He was a member of Salem Lutheran Church in Lititz and the Lancaster Elks Club.

He is survived by two daughters, five grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. Dick had been a member of our chapter since July 1990.

**Why you had trouble opening your copy of our January newsletter**

For decades our printer has used a paper seal to hold the pages of our newsletter together for mailing. It did its job well, yet was easy to open with your fingers.

The seal that held the January edition together, however, was made of sturdy stuff. It looked and felt like Scotch tape. And removing it by hand had resulted only in tearing the page. It required an implement like scissors to remove it cleanly.

Your editor immediately called the printer to make sure that future copies would be held together with the easy-to-remove paper seal. And the answer he got knocked his socks off. A new government regulation requires the new seal. Imagine, there’s a regulator in Washington being paid to micro-manage how pages of mailers get sealed...and, in the process, ruling

that only such an inconvenient one be used. A great example of government at work.

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



*Captain Roy Belli, at Norfolk, while assigned to the amphibian assault ship, USS Boxer.*

In the fall of 1961, Roy Belli was a young Marine Corps captain commanding a battery of 130 men, armed with 105-mm howitzers. That's when he learned that his battery was to replace a battery returning from Guantanamo, our base in Cuba. "We kept a force of Marines there," he explains, "to hold off any invasion of the base by Castro's forces."

How many Marines were there? "Well, we had 130 men in our battery, and there was a Marine company of 220 men. And there was the Marine barracks. So we had about 400 men, altogether."

And those 400 men were supposed to hold off thousands of Cubans? "Well, not really," he grins. "If the Cubans were massing to do anything, we'd get wind of it and would quickly be reinforced." He adds, "Castro had heavily fortified the land around our base with mines and barbed wire. He said that was to protect

Cuba from an invasion by us. But, of course, it was really to keep his own people from escaping to our base."

Apparently, Castro wisely decided not to tangle with the Marines, and Roy's tour wound up and he headed home. On the way, the ship he was on, an LST (Landing Ship Tank) ran into a fierce storm that caused the landing ramp to fall on the small vehicles on the deck below, starting an electrical fire that could have quickly spread to the explosive-filled trucks behind them.

The gale they were heading into flooded the deck with air, so the captain tried to turn the ship 180 degrees, to go downwind. The swells were deck-high, and because the ship was of such a shallow draft, it rolled wildly in the swell. Finally, they were able to complete the turn, put out the fire, and divert to Charleston for repairs.

Roy taught at the Naval Academy for three years, attended Command and Staff College at Quantico for a year, then went to Vietnam, where he served during the Tet offensive. He points out that during that offensive, the Viet Cong rose up and were slaughtered. It was an enormous victory for our forces, but, sadly, the press in the U.S. portrayed it as a defeat.

Roy was returned to Headquarters, Marine Corps, in Washington, where he held increasingly important positions until he retired from the Marine Corps as a colonel in 1983.

**You heard, of course...**

of the way Sam Goldwyn had with words:

- a. "In two words...im-possible."
- b. "A verbal contract isn't worth the paper it's written on."
- c. "We have all passed a lot of water since then."
- d. "Anyone who goes to see a psychiatrist ought to have his head examined."
- e. "If Roosevelt were alive today, he'd be turning over in his grave."
- f. "I want you to know I'm not always right...but I'm never wrong."