



President's Corner

By Robert Pecoraro
Col U.S. Air Force (Retired)

As President of the Western New York Military Officers Association (WNYMOAA), I accepted the 5-Star (highest) Level of Excellence Award at the New York Council of Chapters Convention Banquet held on the Niagara Falls Air Base. In the photo are the other 4 Chapter Presidents from NY who received this Level of Excellence from Admiral Walter Doran from the MOAA National Board of Directors. Overall, we were evaluated on advocacy, community involvement, recruiting and retention, and other functions that made a difference like our legislative affairs outreach. Overall, I could not be more proud of the membership!



I am personally looking forward to seeing everyone at our Chapter's Annual Meeting at Salvatore's Italian Gardens on 1 December – details are in this newsletter. There, I will cover the initiatives the Chapter is pursuing and report on the great legislative success we have had last year. Of course, we wouldn't be successful without you – thank you!

Legislative Liaison Report

By Anthony F. Caruana
Brigadier General U.S. Army (Retired)

In April I attended the annual Storming of the Hill Campaign of MOAA National in our nation's capital at the request of New York Council of Chapters President LTC Peggy Phillips. I worked with COL Pete Ingalsbe of the Genesee Valley Chapter to present the top two major 2018 topics that the MOAA National Board of Directors approved for this year's campaign.

We had only one day to meet with all our 27 New York Congressional Representatives and our two senators.

The two major issues presented were Military Pay and Benefits, including the currently proposed 2.6% pay raise, and Chapter 61 retirees. As members of our New York delegation we advocated for maintaining military pay and benefits in order to recruit and retain an all-voluntary force, and

ending reduced pay for Chapter 61 retirees who have been medically retired with a disability rating of 30 % or greater before reaching a 20-year service career.

We were also able to present materials on the so-called “Widows Tax” issue of SBP/DIC offset, and the repeal of sequestration.

Also, at the Storming the Hill Conference, mention was made of the significance of sending in the advocacy letters and/ or postcards attached to some issues of MOAA’s The Officer magazine. These letters and postcards have a great impact with our representatives in Congress. We are encouraged to continue sending them when they come in the issue of the magazine.

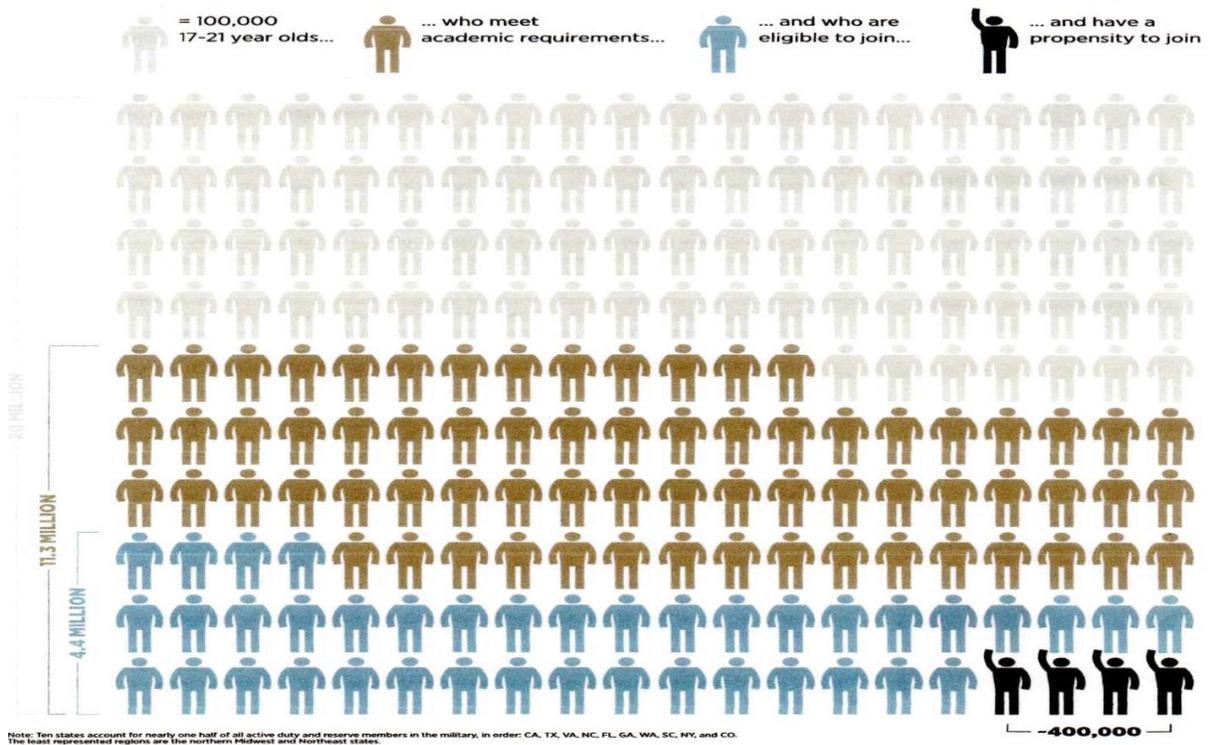
Additionally, it is recommended that we add personal notes to the letters and postcards, as they are more likely to be read than the ones with just a signature on the prepared letters and postcards.

Below is a copy of one of the handouts given to each legislator. This one is a great example of the challenges with recruiting and the difficulties facing the services with a shrinking pool of recruits, especially when pay and benefits are continually being reduced.

SHRINKING POOL OF RECRUITS

Service chiefs face an uphill climb when trying to find qualified recruits; the factors are many. At the heart of the issue is basic eligibility like academics, health, and fitness. Add criminal records and drug abuse and you narrow the 20-million person pool down to about 4.4 million. Propensity to join is another factor, reducing the pool even further to about 400,000. The Army alone will need 80,000 of these potential recruits, and the other services combined with the Guard and Reserve will push the need to about 265,000. Throw in a low unemployment rate, and the competition for talent gets tougher.

Bottom Line: We must ensure military pay and benefits stack up if recruiters are to have a chance in this competitive environment.



Membership Report

By Jerome Privitera

Maj U.S. Army (Retired)

Our total membership is currently at 181. The breakdown of the members who have and have not paid their dues for 2018 is:

| | |
|---|------------|
| Active 2018 paid dues members | 120 |
| Exempt members | 3 |
| CWO3 Harold F. Contact, Army | |
| LCDR Thomas B. Mangus, 4/15/15, Navy | |
| 1LT James S. Pietraszek, Army | |
| Members who did not pay their 2018 dues | 58 |
| Total | 181 |

The total number on the MOAA National Roster shows 181.

We have 64 Chapter Auxiliary Members.

Personal Affairs

By Richard A. Scalfani

CWO4 U.S. Army (Retired)

TAPS:

**COL DANIEL T. KIRST, USA(Ret.)
Died on March 6, 2018**

He was an ROTC graduate of Canisius College as a 2Lt. He served for two years with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment in Germany prior to serving with the 127th Armor Regiment of the NY National Guard, the 1151st USAR School and as commander of the 390th Engineer Training Battalion. He retired in 1989 as a Colonel (06). He was a graduate of the Command & General Staff College and The Army War College. In civilian life he retired from the former Marine Midland Bank in 1996 as Vice President of the Mortgage & Banking

Benefit Program and continued his career as a licensed Realtor at First Real Estate Corp.

**LCDR MARY JOAN MAHONEY, USN
(NC) (Ret.)**

Died on February 25, 2018

She served as a nurse in the United States Navy at duty stations throughout the United States. At one point she attended to Admiral Nimitz at Pearl Harbor where he was confined for a brief hospital stay.

WELL WISHES:

We wish all chapter members that are experiencing health or other life issues a speedy recovery and resolution of those issues.

Both LTC Vincent J. Ventura and LTC Frank J. Sparacino have recently undergone surgical procedures successfully and are recovering nicely.

ITEMS OF INTEREST:

Free Eye Glasses for Retirees:

Retirees are entitled to order eyewear annually if they have a TRICARE health plan and authorized **use of a Military Treatment Facility (MTF). This can be done at an MTF, or if over 50 miles from MTF, through NOSTRA's (Naval Ophthalmic Support & Training Activity) website** (www.med.navy.mil/sites/nostra/order/Pages/Retiree.aspx)

Retirees that have **alternate health care plans** that are not authorized care at an MTF must order eyewear through **NOSTRA's website** by filling out the DD771 and providing all information marked in yellow. (Further instructions on HOW TO ORDER are listed below the chart).

You are authorized to receive one pair of the following standard issued spectacles per year:

Note: Retired military personnel, regardless of rank, who require vision correction, are authorized one pair of standard issue spectacles or one pair of half-eye spectacles. Two pairs of spectacles may be issued when professionally determined to be essential by the examining provider. Tinted lens must be prescribed by your Optometrist/Ophthalmologist.

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Half Eye frames | Distance Vision | Clear |
| | | Tint (prescribed) |
| | Bifocal | Clear |
| | | Tint (prescribed) |
| | Trifocal (Multifocal) | Clear |
| | | Tint (prescribed) |

| Frame | Lens Type | Lens Color |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 5A frames | Distance Vision | Clear |
| | | Tint (prescribed) |
| | Bifocal | Clear |
| | | Tint (prescribed) |
| | Trifocal (Multifocal) | Clear |
| | | Tint (prescribed) |
| 5AM frames (nose pads) | Distance Vision | Clear |
| | | Tint (prescribed) |
| | Bifocal | Clear |
| | | Tint (prescribed) |
| | Trifocal (Multifocal) | Clear |
| | | Tint (prescribed) |

Please ensure to do the following steps when ordering:

- Open the DD-771 form found on the [standard issue frame](#) ordering section of the NOSTRA website (this form is created so you can save the information that you type into it).
- Fill out all sections highlighted in **yellow** and make sure to save the form with the information you added.
- Print the partially completed form, and take this with you to your eye exam. **Ensure that the examining facility writes your prescription on the form and includes your pupillary distance (PD).**
- If your examining facility needs eye size, bridge or temple information, they may find this information on our web site.
- If you currently have standard issue frames please provide the frame size and temple length (found inside the frame).
- There must be a DD-771 form for each request for eyewear.
- Send the following information to NOSTRA:
 - One copy of the completed DD771 form (orders are subject to a DEERS eligibility check).

- Your mailing address, daytime phone number and email address if available.
 - You may submit your order for eyewear by email, fax or standard mail.
 - **Email your order to:** usn-nostra-customer-service@mail.mil
 - **Or—**
 - **Fax your order to: 757-887-4647.**
 - **Make sure you write: “Retiree Order”** on the fax.
 - **Please call NOSTRA Customer Service at (757) 887-7600 option 1** if you have any additional questions.
- or---
- Standard Mail to:**
NOSTRA
160 Main Road
Yorktown, VA 23691-9984

You may also call [NOSTRA Customer Service Department](#) if you have any problems or questions **or** you can email us at: usn-nostra-customer-service@mail.mil.

Space- A Travel for Disabled Veterans:
When President Trump signed into law the new National Defense Authorization Act, disabled veterans were granted a huge travel perk that has virtually gone unnoticed. Not only will the new perk save veterans thousands of dollars, but it will increase morale, esprit de corps, and open the door for many veterans to connect with the military again in ways they can only imagine. Under the new Disabled Veterans Access to Space-A Travel Act, veterans with a service-connected, permanent disability rating of 100% can hop on any scheduled or unscheduled military flight within the continental United States (and scheduled overseas flights) operated by Air Mobility Command (AMC).

The new Act would authorize veterans who have a service-connected, and permanent disability rated as 100 percent to travel on Space-A at no additional cost to the Department of Defense (DoD) and without aircraft modifications, according to military officials. Clarification on whether or not required caregiver accompaniment is authorized has not yet been promulgated.

This is a huge benefit to disabled veterans who travel on aircraft. Many veterans find airports unaccommodating, and difficult to get around. Flying from military terminals are much less congested, and will probably be more suitable for disabled veterans.

To sign up for Space A Travel complete AMC Form 140 and e-mail it to your desired AMC Passenger Terminal. Info you need to complete the form includes:

- Email address
- Personal information (Rank/Grade, First Middle Last Name)
- Service Branch (AF, Army, Marines, Navy, CG)
- Status (Active, Guard, Reserve, Retired, Disabled Veteran, etc.)
- Other Travelers (dependents names)
- Total number of seats required
- Travel status (see Travel Eligibility-Category I-VI). The form has not yet been modified to reflect 100% disability eligibility. In the interim suggest use Category VI until otherwise advised.
- Overseas Travel Ready Status (have required Passports/Visas etc.)
- 5-Destinations (sign-up for up to 5 destinations--e.g. Germany, USA, Japan, Alaska, or Hawaii).

Pay Raise & Other Benefits:

Service members are slated to get a 2.6% pay raise, which would mark the biggest increase in nine years. The increase, which is slated to go into effect 1 Jan, means servicemembers could see a change in their first paycheck of the new year on 15 JAN. Additionally, there will be increases in Basic Housing Allowance and expanded access to Morale, Welfare and Recreation and Post Exchange privileges to Purple Heart recipients, service-connected disabled veterans, former POWs, and their caregivers. Also, provisions to allow Purple Heart and Medal of Honor recipients, former prisoners of war and veterans with disabilities connected to their military service to shop at the discounted on-base store. It extends that access to veteran caregivers.

Medals and Awards:

- **Atomic Veterans** - The law creates a new "Atomic Veterans Service Certificate", to honor retired and former members of the Armed Forces who are radiation-exposed veterans. Since most Atomic Veterans are pretty old, or have passed (the testing ended in 1962), this certificate will also be available to family members.
- **Military Working Dog Handlers** - The law will create a medal and commendation that will be available to military working dog handlers.

Navy Trivia:**Eight Bells**

Aboard Navy ships, bells are struck to designate the hours of being on [watch](#). Each watch is four hours in length. One bell is struck after the first half-hour has passed, two bells after one hour has

passed, three bells after an hour and a half, four bells after two hours, and so forth up to eight bells are struck at the completion of the four hours.

Completing a watch with no incidents to report was "Eight bells and all is well."

The practice of using bells stems from the days of the sailing ships. Sailors couldn't afford to have their own time pieces and relied on the ship's bells to tell time. The ship's boy kept time by using a half-hour glass. Each time the sand ran out, he would turn the glass over and ring the appropriate number of bells.

Fathom

Fathom was originally a land measuring term derived from the Anglo-Saxon word "faetm" meaning to embrace. In those days, most measurements were based on average size of parts of the body, such as the hand (horses are still measured this way) or the foot (that's why 12 inches are so named). A fathom is the average distance from fingertip to fingertip of the outstretched arms of a man -- about six feet. Since a man stretches out his arms to embrace his sweetheart, Britain's Parliament declared that distance be called a "fathom" and it be a unit of measure. A fathom remains six feet. The word was also used to describe taking the measure or "to fathom" something. Today, of course, when one is trying to figure something out, they are trying to "fathom" it.

Feeling Blue

If you are sad and describe yourself as "feeling blue," you are using a phrase coined from a custom among many old

deep water sailing ships. If the ship lost the captain or any of the officers during its voyage, she would fly blue flags and have a blue band painted along her entire hull when returning to home port.

Forecastle

The appropriate pronunciation for this word is *fo'ksul*. The forecastle is the forward part of the main deck. It derives its name from the days of Viking galleys when wooden castles were built on the forward and after parts the main deck from which archers and other fighting men could shoot arrows and throw spears, rocks, etc.

Galley

The galley is the kitchen of the ship. The best explanation as to its origin is that it is a corruption of "gallery". Ancient sailors cooked their meals on a brick or stone gallery laid amidships.

Social Security Spouse Benefit ► Divorcee's Eligibility on Ex-Spouse's Account:

Because the divorce rate is rising sharply among the 50-and-over population. So, many people may find themselves wondering whether or not they can draw benefits on their spouse's account. The short answer is, yes, you can claim ex-spousal benefits even though your ex-spouse has not claimed his own benefits, provided that he is at least 62. In fact, ex-spouses actually receive favorable treatment from the Social Security Administration relative to spouses. If you were still married, you could not claim spousal benefits until your husband actually started his own benefits. Your ex-spousal benefit at your full retirement age will equal one-half your husband's

retirement benefit at his full retirement age. Your ex-spousal benefit is reduced if you have your own retirement benefit, or if you claim early, before your full retirement age. If your ex is a year younger than you that has no bearing on your eligibility for spousal benefits as long as he is at least 62. Other requirements:

- First, you must have been married for at least 10 years.
- Second, you cannot currently be married. If you ever remarried, but are not currently married, you could receive ex-spousal benefits from either ex-spouse (but not both), provided you meet the 10-year rule for both.
- Third, if you have your own benefits, any ex-spousal benefits will be coordinated with your own benefits. For you to receive any ex-spousal benefits, your own benefits at your full retirement age must be less than one-half your ex-husband's benefit at his full retirement age. This rule applies even if you claim prior to your full retirement age. There is one exception to this rule. It arises if you were born prior to 1954 and you have reached your full retirement age. In that case, you can claim ex-spousal benefits without claiming your own benefits at the same time, meaning that the "less-than-one-half" rule stated above does not apply to you, until you apply for your own benefits. If you were born prior to 1954, you can defer claiming your own benefits, allowing them to grow up to age 70. However, if you were born in 1954 or later, you must claim both benefits simultaneously.

A final point: If you claim ex-spousal benefits, your ex-husband's benefits are unaffected. In fact, he does not even need to know that you have claimed benefits on his record. Likewise, if he has remarried and his current wife qualifies for spousal benefits, her benefits are unaffected by your claim on his record.

NYS COC Convention

By Timothy Balunis

CDR U.S. Coast Guard (Retired)

The 46th Annual NYS MOAA Convention commenced on September 10 and concluded on September 13 at the Niagara Falls Air Force Base. The focus shifted to Buffalo for a stirring memorial service on the 11th aboard the LITTLE ROCK at the Buffalo and Erie County Naval and Military Park. This was time set aside to remember those who passed away since our last Convention as well as those victims of the Terrorist Attacks on September 11th in 2001. The Memorial Ceremony was followed by a luncheon on the fantail of the LITTLE ROCK and then full access to the entire Park. Next was an informative and entertaining tour of Buffalo by a professional guide (aka: Officer O'Connor) aboard an authentic Double Decker Bus from London. The Bus deposited the attendees at CHEF's restaurant for dinner. The following morning, the Business meeting was addressed by Admiral Walter Doran (USN Ret.), the on-coming Chair of MOAA's Board of Directors. The Admiral was accompanied by his lovely wife, Ginny. We gained great understanding and appreciation of the goals and issues facing MOAA. Matters of more direct concern in NY were covered by our Council President

LTC Peggy Phillips. That afternoon, we enjoyed free time to sightsee and meet independently. The evening featured a formal banquet in the Heritage Center at the Air Force Base. During the evening program, Admiral Doran introduced our special guest, Holly Baker, President of the Gold Star Mother Association of New York, and her husband, Greg. Admiral Doran presented 5 Star Awards to the Chapters of NY State which had achieved that distinction including The Western New York Chapter for the first time.

Based on all feedback received to date, this Convention was considered to be a huge success. We hope that everyone left with many new friendships, re-kindled old friendships to return home ready and motivated to "**Never Stop Serving.**"

Veteran's Day Dinner and Concert

By Timothy Balunis

CDR U.S. Coast Guard (Retired)

Celebrate Veterans Day with us on November 11th as our annual Dinner-Concert series continues. We'll meet at Pane's Restaurant (984 Payne Avenue, North Tonawanda) at 5:00 p.m. and then proceed to a very patriotic and entertaining concert by the eighty-member National Champion American Legion Band of the Tonawandas at the historic Riviera Theater (67 Webster, North Tonawanda). Salute our veterans during the performing of all of the U.S. armed services songs, enjoy a medley with vocals from *West Side Story*, hear *One O'Clock Jump* by Count Basie, and listen to a variety of other music including rousing marches and other popular favorites. Please mail concert payment via check at \$16 per person to Ingrid Balunis (50 Sweeney Court,

North Tonawanda 14120). Payment to be received NLT 2 November. Tickets will be distributed at dinner or at the entrance of the Riviera Theater. For planning purposes, kindly indicate with payment if you will be joining us for dinner at Pane's. Payment for dinner will be handled individually at Pane's. Email questions to Balunis@roadrunner.com with Subject line as "VETS Day DINNER CONCERT".

Navy Sabbath (Veterans' Day)

By Fr. Michael Zuffoletto
CDR U.S. Navy (Retired)

The first Sunday before Veterans' Day has customarily been traditionally known as the "Navy Sabbath". It has become an opportunity for all members of the military (active-duty, veterans and retirees) to gather in thanksgiving and acknowledgement of the presence and protection of all by the Almighty.

This year's service will be held on Sunday, 4 November at 10:30 in St. Joseph's Cathedral in downtown Buffalo. All military members of any branch are invited to attend the ceremony. Additionally, color guards are encouraged to attend and process in with their flags.

Community Engagement

By Jamie Scotland
Lt Col, USAF (Ret)

"Never Stop Serving." Not only is this the MOAA Motto, but it is a call to action for all MOAA members. This year, our Chapter started an initiative to increase our visibility and engagement with both the local veterans' community, and the WNY

community at large. Our goal is to find fun and relevant ways for the Chapter's membership to support causes important to the military community.

After researching various opportunities, we decided to focus our initial effort on establishing a partnership with the Veterans One-stop Center (VOC) of WNY. The VOC serves a critical mission, providing wide-ranging services at no charge to local veterans—from financial counseling and legal services to job skills development and finding permanent shelter for homeless vets. You can find additional details about the VOC at www.vocwny.org.

In our initial event on 9/11/18, we supported the VOC's Chiavetta's chicken dinner fundraiser. We want to build on that partnership by assisting with their upcoming holiday "Adopt-a-family" program where they provide aid and gifts for families of veterans experiencing financial difficulties. We are asking *all Chapter members* to help by providing monetary support. If you will be attending the Annual Meeting please consider donating to this effort. We will have a VOC donation box available to accept cash or checks. Please make check payable to WNY MOA and indicate "VOC" in the memo portion of your check.

We will also need volunteers to purchase gifts, to distribute, and/or volunteer to help with the logistics of collecting, wrapping, and distributing the gifts. This is a great way for each of us to rally around our military family during the holidays. We will provide specific details on how you can get involved as they become available.

I can be reached at jscotland@hotmail.com, or by phone at 716-574-6131 (please leave a

message) if you have any questions or suggestions on this program. Thank you.

Online Dues Payment

By Stanley Lichwala
 CDR U.S. Navy (Retired)
 WNY Chapter Treasurer

Again, this year when you get your annual chapter dues statement, you will be able to pay your chapter dues online. All you need to do is go to www.moaa.org click on Chapters and Council and then click on Chapter Dues. The one-year renewal fee is \$16 and your Board of Directors has provided a discount for members who want to renew for more than one year. The fee for a two-year renewal is \$30 and for a three-year renewal the fee is \$44. Those choosing to make charitable contributions may also do so online. MOAA national has provided this service at no cost to our chapter and our membership is encouraged to use this new and secure capability. Please use the online payment as much as possible because national may eliminate this program if more members do not use it.

Tailgate Party at VA Hospital

By Stanley Lichwala
 CDR U.S. Navy (Retired)

Our annual Western New York Chapter “Tailgate Party” for the patients at the Buffalo VA Hospital is scheduled for Sunday, November 11th at 1:00 p.m. The Bills will be playing the New York Jets This is the eighth year our chapter has sponsored a Tailgate Party for the veterans. Please plan on baking some homemade cookies for the patients who are looking forward to pizza, wings, pop and cookies during the game. Chapter members and spouses are welcome and should plan on arriving at Freedom Hall

on the 3rd floor between 12:30 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. This year we will be partnering again with representatives from Home of the Brave who will be providing t-shirts, thank you and gift cards for the patients. The Home of the Brave Campaign volunteers support VA medical facilities planned Veteran Day activities, host other activities and visit patients in the November 1-15 timeframe each year.

Previous “Tailgate Parties” have been very successful and greatly appreciated by the patients. If you can attend, please call me, CDR Stan Lichwala, at (716) 639-7225.

Your support of our V.A. patients is greatly appreciated. The VA Hospital still needs 2019 calendars for the patients’ rooms, but they can no longer accept books because of limited storage space. Thank you for your past book donations and we look forward to accepting your calendars at the Annual Meeting.

Editor’s Note

By JoAnne Lichwala
 Editor

The year is passing all too quickly. I wish everyone a very happy healthy finish to the year.



Happy Halloween



Veterans’ Day



Happy Thanksgiving



Happy Hanukkah



Merry Christmas



Happy New Year

The Military Officers Association of Western New York, Inc.
P.O. Box 472
North Tonawanda, N.Y. 14120
www.wnymoaa.org



MOAA WNY Chapter Annual Holiday Party/Meeting

Saturday, December 1, 2018

Free beer, wine, soda bar 5:30-6:30pm – Buffet Dinner served at 6:30pm

Buffet includes garden salad, top round roast beef carving station, fresh fruit medley, olive salad, lemon cucumber orzo, green beans with roasted red peppers, glazed carrots, mashed potatoes, penne pasta with marinara sauce, meatballs, and chicken francaise. For dessert, apple cobbler with salted caramel ice cream.

Salvatore's Italian Gardens

6461 Transit Road

Depew, New York

Dinner Donation - \$ 35.00 per person (including gratuity) See below for reservations

Email Chapter President Col Bob Pecoraro at pecoraror@aol.com the names of attendees and mail the \$35 check per attendee (made out to the MOAAWNY) and this form to CDR Stan Lichwala, 28 South Castlerock Ln, East Amherst NY 14051(check must be received by 16 November 2018)

Please provide the following information for attendee/s:

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Rank/Prefix | |
| First Name | |
| Last Name | |
| Br of Service | |
| Unit or Company | |
| Street Address | |
| City | |
| State | |
| Zip Code | |
| Phone Number | |
| Email Address | |
| Amt Enclosed | |