



The Granite Slate

The official newsletter published quarterly for the
New Hampshire Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America
P. O. Box 712, Dover, NH 03821



December, 2018

Winter Edition

Volume 40, No. 4



The MOAA-NH Chapter's Mission

- To promote the aims of the MOAA stated in the By-Laws of that Association
- To further legislative goals and objectives of MOAA
- To encourage and facilitate camaraderie among our membership
- To provide useful services for and to protect the interests of members, their dependents, and survivors
- To encourage participation in community services deemed to be in the Chapter's best interest

Fall Meeting - Bistro Nouveau

It was a wonderful last day of summer/beginning of fall when MOAA-NH members gathered at Bistro Nouveau at the Center at Eastman for our fall luncheon on September 22. Although the leaves had not yet started turning, it was still a very scenic drive up to Grantham. Bistro Nouveau has become a regular venue for chapter luncheons as the staff there has always been friendly and helpful.

A total of 99 members and guests joined together for a tasty meal that people raved about. We listened to a stirring presentation from the Reverend Jay MacLeod, Rector, The Episcopal Church of Saint Andrew, New London, NH, who spoke of his time in Bedford, England, concerning his endeavors to bring together the interfaith community there during the troubled times after the 2006 London subway bombings.



Pres. Warren Coulter presented Rev. MacLeod with a speaker's gift.

After the luncheon, many of the people stayed for a briefing/question period by chapter member, COL Hunt Kerrigan, ARNG (Ret) from Long Term Care (LTC) Partners on the 2019 TRICARE Dental & Optical Insurance Program. One new chapter member joined us: Christopher Raymond and his fiancé, Andrea Barlick, of Troy.

CDR Michael A. McLean, USN (Ret)
MOAA-NH Secretary

A Message from the President

CAPT F. Warren Coulter, USN (Ret)



Greetings during this year's holiday season as we wrap up 2018.

The past year has been a busy, rewarding one for the chapter. We now look forward to possibly earning our 17th consecutive Five-star Banner. With a fully manned Board of Directors and an able leadership team, that prospect is definitely within our sights.

As is sometimes the case, the chapter experiences occasional vacancies in its supporting roles that need to be filled. Fortunately, during the year we were able to recruit Kent Whitman as our new chapter PAO and Geoff Corson to manage our blast e-mail effort. Now, we are searching for a Vice Treasurer to back-up our Treasurer, Roby Day. We invite anyone interested in this position to contact him.

As 2018 closes, we look forward to another year of interesting and enjoyable chapter luncheons arranged by our program chairman, Gerry Boyle. The first one of 2019 takes place on January 26 at the Portsmouth Country Club where we will present our Granite State Warriors awards. We have two worthy candidates in HALO Maritime Defense Systems from Newton and Norman Langlois from Dover. Please join us to learn more about them as we honor their contributions.

Meanwhile, while we enjoy the peace and friendship of the holidays, please keep in mind and wish all the best for those who stand watch on our behalf.

Warren Coulter

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Visit the chapter's website at www.moaa-nh.org

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Annual Meeting - Nashua Country Club

It was a sunny, cold, blustery day when the chapter held its Annual Meeting and Luncheon at the Nashua Country Club on November 10, 2018. It was also the 243rd birthday of the US Marine Corps. As always, the country club's staff was extremely helpful. Scott Hobden, Clubhouse Manager, and Marilyn DiFillipo were always present to assist with every eventuality.

While the members' business meeting was going on, the spouses and friends listened to a presentation from Collette Travel on 2019 and 2020 chapter trips. That was followed by a briefing by Martins Point on the upcoming TRICARE Dental Plan changeover to FEDVIP.

Prior to the luncheon, a 50/50 Raffle was run by chapter Board members Andrew Breuder and Wayne Balcom and chapter honorary member, Terry Bobseine. Together they raised \$400 with \$200 going to support NH veterans organizations. The winner of the raffle, chapter member Jim Spotts, donated his winnings to the chapter Scholarship Loan Fund. What a noble person!

Members and guests totaling 125 participated in the traditional playing of all the service marches. Unfortunately, no one was present again this year from USPHS to stand up for their march. Chapter president CAPT Warren Coulter, USN (Ret) called on all the previous chapter presidents present to stand and be acknowledged as he announced the chapter's **sixteenth consecutive year** being recognized as a 5-Star Level of Excellence Chapter recipient by MOAA.



Immediate past chapter president CDR Peter S. Burdett, USN (Ret) presided over the installation of this year's chapter officers and Board of Directors. The results of the annual elections can be found

on the "Chapter News" page. We acknowledged all chapter members who had died since the last annual meeting. TAPS was played for them.

Everyone enjoyed a delicious meal excellently prepared by the staff of the club. We were pleased to have the Honorable Gerard J. Boyle, Col, USMC (Ret) as our guest speaker. Col Boyle, a chapter member, is Senior Judge of the New Hampshire Circuit Court. He spoke about alcohol, drugs, texting & driving, and DWI among young people.

After his presentation, in honor of the 243rd Marine Corps' birthday, the Marines present participated in the reading of birthday greetings from former and present commandants of the Marine Corps followed by the traditional cake cutting. For a change of pace, members enjoyed a recording of the Marine Corps Hymn played on the bagpipes!



We were joined by ten first-time attendees: Lynne & Dennis Blankenkemper of Concord, Dana & Rande Gray of Exeter, Michael Megan of Nashua, Laurence & Patricia Miller of Merrimack, Brenda Pennels of Scarborough, ME (she joined at the luncheon) and Christopher Raymond and his fiancé, Andrea Barlick, of Troy.

*CDR Michael A. McLean, USN (Ret)
MOAA-NH Secretary*

**Consider applying for
this job with MOAA-NH!**

VICE TREASURER

Do you like money? Have you ever wondered how your MOAA-NH dues are used? Are we solvent? Are we getting the most bang for our bucks? Consider stepping forward to be elected as our VICE TREASURER and find out all the answers and more.

The Vice Treasurer's role within the framework of the Board of Directors is to be able to step in when the Treasurer is unavailable for any reason. To do so, the Vice Treasurer is kept current in, and familiar with, all our chapter's finances. The Vice Treasurer can write checks, make deposits, prepare treasury reports, and complete reports external to the organization (e.g. IRS, State of NH, etc.). If you like dealing with money, here is an excellent opportunity to serve your fellow members. If you are interested in participating, please contact our current Treasurer, Roby Day (603-642-7956; fuzzbutthall@comcast.net).

Let's Welcome Our New 2018 Chapter Members!

Col Stanley L. Anderson, USAF (Ret) - Manchester
LTC Thomas J. Berry, Jr., USAR (Ret) - Hopkinton
CAPT William B. Birkmaier, Jr., USN (Ret) - Lebanon
CAPT Lynne F. Blankenkemper, USNR - Concord
CAPT Matthew P. Dubois, USN (Ret) - Dover
CW3 David L. Feller, USA (Ret) - Rochester
LT Dana Aa. Gray, USCG (Ret) - Exeter
CW3 David Hadley, USA (Ret) - Weare
LCDR Stephen F. Lotterhand, USN - New London
CAPT Michael A. Megan, USCG (Ret) - Nashua
2LT Paul S. Moore, USA (Ret) - Bedford
COL Richard F. Oberman, ARNG - Bow
LTC Brenda M. Pennels, USAR - Scarborough, ME
Col John C. Powers, USMC (Ret) - Amherst
Capt Christopher D. Raymond, USMC (Ret) - Troy
CAPT James Rutkovsky, USCG (Ret) - Grantham
CDR Kevin R. Shilling, USN (Ret) - Durham
CDR Ross A. Stroebel, USCG (Ret) - Bedford
LtCol Kevin P. Sullivan, USMCR (Ret) - Boscawen
Capt James G. Westberg, USMC - Hebron
Capt Thomas S. Wilk, USAF (Ret) - Epping



Reflections . . . In Service to My Country

Editor's Note: Have your tissues ready. I promise you will need them.

. . . Honoring Teddy . . .

I have the best job in the Navy. I am a nurse. In peacetime, I care for our service members, their families, and our veterans. In wartime, I have the honor and privilege to care for our warfighters as a combat nurse. We vigorously train for the day when we may be called to the theater of operations to provide critical care for our warriors. Yes, we are ready when called to treat the wounds and save lives during the golden hour before transporting these brave men and women to the next level of care. But no amount of training can ever prepare us for the wounds of the heart we feel for every one of our casualties, especially for those we cannot save.

This is the story of one I could not save. This was a rarity in 2011 in Kandahar, Afghanistan, because battlefield medicine had become so sophisticated that we had a very high survival rate. But, alas, some were so injured that no amount of sophistication was going to save their lives.

It was 0900 on Veterans Day 2011. The hospital team of the NATO Role 3 was assembled in formation for a "Remembrance Day" ceremony. We had a moment of silent prayer, and I asked God to spare the forces any casualties that day. Sadly, that would not be the case. Shortly after my prayer, my pager went off indicating we had a casualty arriving . . . a category A . . . the most critical of injuries.

I ran to the trauma area to receive the patient. His name was PFC Theodore Rushing. We instantly began our life saving efforts, working tirelessly; but, sadly, PFC Rushing would not survive his injuries.

As I prepared PFC Rushing for his journey home, I wondered about his family. Surely they were getting that dreaded knock at the door right now. But who were they? Was it his wife? His mother and father? Did he have children? I grieved for all of them, not knowing who they were. I grieved for PFC Rushing . . . for the life ahead he was missing. But I had no idea what that was. Who was PFC Rushing? I never stopped wondering. I never forgot his sacrifice. I wanted to honor him . . . but for now and in that place the honor was keeping his service and sacrifice alive in my memory of 90 short minutes of "knowing" this brave young man.

As with all deployments, my day came to return home. I had made many new life-long friends and many new life-long memories. I had no idea what God had laid

ahead for me, however, and I never, ever stopped thinking about PFC Rushing and the family I hoped he had.

Later that year, I was stationed at the Pentagon. This was a scary proposition being a New Hampshire girl from a small town. DC seemed so overwhelming, but I had been to scary places before. Somehow, though, DC seemed scarier than Afghanistan. I chose to live in the town of Arlington, VA. I quickly came to learn that this was no random happenstance.

My first day in Arlington, I got on my bike and started riding. I had no idea where I was going, but I landed on a trail that found me at a crossroads . . . go left to the Arlington National Cemetery (ANC) or right to the Lincoln Memorial. I chose left. As I entered the Visitor's Center at ANC, I wondered if PFC Rushing might be buried there. I entered his name in the directory and learned he was laid to rest in section 60. A huge rainbow appeared as I walked to section 60 that seemed to direct me to the exact spot where PFC Rushing laid.

I located his grave, and my unanswered questions were being answered. There were flowers from his mom and dad. I now knew he had parents. His headstone said "little brother." I now knew he had an older sibling or siblings. I learned his birthday. I learned he had earned the Bronze Star . . . and for the next five years, I visited PFC Rushing on Memorial Day, Veterans Day, on his birthday, and Christmas.

Section 60 became a sacred place for me . . . and a place of fear. What if I ran into his mother? Being a mother myself, I felt the unimaginable pain PFC Rushing's mother must feel every day. How do you tell his mother you are sorry when you couldn't save her son's life? But I continued to visit PFC Rushing. As a mother, I wanted to continue to watch over PFC Rushing. As an American, I wanted to honor his sacrifice; so with each visit, I left a quarter . . . a tradition in ANC for visitors who were with the person when they passed. And so, for five years and countless visits, I paid my respects and left tears . . . and a quarter.

In April of 2017, I knew my tour in DC would soon be coming to an end; and I would be returning to New Hampshire. I worried that I would no longer be able to visit PFC Rushing regularly. Who would be laying his wreath every year during Wreaths Across America? But this is the struggle of us in the military. We learn to move forward, and it was time. I had no idea where the Rushing family lived; but given the fact that there were always flowers, I assumed they lived close by ANC. I found comfort in knowing PFC Rushing would have regular visitors.

My bedtime routine involved scrolling through Facebook and catching up on things going on in other people's lives. One night in April as I was on Facebook, a video of a woman having a baby in a car popped up. Being a nurse and mother, this caught my

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Reflections . . . In Service to My Country

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attention. As with all YouTube videos, after watching the first, I was led through a series of other suggested videos. And then, about three videos in, I was directed to a video of a man and a woman holding a picture of PFC Rushing. How could that be? I watched the video. I learned about Teddy's family — his mom, his dad, and his baby sister. I learned he was from Florida, and he liked skateboards. I learned about his unit and the 10th Mountain Division and how they called him "little brother" and thus the inscription on his headstone. I learned Teddy earned the Bronze Star after selflessly alerting his unit to the IED in the road that would ultimately take his life, but allowed him to save the lives of his entire unit. I wondered why nearly six years later, God finally revealed to me the answers to the questions that haunted me for so long. I was glad to know Teddy's family was healing; but, mostly, I was glad to finally "meet" his mother.

A few weeks later another strange Facebook suggestion appeared. A photo of an arm with a tattoo popped up as a suggested friend. The tattoo was significant because it was **EXACTLY** the same tattoo that was on Teddy's chest. I clicked on the picture to learn it was Teddy's sister. Why was God (or perhaps Teddy) pushing me towards this family? I would leave it alone, because I did not want to hurt this family and had far more answers than any combat nurse would ever get ordinarily.

Then, as if God and Teddy were insistent we meet, Teddy's family's address was sent to me in an unrelated Google search for a voter list in New Hampshire. Why was I provided the full address completely unsolicited?

I proceeded to write daily letters to the Rushing family to only tear them up after each writing for fear of opening wounds that were slowly healing. But then, I felt compelled to send one short note: *Hi, I'm Lynne. Teddy's nurse in Afghanistan. Thank you for your sacrifice. I am sorry for your loss.* — followed by my contact information.

A month passed without response. I anguished over feeling as though I had hurt this family, which was not my intent. And then a beautiful, heartfelt letter arrived from Teddy's mom. She told me all about Teddy and said she was going to call.

Our first conversation lasted for hours, as though we were long-lost friends. After tears and laughter and easy conversation, Ann invited me to the annual "Teddyfest,"

a week-long, family beach vacation in Florida to celebrate Teddy's life. It was just a month away. I went.

I met the most amazing family and celebrated an amazing American hero. Most importantly, Ann was not angry at me for not saving her son that day. And that day, I realized Teddy needed the hands of a mother in Afghanistan rather than the hands of a nurse. The three days at Teddyfest were very healing for me. My unanswered questions were answered, and I was finally at peace knowing that Teddy and his family were remembered and celebrated.

On my last day at the beach, Ann and I shared a quiet moment over coffee in our beach chairs on the sand. We looked at the space between our chairs and saw a quarter sitting there perfectly placed, alone, atop the sand. Ann, without hesitation, said "Finally, a sign from Teddy." It was just then I made the connection: Teddy's mom brought Teddy into this world to do great things, and I was so privileged to be the mom at Teddy's side when he was called home after what was his most selfless act of bravery saving his unit and sacrificing his own life.

Our families are forever bonded by Teddy. The Rushing family is amazing. Their strength, their love, their resilience is to be admired. And I am so fortunate to have known Teddy, if for only 90 minutes, and to have the Rushing family in my life. I truly have the best job in the United States Navy.

Lynne Blankenkoper
CAPT, USNR
Concord, NH



PFC Theodore B. Rushing
1986 - 2011

DUTY

Each day I awake, and put on the gear.
To protect the ones, who tremble in fear.
I don't do this job, for riches or fame.
For the call of duty, to this profession I came.
It's in my blood...it's what I do.
To do anything else, I wouldn't be true;
To my calling in life...to the job at hand.
To protect my people...to protect my land.
A hero I am, some people may say.
To tell you the truth, I don't see it that way.
I'm just doing the job, and serving the role.
Completing the task, that makes me feel whole.
I love what I do...it truly is me.
Protecting and serving, forever I'll be.
Fulfilling my duty, I never shall stop.
A fireman, a soldier, a medic, a cop.

By Cody Weiser

Every MOAA-NH Member is a Recruiter

Over the last several years, the New Hampshire Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA-NH) has seen declining membership. This trend was reversed in the third quarter of calendar year 2018 because of the hard work of several members actively engaging potential members and following through until they sign up. That said, MOAA-NH needs *your* help to keep this momentum going.

What can you do?

(1) Always carry MOAA-NH recruiting material for when you meet potential members. MOAA-NH has an *Invitation to Join* tri-fold and recruiting business cards that are handed out at every luncheon. If you're not able to attend a luncheon, we can mail these to you at your request.

(2) Make calls. We have information on over 2,000 active, retired, and former officers who reside in New Hampshire who are not members of MOAA-NH. If you have time to make calls, contact the MOAA-NH Recruiting Coordinator at recruiting@moaa-nh.org or call 603-494-8796 and request a list of eligible candidates.

(3) Attend Events in Your Area. Use local veteran events as an opportunity to spread the word about MOAA-NH. If you have an event coming up in your area and you can't attend, contact the MOAA-NH recruiting coordinator so we can get a member to cover it.

(4) Encourage potential members to join our social media pages/groups. MOAA-NH is active on both Facebook and LinkedIn. Have them search "MOAA-NH" and submit a request to join. We post all our public information on both systems. The LinkedIn group has additional information for transitioning members, job seekers, and people entering retirement. Potential members will see the great things we're doing throughout the state.

What resources are available? MOAA-NH sets up its recruiting members for success. We have a training presentation that explains the nuances of membership between MOAA-National and MOAA-NH and how members can sign-up online and by mail. As mentioned, we have the *Invitation to Join* trifolds and recruiting business cards that are handed out at every event and can be mailed to you. Thanks to a very generous member, we now have 24 tickets every year for potential members to attend MOAA-NH events free of charge. If you know of a potential member who hasn't made the commitment, invite him/her to a MOAA event; and we'll cover the costs. These tickets are provided on a first-come/first-served basis through the MOAA-NH Recruiting Coordinator.

Recognition for Recruiters. MOAA-NH also recognizes that recruiting (and the follow-up often needed to get people to join) are efforts that should be recognized. Again, our very generous member has sponsored two free tickets to the quarterly luncheon for the top recruiter from the previous quarter. Additionally, the top recruiter for the year will be recognized with four free tickets to the annual clambake!

How do I get started? Contact MOAA-NH Recruiting Coordinator, Jim Spotts, Captain USCG (Ret). He can be reached at recruiting@moaa-nh.org or 603-494-8796.

Is travelling on your bucket list?

Maybe this list will help



2019 MOAA Travel Program:

(Additional information on the available 2019 and 2020 trips are posted on our website under Group Travel.)

- Iceland's Magical Northern Lights, March 21—27
Seven days (\$3,499 with air)
- Magnificent Cities of Central and Eastern Europe, 14 days, August 4 — 17 (\$4,699 with air)
- Discover Canyon Country, October 8 — 15, eight days, (\$2,999 with air)
- Alaska Discovery, Land and Cruise, (featuring a seven-night Princess Cruise), July 16 — 28, 13 days, (\$5,414 with air and cruise)
- Magical Christmas Markets, Austria and Germany. December 7 — 14, eight days, (\$2,899 with air)
- London and Paris, eight days, May 1 — 8 (\$3,449 with air)

2020 MOAA Travel Program:

- **The travel event of the decade! Book early! One of the tours is already sold out. All the trips listed below include the Passion Play in Oberammergau, Germany.**
- Classic Danube River Cruise, 10 days, June 6 — 16, (\$6,499 with air)
- Classic Danube River Cruise, 10 days, Aug 30 — Sept 10 (\$6,499 with air)
- Exploring the Alpine Countries, (several dates available), 13 days, (\$6,999 with air)
- Austrian Delight, (several dates available), 10 days, (\$4,999 with air) — **Soon to be sold out!**
- Discover Switzerland, Austria and Bavaria, (several dates available), 10 days, (\$4,999 with air)
- Imperial Cities, (several dates available), 11 days, (\$4,199 without air), air contract pending
- Germany's Cultural Cities and the Romantic Roads, (several dates available), 13 days, without air, contract pending

Look for our "Trip of the Month" email blasts sent out periodically. Log into our website "moaa-nh.org" and click on "Group Travel." **For reservations or additional information, contact Tony Burdo, 603-391-7106 or email: tonyajjb@gmail.com.**



CHECK US OUT ON FACEBOOK

Did you know that MOAA-NH has a Facebook page? We do . . . at <https://www.facebook.com/MOAA-NH-403462326493407/> Check out all the latest pictures and information about the chapter. While you're there, be sure to "like" us.

The New Hampshire Chapter of the MOAA
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16th YEAR



www.moaa-nh.org



WHY MOAA?
YouTube video

Cut and paste or type the link below into your browser. It will take you directly to National MOAA's "Take Action" tab. There you can learn about current legislative issues and voice your opinions about their efforts.

<http://www.moaa.org/takeaction>

**2019 MOAA-NH
Luncheons and Annual Meeting**

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| January 26 | Portsmouth Country Club, Greenland for the <i>Granite State Warriors Award</i> |
| April 27 | Common Man Inn & Spa, Plymouth |
| June 22 | Red Jacket Inn, North Conway
(<i>Tentative</i>) |
| August 3 | Clambake, PNSY |
| September 21 | Bistro Nouveau at the Ctr at Eastman, Grantham |
| November 9 | Annual Meeting, Nashua Country Club, Nashua |



December 2018

Taps



Maj. Donald E. Bennett, USAFR (Ret), Center Conway
Lt. Col. Herbert E. Follansbee, Jr., USAF (Ret), Dover
Mrs. Joyce P. Kelly, New Castle
Mrs. Jean F. Wilcox, Eaton Center

FOR LINKED-IN USERS

MOAA-NH members: We have established a group on LinkedIn for the purpose of helping members find employment in the New Hampshire area. If you have a LinkedIn account, please request to join the "New Hampshire Chapter of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA-NH)" group. If you are seeking employment or know a prospective member who will be, create a post for the group with a link to the member's profile. We also ask that recruiters and human resource professionals from companies around New Hampshire who are interested in hiring former officers to join the group. If you have suggestions for the LinkedIn Group, please contact Jim Spotts at jim.spotts@hotmail.com.