



COL (Ret.) Eugenia Thornton, USA,
Chapter President

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2024

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MOAA is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization open to officers and former officers of the Uniformed Services

October Meeting Agenda

Welcome to fall and its customary accompaniments-- football, homecoming events, baseball playoffs (not so good for us Phillies fans...), and cooler weather.

Along with these early autumn accords is our Dover MOAA October meeting. Details are as follows—

Thursday, 17 October

**Franco's Restaurant
1708 E. Lebanon Rd.
Dover DE 19901**

**Social Hour: 5pm-6pm
Dinner: 6pm-7pm
Program: 7pm-8pm**

Dinner selections include these choices:

- Fettuccine with Chicken and Vegetables (\$32)
- Veal Parmigiana (\$33)
- Ziti Alla Vodka (\$32)

*All meals include bread, side salad, and coffee, tea or soda.

To secure your dinner choice, contact Tom Smith by 12 noon on Tues., 15 October

Email: rotorhead65@aol.com

Phone: (301) 904-0228

Disaster Assistance Through MOAA



**CRISIS RELIEF
PROGRAM**

As we're aware, recent hurricanes have caused significant affliction to communities along the east coast, primarily in North Carolina and Florida.

To assist victims of these natural disasters, the MOAA Foundation's Crisis Relief Program provides active duty servicemembers, veterans, and their families with assistance through crisis relief grants.

If you are able to donate to this program, your tax-deductible gift can offer hope to those suffering from the consequences of disasters.

Please click the below link for more information on supporting this cause.

<https://crisisrelief.funraise.org/>

October's Program and Guest Speaker

During October's meeting, our program will be themed "NCO Roots Help Shape Public Figure," and we will be honored by our guest speaker, Dover City Councilman Gerald L. Rocha, Sr.

Councilman Rocha hails from Riverhead, NY, and moved to Dover, DE in 1998, following a distinguished career in the U.S. Air Force. During his service, he held the position of Program Manager for the esteemed Dover Air Force Base Honor Guard. After dedicating 20 years to military service, he shifted his focus to community engagement, passionately working to inspire young people to reach their full potential while fostering their core values. He is a co-founder of the Delaware Youth Leadership Academy, which empowers youths aged 10 thru 18 through leadership development, public speaking, and citizenship initiatives.

In his current role as Executive Director of the Delaware Parents Association, Councilman Rocha plays a vital part in the nutritional welfare of children who attend local daycares and centers throughout the state. He also contributed as an appointed member of the Delaware Law Enforcement and Community Policing Task Force, and is a commissioner with the State Office of Volunteerism Delaware. Councilman Rocha holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Information Resource Management and a Master's Degree in Organizational Leadership from Wilmington University.



Dover City Councilman Gerald L. Rocha, Sr.

In addition to his professional commitments, Councilman Rocha actively participates on multiple boards, including serving as Secretary for One Village Alliance in Wilmington. He is an advisory board member for the College of Health Professionals & Natural Science at Wilmington University, and an advisory board member for the Inner-City Cultural League in Dover. He is also a graduate of the Leadership Delaware Fellowship Program, Class of 2012.

Councilman Rocha shares his life with his wife, Valerie, and they are proud parents to four adult children.

DCVA Events

The Delaware Commission of Veterans Affairs (DCVA) announces the following upcoming events:

- 02 November: NABVETS Black & Gold Gala, Modern Maturity Center, Dover DE
- 07 November: Annual Trust Fund Dinner, Modern Maturity Center, Dover DE
- 11 November: Veterans Day Bridge Ceremony, Veterans Memorial Park, New Castle DE

*Information submitted by MOAA Member Doug Hudson



Phone: (302) 739-2792
Email: DOS_OVS@delaware.gov
<https://vets.delaware.gov/>



September's Meeting Moments



INAUGURAL HONOR FLIGHT

'Unforgettable' experience for Delaware veterans

Honor Flight takes 24 vets to visit war memorials

By Mike Finney, Daily State News

(Reprinted with permission from Daily State News/Bay to Bay News)

DOVER — The tears welling up inside of Army veteran Greg Fleming's eyes told the story of what Delaware's inaugural Capital Region Honor Flight on Thursday meant to him and 23 other veterans as they traveled to Washington for a day fit for a king — in military fatigues.

When the day neared its end and the red, white and blue Honor Flight bus returned to Bally's Dover on U.S. 13 just after 8 p.m., something unexpected and extraordinary greeted the group.

Hundreds of people lined both sides of the hallway just inside the entrance to Bally's hotel and greeted the veterans with high fives, hugs and banners thanking them for their service.

"This reception is a hell of a lot different than a lot of us got 55 years ago," said Mr. Fleming, a resident of Lewes. "It had to have been the most rewarding thing I've ever encountered in or out of the military. That's the only way to describe it."

"The planning, the organization, the police escorts from here to there ... (organizers) Jenny (Brawley) and Bill (Welser), and all the people who were involved, they're a dream to work with. It was an amazing 24 hours."

Perhaps the military veterans and their traveling mates got a clue that it was not going to be an ordinary trip to Washington earlier that morning.

Many of the guests of honor glanced out the windows of the bus and noticed other drivers pulling over and letting them cruise on past, many of them saluting the bus as it moved by.

They soon learned that police departments from Dover all the way to Washington had escorts set up so that they could travel nonstop to see war memorials spread across the nation's capital.

The free tour of the memorials — which was sponsored by GE Aerospace — began with a stop at the under- construction Air Force Memorial, just across from the Pentagon.

But a couple of the day's several stops seemed to rank high on all of the veterans' lists of memories — a drive through the National Cemetery in Arlington, Virginia, before watching a changing of the guard ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.



Bob Agurs (Navy), Sarge Bolen (Marines), Greg Fleming (Army) and Penny Schneider (Air Force) represented Delaware's Honor Flight as they placed a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Washington. See photo gallery with this story at BayToBayNews.com.
DAILY STATE NEWS/MIKE FINNEY



Dover MOAA's own Bill Welser, who played a key role in organizing and implementing the 2024 "Honor Flight"
DOVER MOAA MEMBER PHOTO

They also got a glimpse of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, commonly referred to as "The Wall."

Penny Schneider, Bob Agurs, Sarge Bolen and Mr. Fleming got the chance to participate in the wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

"I'll remember Arlington (National Cemetery) the most. But many parts of it were very good," Ms. Schneider said. "It was a special honor — very special. Those (guards) are unbelievable and clearly so proud of what they do. I think it was absolutely wonderful. It was meaningful. It was very emotional."

There were special treats included throughout the day, such as countless people around Washington stopping to shake the

See Honor Flight- Page 5

Honor Flight- Continued from Page 4



TOP- A total of 24 veterans from Delaware took part in the first Honor Flight on Sept. 12 to see the war memorials in Washington.

U.S. AIR FORCE PHOTO/AIRMAN LIBERTY MATTHEWS

RIGHT- Dover MOAA's own Randy Morgan, assisted with participants in the 2024 "Honor Flight"



veterans' hands and thank them for their service, plus a performance by a U.S. Marines Corps precision drill team.

"I really enjoyed it," said Mr. Agurs, a Navy vet and a Middletown resident. "It was one of the best days that I've had. I really enjoyed the trip to the monuments. Everything was very nice. I can't complain."

Gus Bloom is an area director for Mission BBQ — including the Dover location — and served as a guardian for Lenny Hirsch, one of the veterans on the Honor Flight.

Each veteran was assigned a guardian who was there with them throughout the day to take care of any needs they may have had and ensure their safety.

Mr. Bloom said it was an experience that he will never forget. "Seeing that police escort that happened (that) morning was incredible and it just kind of set the tone for the day," he said. "Being able to sit next to somebody who served our country and hearing the stories and the pride — not just from him, but from everybody — was definitely special for me."

"Two things really stood out for me. One was when we did see the Marine brigade perform, just how excited (Mr. Hirsch) was for that, but also how excited he was to talk to the Marines after that."

"The second thing was how meaningful it was for him to see The Wall, find a name on the wall and

what that name meant to him. It wasn't somebody he knew. It was somebody whose kid he met."

"Just seeing that impact on somebody who served our country was really, really special."

Delaware's first Honor Flight was hosted by Capital Region Honor Flight, a consortium that hosts trips for veterans in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and Delaware.

Mr. Welser, who served as commander of the 436th Airlift Wing at Dover Air Force Base in the early 1990s, certainly hopes it will not be the last.

"It would be great if Delaware in the future could have their own hub," he said.

The Battle of Cooch's Bridge

The Battle of Cooch's Bridge, fought on September 3, 1777, is the only battle of the American Revolution fought on Delaware soil.

On the Saturday closest to September 3rd, for many years now, the Sons, Daughters, and Children of the American Revolution, the Pencader Heritage Association, and other Delaware civil and government groups, gather on the battlefield at the Pencader



Rev. John Riley, at the 2024 Battle of Cooch's Bridge commemoration

Heritage Museum (near Rt. 72 in Newark) to commemorate the Battle and remember the fallen.

Dover MOAA's own Rev. John Riley was at this year's event, as State Chaplain for the Delaware Society of Sons of the American Revolution.



Local and National Topics of Concern



Filing a Supplemental Claim, if the VA Denied Your Disability Claim in the Past

From the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs:
<https://www.va.gov/decision-reviews/supplemental-claim/>

2025 COLA Prediction

From MOAA Magazine:
https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/finance/final-cola-prediction-tracking-the-2025-adjustment/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=TMNsend&utm_content=ji5pOIfKmqMAMHJh1eJHNA==+DE+ATFHsRM+1+ERet+P+CC

TRICARE Toolkit: Understanding Medical Equipment Coverage

From MOAA Magazine:
https://www.moaa.org/content/topic-and-landing-pages/moaastricare-toolkit/tricare-toolkit-medical-equipment-coverage/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=TMNsend&utm_content=ji5pOIfKmqMAMHJh1eJHNA==+DE+ATFHsRM+1+ERet+P+CC

Find Your Boot Camp, Basic Training Photo

From Together We Served:
<https://togetherweserved.com/bootcampphoto>

U.S. General Highlights Changes to Army's Training in Europe

From the American Legion:
https://www.legion.org/information-center/news/security/2024/september/transforming-in-contact-us-general-highlights-how-armys-training-in-europe-has-adapted?utm_campaign=Source+Code+Here&utm_content=COMMANDER&utm_term=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Adestra

No-cost Google Cloud Training and Certification for Veterans

From the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs:
https://rsvp.withgoogle.com/events/google_cloud_launchpad_for_vets

Vet the Vote Recruits Nearly 160,000 Veterans as Election Workers

From MOAA.org:
https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2024-news-articles/recommended-reads/vet-the-vote-recruits-nearly-160,000-veterans-as-election-workers/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=TMNsend&utm_content=ji5pOIfKmqMAMHJh1eJHNA==+DE+ATFHsRM+1+ERet+P+CC

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month: Protect Your Benefits and Assets

From Digital VA:
<https://digital.va.gov/cyber/>

UD Football: Free Admission For Active Military and Veterans on 09 November

From the Univ. of Delaware:
<https://bluehens.com/news/2024/4/4/25/football-announces-2024-promotional-schedule>

DVTF Dinner, 07 November

Keynote speech by wounded warrior Col. Laurel Burkel, USAF; and, entertainment by countertenor singer Terry Barber.

Dover MOAA will sponsor a table. Contact Gene for details

**ALL WILMINGTON VA
4- DIGIT EXENSTIONS
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EXTENSIONS**

All existing extensions will remain the same, with an additional "3" added to the front.

For example when calling, dial: 1-800-461-2511 then your extension 3-XXXX



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Wilmington, DE 19804

Chapter President's Chat

The Backbone of the Army

When my husband, LTC Don Jagger, commanded the 2/30th Mech Infantry in the 3d Infantry Division (W. Germany) before the fall of the Berlin Wall, his unit was selected to be visited by senior Russian military delegates.

Both my husband and I firmly believed in the saying "NCOs are the backbone of the Army."

Nowhere was that more evident when Don used E-5s and E-6s to escort small groups of senior Russian officers. He had NCOs standing by the significant pieces of equipment (Bradley Fighting Vehicles and an Abrams Tank from the cross-attached tank unit) to explain them, and give rides to the dignitaries. He had supply sergeants proudly explain logistics. A corporal showed off the unit's arms room, expertly defining their range, while rapidly breaking down each type of weapon and putting it back together.

Neither Don, nor his officers, were anywhere to be found until lunch at the dining faculty, after a tour of the kitchen and food supplies, also led by NCOs.

Later, when Don worked for the Defense Information Systems Agency, he came across a recently declassified internal Russian document about the visit. The Russians believed my husband had dressed up officers in NCO uniforms to try and fool the Russians into thinking our NCO Corps was capable of running things on their own.

The report concluded that if the soldiers they met were indeed non-commissioned officers, the Russians were doomed if they ever went up against the U.S in battle, because it was clear that the NCOs took direction from



officers, and they did not need them to perform their duties. Don's self-actualizing NCO Corps was a force multiplier beyond anything the Russians could imagine.

This was the Army that we took to Desert Storm when the whole world learned of the extraordinary capabilities of our professional NCO Corps.

An extract from the Army NCO Creed's last paragraph sums up what the Russians saw, and rightfully feared so much: "Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine. I will earn their respect and confidence as well as that of my Soldiers. I will not compromise my integrity nor my moral courage. I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget that we are professionals, non-commissioned officers, leaders!"

Our October guest speaker's (Honorable Gerald Rocha's) last military assignment was leading the Honor Guard at Dover Air Force Base. Post retirement, he continued to serve and currently is a Dover City Councilman, along with MOAA member Dr. Julia Pillsbury. He will tell us how his NCO experience makes him the great public servant he is today.

Never Stop Serving,
Gene

Upcoming Dover MOAA Meetings

17 October

21 November

19 December

16 January



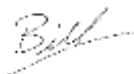
Newsletter Submissions

The *Dover MOAA Newsletter* is slated for publication on the Friday prior to each monthly meeting, and is disseminated electronically via email to all members. Input is welcomed from Chapter members, as well as relevant information from members of the community.

We will also accept the submission of opinion articles, with the understanding that the eventual publication of any items is subject to the discretion of the Chapter Newsletter Editor, and Chapter President.

Please submit all items via email to me directly at: colwjalexander@gmail.com. You can also contact me via cell phone (voice or text) at: 302-521-4781.

Thank you for your support in helping make our newsletter a distinguished channel of information for our MOAA members!



Bill Alexander

Help Us Grow & Stay Informed!

Please share the news of membership in our great chapter with any eligible uniformed services members and veterans with whom you come into contact. Here's the link to our membership form: <https://dovermoaa.org/chapter-membership>

And, check out our Facebook page for the latest news and info:
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/8509355691721>

Never Stop Serving...