

**Annual Report of the Quantico Area Chapter of the**

**U.S. Naval Academy Alumni Association**

**1 June 2022 – 31 May 2023 (Year 11)**

This annual report records events and activities during the eleventh year of the Quantico Area Chapter (QAC) of the U. S. Naval Academy Alumni Association (USNAAA). The financial report, prepared by the Chapter Treasurer, follows the narrative.

Officers and Council Members (volunteers; elected in May 2022 by silent acclamation):

President: Robin Dreeke ‘92

Vice President: George Williams ’87, LtCol USMC (Ret.)

 Secretary: Nancy Springer ‘87, Col USMC (Ret.)

 Treasurer: Ron Diefenbach ’00, Maj USCMR

Council Members: ‘60s and Before: Walt Giraldi, ’69, LCDR USN (Ret.)

 ‘70s: Steve Ritacco ’73, LtCol USMC (Ret.)

 ‘80s: Don Schmieley ’84 CAPT USN (Ret.)

 ‘90s: Greg Lane ’94, LtCol USMC (Ret.)

 ‘00s: Kevin Barnard ’01, CDR USN

 ‘10s: Bob Taylor ’74, CAPT USN (Ret.) (At-large)

 Appointed Positions:

Senior Enlisted Advisor: J. D. Baker, MSgt USMC (Ret.), Honorary member of ’05

 Dave Mattingly, ISCM USN (Ret.)

Membership Committee: Bob Taylor ’74, CAPT USN (Ret.)

Area Blue and Gold Officer: Jim Ripley ’74, CAPT USNR (Ret.)

STEM Coordinator: Phil Salinas ’82, LtCol USMC (Ret.)

Website coordinator: Bob Taylor ’74, CAPT USN (Ret.)

Objectives/End of Year Status:

Chapter Officers, Board of Advisor members and other interested Chapter members established the following goals and intermediate objectives for the 2022-2023 Chapter year:

**1. Continue to grow the Chapter Membership.** Quantico Area Chapter had 66 members at the end of the 2022-2023 Chapter year a 33% decrease from the previous year. Several factors contributed to that decrease: re-starting personal pre-COVID routines, job reassignments that precluded attendance at the Breakfast Speaker Series events (the Chapter’s flagship activity), moves out of the area, and difficulty participating in activities due to personal illness or aging. Going forward, the Chapter will continue emphasizing growth as an annual objective.

**2. Increase Fundraising Activities.** We continue to appeal to the altruistic, service-oriented personalities typical of Academy graduates and maintain our theme of **“It’s not what you get, it’s what we give that matters,” focusing on the intangible benefits of Chapter membership.** We again raised scholarship funds for the Naval Academy Summer Programs through the Run To Honor (RTH) Remembrance Run. The Chapter also made a monthly donation to the Semper Fi Fund, a veteran and servicemember-themed non-profit, in the name of the Breakfast Speaker Series guest speaker.

**3. Maintain our monthly Breakfast Speaker Series.** Our activities include the monthly Breakfast Speaker Series, watch parties for Army versus Navy sporting events at The Basic School and other locations throughout the Quantico, Virginia area, and the Run To Honor Remembrance Run. Additionally, Chapter members participated in the annual Sergeant Mac Foundation wreath laying and retrieval at the Quantico National Cemetery in December and February, respectively. One of our goals is to increase the number of participants at these and other events. However, the Breakfast Speaker Series remains QAC’s most important and well-attended activity.

**4. Enjoy the company of alumni and retell/enhance old tales.** We continue to stress to Chapter Officers, Board of Advisors members and activity leaders that we are all volunteers striving to accomplish the common goal of promoting the Naval Academy through actions, not words. Nobody ever felt like he/she was on an island by him/herself as members always rallied to support activity leaders. We encourage more members to participate in activities and to have fun when doing so. We are a diverse group and inclusive of all alumni who want to participate in QAC activities. In fact, we publicize our web calendar and Facebook addresses in the Chapter Shipmate columns and encourage QAC-area alumni to join our events.

USNAAA awarded QAC another Distinguished Chapter award during this period. We are proud that USNAAA has recognized QAC four times in the past five years. QAC will continue to be proactive and relevant for our members.



 **Proud Recipient of a 2018, 2020, 2021 and 2022 Distinguished Chapter Award**

**Chapter Events**

1 Jun 22: Chapter members ratified Amendment Six of the QAC bylaws.

3 Jun 22: Monthly hybrid-format (in-person and Zoom) Breakfast Speaker Series session featuring COL Bob Quackenbush, USA (Ret.), Deputy Chief of Staff, Arlington National Cemetery (ANC). COL Quackenbush gave a very interesting talk that included the history of the cemetery, its organizational structure and missions and relevant information about current and proposed burial eligibility. He also briefed the group on the southern expansion plan and the proposed revised burial eligibility criteria designed to preserve ANC as an active burial ground “well into the future (defined as 150 years in ANC’s 2017 report),” in accordance with the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act. Held at The Hampton Inn in Dumfries, VA. Attendance: 16.

3 Jun 22: Article published in the June Shipmate.

7 Jul 22: Chapter member Maj Andrew “Drew” Vuillemot ’87, USMC (Ret.) passed away due to cancer.

5 Aug 22: Monthly Breakfast Speaker Series meeting with Colonel Wendell Leimbach, Jr., USMC, Director, Joint Intermediate Force Capabilities Office. Colonel Leimbach provided an extremely interesting presentation about the July-August 1779 Penobscot Expedition to Majabigwaduce Peninsula (now Castine, ME). This six week operation, the largest naval expedition of the Revolutionary War, tried to dislodge the British position at Fort George on Majabigwaduce. However, the operation failed, ending with the numerically superior Continental Navy contingent fleeing the British on the Penobscot River and ultimately scuttling the American fleet. Colonel Leimbach detailed the battle’s leadership failures, some of which are timeless and useful for both experienced and aspiring leaders. Actual battlefield relics brought the presentation to life and stimulated several questions from the audience. Held at The Hampton Inn in Dumfries, VA. Attendance: 17.

5 Aug 22: Article published in the July-August Shipmate.

2 Sep 22: Monthly Break Speaker Series with Representative Abigail Spanberger, (D, VA-7). Congresswoman Spanberger discussed many aspects of her roles in Congress, concentrating on her views on various topics as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee. She took many questions that occupied most of the session. She was very forthcoming and did an excellent job explaining her point of view on a variety of subjects. Held at The Hampton Inn in Dumfries, VA. Attendance: 24.

1 Sep 22: Article published in the September Shipmate.

1 Oct 22: Navy/Air Force football game watch party at Paddy’s Public House in Stafford, VA. Attendance: 6.

7 Oct 22: Monthly Breakfast Speaker Series breakfast and 247th Navy Birthday ceremony and cake cutting featuring VADM John Mustin, USN, ’90, Chief of Navy Reserve and Commander, Navy Reserve Force. CAPT Tom Taylor, USN (Ret.), ’63 was the oldest sailor present and VADM Mustin’s aide, LCDR Amy Thomas, USN, Pennsylvania State University ’10 was the youngest. VADM Mustin gave a very interesting presentation about the Navy’s strategic efforts to cope with the evolving threat landscape and its effects on the Navy and Navy Reserve. The group had a thoroughly enjoyable time participating in the traditional birthday observance and cake cutting. Held at The Hampton Inn in Dumfries, VA. Attendance: 16.

22 Sep 22: Article published in the October Shipmate.

4 Nov 22: Monthly Breakfast Speaker Series installment and the United States Marine Corps’ 247th birthday commemoration featuring Colonel Reginald McClam, Commanding Officer, The Basic School (TBS). Colonel McClam gave an overview of the current TBS curriculum and its emphasis on leadership and professional development. He also provided very frank and thoughtful answers to numerous audience questions. The Marine Corps birthday celebration included a traditional ceremony and cake cutting. Colonel Michael Cathey ‘67, USMC (Ret.), one of the Chapter’s founding members, was the oldest Marine present and Major Ryan Steenberge, USMC, the youngest. Held at The Hampton Inn in Dumfries, VA. Attendance: 20.

16 Nov 22: QAC Council conducted via Zoom.

23 Nov 22: Article published in the November-December Shipmate.

2 Dec 22: Monthly Breakfast Speaker Series engagement (in-person and on Zoom) with VADM John Fuller USN, ’87, the 42d Naval Inspector General. VADM Fuller gave a very interesting talk about the position’s history and mission, its organizational structure. He also described his intent to operationally orient the office while streamlining it and enhancing transparency and professionalism. His priority areas for fiscal year 23 include TRICARE, logistics, and cyber resiliency special assessments. Held at The Hampton Inn in Dumfries, VA. Attendance: 22.

3 Dec 22: Two Chapter Members braved the rainy weather and participated in the annual Sgt Mac Foundation wreath laying at the Quantico National Cemetery. The Sgt Mac Foundation memorializes Marine Sergeant John “Mac” McColley, USMC who perished in a 2006 helicopter mishap off the coast of Djibouti while on deployment with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit. QAC has supported this event for the last several years.

9 Dec 22: USNAAA selected QAC as a Distinguished Chapter for the fourth time in the last five years. BZ!

10 Dec 22: QAC hosted its 6th Annual Army Navy Football Watch Party for the officers of TBS, Quantico, VA.  Approximately 100 lieutenant students and TBS staff members gathered with several Chapter volunteers, families and friends to share the camaraderie of the annual football contest.  The group had an enjoyable time despite the disappointing 20-17 Navy loss in a first-ever double overtime! Beat Army!

20 Dec 22: QAC Council meeting held via Zoom with a quorum (6) in attendance. Discussion topics included preparing this year’s Distinguished Chapter package, alignment of the Chapter’s activities with Distinguished Chapter requirements and a method to update the Chapter Strategic Plan.

6 Jan 23: Monthly Speaker Series Breakfast with LtGen John Wissler, USMC (Ret.), the Distinguished Chair of Leadership, VADM Stockdale Center for Ethics, US Naval Academy. General Wissler gave a very interesting talk about the status of warrior ethical leadership and character development at USNA and how the midshipmen get involved in the discussions. He was forthcoming about various aspects of USNA that were of interest to all in attendance. He graciously answered several audience questions and remained afterwards to personally engage several Chapter members on an individual basis. Held at The Hampton Inn in Dumfries, VA. Attendance: 18.

21 Jan 23: Army-Navy Basketball Watch Party at 6 Bears and a Goat Brewing Company, Fredericksburg, VA. Attendance: 6

25 Jan 23: QAC Council meeting conducted via Zoom. Chapter President, Robin Dreeke ‘92, informed the Council that the newly established Cape Fear Chapter had queried him about QAC best practices.

1 Feb 23: Article published in the January-February Shipmate.

3 Feb 23: Monthly Breakfast Speaker Series iteration in-person and on Zoom with CAPT Joe McGettigan ‘80, USN (Ret.), Director, U. S. Naval Academy STEM Center for Education and Outreach. He gave an overview of the STEM Center and discussed his and the Center’s work regarding STEM education. The Center’s charge is getting more young people involved in STEM activities for the good of the nation. This session was very relevant for QAC since STEM outreach is a specified Chapter goal, and we have searched for ways to get involved in the local community and school STEM programs. The STEM Center employs teams, composed of Midshipmen and USNA professors, equipped with a variety of low-cost “modules,” to teach students and their teachers about STEM. The fun, yet informative, teaching process emphasizes ample student practical application and experimentation. CAPT McGettigan also provided information about a variety of Center-sponsored or affiliated events in which QAC may participate, potentially providing a framework for greater Chapter involvement in STEM education. Held at The Hampton Inn in Dumfries, VA. Attendance: 24.

11 Feb 23: Army/Navy basketball game watch party at Six Bears and a Goat Brewery in Fredericksburg, VA. Attendance: 5.

20 Feb 23: QAC Council meeting conducted via Zoom.

3 Mar 23: Monthly Breakfast Speaker Series meeting in-person and on Zoom with Major J. Kevin White, ’92 USMC (Ret.), founder and CEO of Global Vision 2020. This non-profit organization and its partners manufacture and dispense affordable prescription eyeglasses in the developing world. Maj White informed the Chapter that poor vision caused by correctible refractive error is the largest unmet disability in the world, affecting more than one billion people and costing the global economy more than two hundred twenty-seven billion dollars annually in lost productivity. During his talk, he explained his interest in solving this problem, how he invented and patented the USee Vision KitTM, an affordable and simple vision correction system, and Global Vision’s “dial-snap-wear” method of quickly producing low cost eyeglasses. Maj White also answered numerous audience questions. Attendance: 16.

14 Mar 23: Article published in the March-April Shipmate.

5 Apr 23: QAC Council meeting conducted via Zoom.

7 Apr 23: Monthly Breakfast Speaker Series meeting featuring CAPT Ken Reightler, USN (Ret.) ’73, USNA Professor of Aerospace Engineering, USN P3 pilot and space shuttle astronaut. CAPT Reightler talked about where we (the U. S.) have been in space, where we are in the present and where we plan to go. He also discussed the space industry’s burgeoning use of commercial and international partnerships to build portions of future space stations and personnel/logistics vehicles. Additionally, CAPT Reightler informed the audience of an emerging logistics concept using “rental” and lease agreements to move and sustain the force in space. Examples include Uber-like space station-Moon shuttle vehicles and rented space suits. He answered several questions from the audience including one pertaining to NASA’s relationship with the U. S. Space Force. The attendees included several Chapter members’ daughters and a grandson. Held at The Hampton Inn in Dumfries, VA. Attendance: 29.

26 Apr 23: QAC President, Robin Dreeke ’92, attended the annual International Chapter Officers Forum (ICOF, re-named the RADM Simpson Summit) at USNA.

5 May 23: Annual Chapter meeting convened at the New Hope United Methodist Church, Fredericksburg due to The Hampton Inn’s non-availability. President Robin Dreeke ’92 briefed the audience on the state of the Chapter and on information he received at ICOF. Discussions ensued about membership, the annual bylaws update, and upcoming events. Pending near-term events include the annual Memorial Day Run-To-Honor Remembrance Run and the Chapter’s inaugural participation in the June Women Can Fly event at the Fauquier-Warrenton (VA) airport. The area BGO coordinator provided an informative update on numbers of USNA applicants, graduation rates, etc. President Dreeke also provided a brief on the election candidate slate and voting procedures. Attendance: 15.

8 May 23: Article published in the May Shipmate.

26 May 23: Completed annual elections and ratified QAC bylaws Amendment Seven.

29 May 23: Conducted the 6th Annual Run To Honor Remembrance Run at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Triangle, VA with 13 runners and walkers. A second contingent of six participants convened in Fredericksburg. This group virtually participated in the event opening ceremonies led by LCDR Lynne Malinowski ’95, USNR (Ret.). Event organizers did not dedicate this year’s event to a specific alumnus/alumna; rather, participants announced the name(s) of the fallen warrior(s) for whom they ran/walked.

**2022-2023 Financial Report of the QAC**

