

## *Harrisburg Chapter #76 National Sojourners, Inc. and Heroes of '76 York Camp*

*Newsletter Issue #38 - February 2024*

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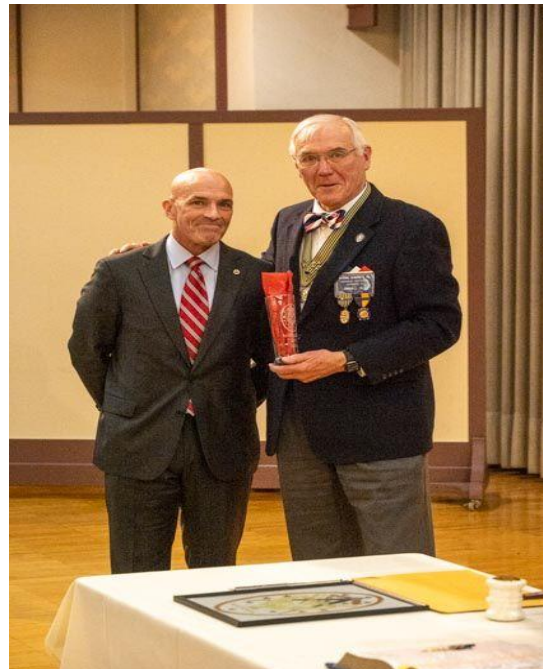
### *CW5 Darwin A. Gaston, President*

Don't forget Wednesday, 14 February is Valentine's Day! Please remember with your thoughts and prayers, those Sojourners and Heroes who are ill or injured, thus unable to attend our activities. Also remember all currently serving men and women of our armed services, veterans, law enforcement and other first responders.

**Colonel Doug Douds, USMC, (Ret) was our Guest Speaker for January 2024**  
Photos taken by Brother Jack Vickery



Colonel Doug Douds, USMC, (Ret) gave a presentation on his F18 pilot experience.



Brother Bryan Hill, National Sojourners Trustee presented Colonel Douds, USMC, (Ret) with a gift showing our appreciation for an outstanding presentation.

## Major General Mark D. McCormack Biography February Guest Speaker

### **Maj. Gen. Mark D. McCormack Commanding General, 28th Infantry Division**

On 20 June 2020, Maj. Gen. Mark McCormack assumed command of the 28th Infantry Division, Pennsylvania Army National Guard, an Infantry Division consisting of 14,000 Soldiers, four major subordinate commands and 23 battalions, stationed in over 100 communities in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Virginia, West Virginia, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Tennessee and equipped with over 5,500 tracked and wheeled vehicles and over 60 attack, utility, and cargo rotary wing aircraft. He is responsible for the execution of readiness programs with special emphasis on strength management, personnel, intelligence, training, logistics, facilities and communications readiness.

General McCormack was commissioned in 1988 through the Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Fort Benning, Georgia. McCormack assumed command of the 281<sup>st</sup> Personnel Detachment and led a detachment to Operation Joint Endeavor in Germany. He served as the 28<sup>th</sup> ID Support Command S1 and as personnel service officer and J1 at JFHQ. He served as Deputy Commander, Headquarters, 213<sup>th</sup> Area Support Group in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and then as commander of the 213<sup>th</sup> Regional Support Group in Allentown. Prior to his present assignment, he served as Deputy USPFO, Joint Force Headquarters and Deputy Commanding General - Support (DCG-S), 28th Infantry Division.

### **EDUCATIONAL DEGREES**

Mansfield University of Pennsylvania - BA - Criminal Justice  
Infantry Officer Basic Course  
Adjutant General Officer Advanced Course  
United States Army Command and General Staff College  
United States Army War College - MSS - Strategic Studies



### **US DECORATIONS AND BADGES**

Legion of Merit  
Bronze Star Service Medal  
Meritorious Service Medal (with 1 Silver Oak Leaf Cluster)  
Army Commendation Medal (with 2 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters)  
Army Achievement Medal (with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster)  
Army Meritorious Unit Commendation (with 1 Bronze Oak Leaf Cluster)  
Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (with 1 Silver Oak Leaf Cluster and 3 Bronze Oak Leaf Clusters)  
National Defense Service Medal (with 1 Bronze Service Star)  
Iraq Campaign Medal (with 1 Bronze Service Star)  
Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal  
Global War on Terrorism Service Medal  
Armed Forces Service Medal  
Armed Forces Reserve Medal (with Gold Hourglass, M Device and Numeral 3)  
Army Service Ribbon  
Overseas Service Ribbon with Numeral 3  
Army Reserve Components Overseas Training Ribbon (with Numeral 5)

## ***2023-2024 PROGRAMS and SPEAKERS***

**Social Gathering 5:15 PM**

**Dinner 6:00 PM**

**Meeting 6:45 PM**

**08 February 2024** – Major General Mark McCormack, CDR 28th Infantry Division – will speak on the 28th Infantry Division’s recent deployments

- **Recognize all National Sojourners Past President**
- **Recognize all Heroes of ‘76 Past Commanders & Present Commander**

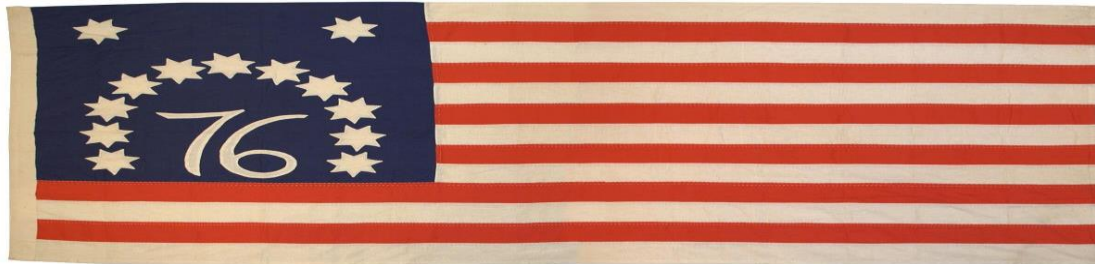
**14 March 2024** – COL Charles Bechtel, U.S. Army (Retired), Infantry platoon leader 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, Republic of Vietnam 1968, Former Director of Logistics for the PA Army National Guard will speak on what it was like as a platoon leader in 1968 and what it was like to go back to Vietnam 50 years after the war

- **National Vietnam War Veterans Day - 29 March (recognize all Vietnam Veterans)**

**11 April 2024** – Essay Contest Winners – 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place students will present their essays and receive their awards.

**09 May 2024** –CMDR Steve Funck, USN, SC (Retired) - will speak about his experiences supporting the aftermath of 1983 Beirut Marine Barracks bombings along with crossing the Libyan “Line of Death” in the Gulf of Sidra Incident

**13 June 2024** – Installation of New Officers for 2024-25 by Glenn Kurzenknabe, Past President



### ***HEROES' BIVOUACS/ENCAMPMENTS 2024***

28 Mar 2024 Thursday BIVOUAC / ENCAMPMENT and Hero Initiation 6:00 PM

25 Apr 2024 Thursday BIVOUAC / ENCAMPMENT and Hero Initiation 6:00 PM

23 May 2024 Thursday BIVOUAC / ENCAMPMENT and Hero Initiation 6:00 PM

### ***MEMBERSHIP***

*As of January 31, 2024*

*Tom Gordon, Secretary*

Annual Active Members - 37

Annual Honorary Members - 4

Honorary Members-In-Perpetuity - 34

Multiple Members-In-Perpetuity - 28

Primary Members-In-Perpetuity - 241

**Total Chapter Membership - 344**

**Total Heroes of 76 York Camp Membership - 163**

### ***Harrisburg Chapter 76 Past Presidents***

During the 94-year history of the National Sojourners Harrisburg Chapter #76 there were 94 Chapter Presidents. These Brothers represent all branches of the military and included commissioned officers, warrant officers, non-commissioned officers, and enlisted men. These Masonic Brothers shared their Military and Masonic experiences and leadership skills during their tenure as Chapter Presidents. Today, there are 23 living Past Presidents of our Chapter spanning the last 33 years.

1990-1 CW5 Donald R. Byers  
1991-2 CPT R. Edward Baumgardner  
1995-6 CW5 Darryl R. Hamm  
1996-7 COL Jerry V. Lambert  
2001-2 CPT Charles A. Pass  
2002-3 CWO4 Raymond A. Vaughan  
2004-5 MSgt Perry W. Byers  
2006-7 Lt Col Richard D. Byers  
2007-8 LTC Jack W. Heinze  
2008-9 Lt Col Laurence R. Rutt  
2009-10 MSgt Vaughn L. Schwalm  
2010-11 BG (PA) E. Thomas Kuhn  
2011-12 TSgt Glenn R. Kurzenknabe  
2012-13 SGM Norman A. Beard  
2013-14 PO2 Robert G. Hamilton Jr.  
2014-15 CAPT David W. Willmann  
2015-16 LTC Michael M. Wertz  
2016-17 LT Daniel J. Benny  
2017-18 MCPO Russell W. Baker  
2018-19 Col Kenneth W. Womack  
2019-20 Lt Col Craig E. Lady  
2020-21 SGT David L. Ball  
2022-23 SGT Benjamin F. Hoenich

Your Brothers salute you and thank you for your service to our nation and to our Sojourners Chapter!



In the March Newsletter we hope to recognize the living Past Commanders of the York Camp of the Heroes of '76.

***Glenn L. Kurzenknabe, PP***  
***Essay Contest Chairman***

A total of 75 Sojourners Essay Contest entry forms were mailed in mid-August 2023 to 15 JROTC groups and 45 high school guidance departments in Central Pennsylvania. This included both public and private schools as well as the Masonic Home for Children. Entry forms were also mailed to 15 Masonic youth group advisors in the greater Harrisburg area. The deadline for local entries was a postmark of 01 December 2023. The national deadline was a postmark of 15 January 2024.

The theme for the contest this year was: "Causes of the American Revolutionary War."



***Brother Tom Gordon, Secretary***  
***Education and Training***

Brother Sojourners,

During the months ahead, I hope to provide you with knowledge from the Constitution and Bylaws of the National Sojourner as well as the Constitution and Bylaws of Harrisburg Chapter #76. I will also share with you the Chapter's Policies and Procedures that have enabled this Chapter to excel in Membership, the Americanism programs, and Bridge of Light programs.

Here is the first bit of knowledge for all Brother Sojourners to know and understand.

The National Sojourners is incorporated as a nonprofit organization under Internal Revenue Code 501(c) 10, referred to as a "domestic fraternal Order".

At each monthly meeting the Purposes and Pronouncement of the National Sojourners is recited by one of our Chapter's elected officers. While the Purposes and Pronouncement are recited, do we really listen and comprehend these Purposes and Pronouncement?

These are the National Sojourners **Purposes and Pronouncement** as recited at our meetings and written in our National Constitution.

The Purposes of National Sojourners, shall be to organize current and former members of the uniformed forces of the United States and Honorary Members, who are Master Masons, into Chapters, for the promotion of good fellowship among its members, for assisting such as may be overtaken by adversity or affliction, for cultivating Masonic ideals, for supporting all patriotic aims and activities in Masonry, for developing true patriotism and Americanism throughout the nation, for bringing together representatives of the uniformed forces of the United States (past and present) in a united effort to further the military needs of National defense, and for opposing any influence whatsoever calculated to weaken the National security.

#### Pronouncement

National Sojourners believe in God as the Supreme Architect of the Universe. We hold that political, economic, and social problems are subsidiary to and ever separate from that steadfast belief in God. We maintain that God must motivate man if present day problems are to be solved, and we urge active participation in maintaining that Government for which our forefathers fought. Sojourners, remember that George Washington once said, "When we assumed the soldier, we did not lay aside the citizen."

#### **Membership** as address in Article III of the National Constitution

Membership in National Sojourners® is authorized only for citizens of the United States, who are Master Masons in good standing in any duly constituted Lodge of Master Masons, whose Grand Lodge is recognized by and maintains fraternal relations with the Grand Lodge member of the Conference of Grand Masters of Masons in North America and within whose jurisdiction the prospective member's Chapter is located.

#### Membership as address in Article III of the National Bylaws

##### ELECTION TO ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP:

Election to Active membership in an operational Chapter requires the Chapter Secretary to receive a duly completed, current Application for Membership; appropriate fees; and documented proof of United States citizenship, good standing as a Master Mason in a Lodge recognized by the Grand Lodge under whose authority the Chapter operates, and current service in or honorable discharge from the uniformed services. The Chapter Secretary must attest that all required documentation qualifies the applicant for Active membership before he is duly elected and initiated. (emphasis added)

##### ELECTION TO HONORARY MEMBERSHIP:

Election to Honorary membership in a Chapter requires U.S. citizenship and Master Mason status, certification by the Chapter President and Chapter Secretary that the Chapter is and remains below the 15% Honorary Member limit, and an affirmative, unanimous Chapter ballot. (emphasis added)

#### **Harrisburg Chapter #76 Policy:**

Since only candidates for Honorary Membership require an affirmative, unanimous Chapter ballot, and the normal attendance in a Harrisburg Chapter #76 meeting ranges from 60 to 80 members, the Chapter's Executive Committee performs the balloting by the customary "Masonic Ballot Box". If the candidate receives an affirmative, unanimous ballot for membership by the Executive Committee, the Chapter Secretary then presents the "Application for Membership" to the membership for election and initiation.