Garden State Chapter Honors Members, ROTC Scholarship Recipients

By Bob Perricelli, Director, AOC Garden State Chapter

On May 1, the Garden State Chapter (GSC) held its annual appreciation dinner at the Navesink Country Club in Middletown, NJ. The event honors both Rutgers University ROTC scholarship recipients and chapter members for all the work they do supporting AOC and the GSC. The dinner was attended by GSC members as well as AUSA and Quad A (AAAA) local chapter members, and the chapter also welcomed AOC President Glenn "Powder" Carlson and AOC Northeast Regional Director Myles Murphy.

GSC President Nicole Zaretski opened the event by welcoming all, summarized GSC accomplishments in 2020 and noted winning the Chapter of the Year Award for a medium sized chapter. She also recognized three GSC recipients who received AOC National Awards in 2020: Donald Belmar, Joseph W. Kearney Pioneer Award recipient; Lawrence Rakos, AOC Technology Hall of Fame inductee; and Robert Filoramo, Certificate of Merit recipient for his long career and professional excellence supporting the Navy's IDECM program. Two strong chapter sponsors were also acknowledged; CACI international Inc. and L3Harris Technologies.

Zaretski then recognized the four Rutgers University ROTC cadets who each received $2,500 GSC AOC scholarships in 2021. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, restrictions the awardees and their families could not attend the dinner. The following cadets were awarded scholarships and were recognized at the GSC event.

- Cadet Aaron Bender of Pennsauken, NJ, is majoring in

Aerospace Engineering while building his computer language skills. Aaron wishes to fly and obtain certification in computer programming.

- Cadet Kevin Morales of Edison, NJ, is also majoring in Aerospace Engineering and hopes to be commissioned in the US Army upon graduation.
- Cadet Hayoung Park of Ridgewood, NJ, is majoring in Nursing and wishes to receive a commission in the Army Nursing Corps upon graduation.
- Cadet Owen Murphy of Red Bank, NJ, is majoring in Civil Engineering with a double minor in History and Military Science. Upon receiving his commission, he hopes to serve as an Engineering Officer with the Army Corps of Engineers.

In a moving remembrance to the late COL Sam Fuoco, who was a loyal and good friend of the GSC, Zaretski presented the COL's family with the AOC Distinguished Service Award. COL Fuoco was honored for a lifetime of selfless service to our warfighters, veterans and his country.