

AZ Council of Chapters



Date: April 2014

President: COL Allen Rossow, USA, Ret.



President's Message

This has been a busy time.

In December, Bob Roberts, formerly President of the Luke Chapter moved to the Bullhead area and in December, explored establishing a new Chapter. We attended an initial meeting and the reception was very positive. The new Chapter would encompass Lake Havasu City and Bullhead City. Like the initiative taken by Dick Jonas in developing Grand Canyon Chapter of contacting MOAA members and holding meetings to establish interest, Bob is moving ahead to continue the development of a new satellite Chapter – Mohave Chapter?

With Dick Jonas's leadership – Northern AZ Satellite Chapter is working on new members in the Payson area. They have held initial meetings to garner support and encouraging local National members to take a leadership role in establishing a satellite organization.

Ed Mangan, President of the Superstition Mountain Chapter, has also taken actions to gather local National members in the Casa Grande, Florence, and Coolidge areas, the possibility of starting a satellite chapter.

Tom Owens, President of the Tucson Chapter, has held events in the SaddleBrooke area (60 National members) (25 miles North of Tucson) and in the Tucson Estates area (SW of Tucson) (25 National members).

Bob Welch, of the AZ Chapter is now the Chairman of the United Veterans Council for the State.

Darren Venters, Lt. Col, USAF, will present an update on the ESGR program and approval of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the AZ ESGR.

Our Director of Veterans Affairs, Ted Vogt has spoken to some Chapters. I heard him speak at the Coronado Chapter meeting and he was very good.

We attended a meeting with the Tucson Chapter. Great people, great food and great fellowship. Our National Director, Col Gary Fredericks presented the MOAA guidelines and will present it at our May COC meeting in Sierra Vista.

Again this year, I was honored to participate in the "Storming The Hill", ably led by our own Col Gary Fredericks, his eighth tour! And with our newest National Director, CDR (R), USN, John Chernoski of our Green Valley Chapter. As a sidelight: MOAA District 6 for Directors, encompasses the following states: AZ, CO, MT, WY, ND, SD, NE, KS, MN, WI, MI, IA, IL, MO, IN, and KY. And, both Directors are from our State.

We had appointments with both of our Senators and all Representatives, or their Legislative Affairs Assistants. Takes persistence and several follow-up requests, but it works.

The normal schedule is to board buses at the hotel (0730 hrs), arrive and line up for a group picture in front of the Capitol steps. This year, due a traffic accident, only two busses arrived on time. Those with the earliest appointments boarded and proceeded to their first appointments. There will be no group pictures this year.

Again this year, with Gary's experience of locating and arriving at the right office, we unloaded from the bus and started a forced march (uphill), three blocks to the Senate Russell building. Only two entrances for visitors – go through the ex-ray security check, and find the right office on the right floor, and arrive at the scheduled time slot. Then, on to the three buildings for the Representatives. First to the Cannon Building – another three blocks forced march. Complete those two appointments, back on the street for two blocks, e-ray, find the right floor and the right office, in the Longworth building, then finally the Rayburn building. Due to available time slots for all appointments, we had to split up the team, with Gary taking some appointments, and John and I handling others at the same appointment time slot. We made all scheduled appointments and even had time for a lunch. Sounds very detailed, but you would fail if you didn't follow Gary's plan. We finished and returned to our bus about 1700 hours.

Upon arriving at Senator McCain's office, we were ushered into meet with him. He talked for about 25 minutes, focusing on the need for Tucson to support continuing missions for Davis Monthan Air Force base. He then listened to our three issues and indicated his agreement. Then he said, "let's get a picture". He was most hospitable and thanked MOAA for their efforts. Then to Senator Flake's office. He walked in from the hallway, said he had a meeting, but "let's get a picture"! We then briefed his legislative affairs person.

We then visited the offices of all Arizona Representatives and met with a knowledgeable staffer's. The House was in session, so none of them were available. Again, the representative's were very knowledgeable and welcomed the visit and our fact sheets.

The hand-out that we used to brief and left with them is on the MOAA website. I would encourage you to share this website <http://www.moaa.org/storming2014/> with your memberships, as I think it is the most impressive sample of what "Storming" is about. And, this message was forwarded to many of our local news media.

A very special treat again this year, was sitting at the welcome table with Victoria and Carol! With all the excellent support that we receive from them, it was great to give them a Big Thank You!

The 2013 Communications Awards were announced – Arizona did Great!! Those four Chapters will be recognized during our Council meeting. Well done to those Chapters.

We very much appreciate COL (R) Tom Hessler's thoroughness in hosting our Council meeting this year. I hope that all will take the time to visit the unique sites like the Fort Huachuca museum, and learn of the wide variety of missions in place on the post.

Here is the website – I encourage you to publish and publish it to your members, and encourage them to read it. It is a great recruiting tool....

2014 Storming the Hill Brochure
[*A Bargain, Not a Liability, go to*](#)

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

Allen

"Storming the Hill 2014"
Arizona Delegation meets with Senator
McCain and Senator Flake

MOAA Council Presidents from across the country, visited the offices of our Senators and Representatives to discuss the issues, provide fact sheets and brochures, urging support for those critical issues affecting our military and their families.

- Sustain military pay and benefits of our troops: FY 15 proposal caps pay, reduces housing allowances, cuts commissary savings and will require military families to pay more for health care (an E-5's family of four would lose \$5,000 in annual purchasing power; an O-3's family would lose \$6,000); the 1.6 percent pay raise which in the law, is reduced by the administration to a one percent annual pay raise.
- Reject disproportional TRICARE fee increases which shift costs onto beneficiaries while reducing access; Congress rejected disproportional fee hikes last year. The FY 15 proposals are much more severe, consolidating TRICARE programs and shifting \$9 billion in costs over 10 years onto beneficiaries. These piecemeal changes to compensation, benefits, and health care are inappropriate in advance of the FY-16 congressionally-directed commission's work.
- Eliminate catastrophic sequestration cuts (for 2014) which threaten national security (i.e., study is due out in 2016 for FY 16 – FY 22, which levies approximately \$ 50 billion per year).

The Arizona "Stormer's" visited both AZ Senators and every AZ Congressional Office.



L to R AZ COC President Allen Rossow, National MOAA BOD member Col Gary Fredricks, Senator John McCain and CDR John Chernoski, National MOAA BOD and Green Valley Chapter Member.



COL Allen Rossow, Senator Jeff Flake, Col Gary Fredricks and CDR John Chernoski

Secretary's Message

The upcoming Council of Chapters meeting is scheduled for May 16th, 2014 hosted by the Coronado Chapter in Sierra Vista, AZ. The Council meeting will be held in conjunction with the Coronado Chapter Dinner meeting held on May 15th, 2014. The Chapter Dinner will be held at the Pueblo del Sol Country Club, (2770 Saint Andrews Dr., Sierra Vista AZ 85650 Phone 520-378-64444). Social Hour (no Host Bar) at 1800, dinner at 18:30, program to begin about 19:30 ending around 20:30. Guest Speaker Col Gary Fredricks, National MOAA BOD, Council and Chapter Affairs. Cost is \$25.00/person and the menu is fixed. Please make your Check payable to Coronado Chapter MOAA and mail to Coronado Chapter MOAA, P.O. Box 1685, Sierra Vista, AZ 85636-1685 by May 2nd, 2014.

Lodging (if desired) has been arranged at the Sierra Suits Motel, 391 E. Fry Blvd., Sierra Vista, AZ 85635. Call (520) 459-4221 for reservations. Be sure to mention you are to receive the MOAA Group Rate. Rate should be \$88.12/night for King size bed or \$92.59 for two Queen sized beds. These rates include breakfast and check-in time is after 2 PM.

The AZ Council of Chapters meeting will be held next door to the Hotel at the La Casita Restaurant on May 16th. Coffee 8:30 meeting to start at 9AM and hopefully end by 2:30 pm. Lunch, Buffet of "best Mexican Food ever" on the day of the Council meeting will be at this restaurant at a cost of \$15/pp to include tip. This is to be paid at the door in cash or check made payable to "Coronado Chapter MOAA". Guest speaker as of now TBD.

For further details or clarification regarding these meetings please contact Coronado Chapter President COL Tom Hessle at tjhessler@cox.net or myself at stevenabel8@msn.com regarding council business.

The Chapter President's semi-annual report for spring 2014 will be due back to me (via email)

for distribution by May 3rd 2014. As always in the spring if your chapter has completed its 5 Star LOE application to National these can be substituted for your spring report. I do ask that since the LOE doesn't include membership numbers for your chapter that you please include them (# Regular members, # Auxiliary members and Total members) in the body of your email when you send me your reports. We are looking at these membership numbers in order to see how each chapter did in the 2013 recruiting campaign.

Steve Abel, Maj, USAF, Ret.

Secretary

IMPORTANT UPCOMING MOAA EVENTS

1) **September 4th - 6th 2014 Southeast Region Chapter Presidents Symposium**, Jacksonville, FL for SE Region only.

2) **October 26th-29th, 2014 MOAA Annual meeting** in Washington, DC (4/5 Star LOE Awards)

Treasure's Report

Good news on the financial front. Despite having a couple unforeseen expenses, renewal of the Council website (\$231.63/3yrs.) and purchase of the AZ/MOAA coins (\$82.00) for the council we are in good financial health. Actually the best since 2004 thanks in part to receiving a \$500 National MOAA recruiting incentive for the 4th Quarter 2013.

I would not presume that we are in great shape but certainly better than we have been in a long time. The travel reimbursement restrictions put in place in 2012 (along with the fact our President and VP have not requested reimbursement since taking office) along with the significant decrease in administrative expenses and no longer paying for the Council meeting rooms have lead to our well being. The fact that our President and VP have yet to request travel reimbursement can't be assumed in the future and must be accounted for in the future projected budgets.

VETERAN LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

The Council Balance as of this moment is \$ 5,066.80 and our fiscal year projected ending budget had our balance of \$3,824 ending this fall. So you can see we are doing well but this fiscal year is only 1/2 over at the time of our spring meeting and we have 6 more months to go to keep to this projection.

MOAA is fortunate -- our affinity associate, USAA, recognizes that many noteworthy events and meetings initiated by MOAA Councils and Chapters need financial support to "get to the finish line" So, USAA has established a fund to provide some financial backing to councils and chapters. Sponsorship will be considered for events such as state council conventions; chapter events to recognize ROTC/JROTC students and enhance relationships with those schools, special chapter meetings to educate members on benefits etc. If your Chapter is planning one or more of these types of events I would encourage you to check out this National MOAA Website

<http://www.moaa.org/USAAsponsorship/> which explains the process and gives you a link to complete the application process. It can't hurt to apply for support for your chapters upcoming events, the worst they can do is deny your request. Please note these applications for grants need to be submitted at least 45 working days prior to your scheduled event.

If National MOAA and USAA continues this sponsorship and grant program, I plan on applying for one, in the name of the Council, in the spring of 2015 to help support the Hosting Chapters for the 2015 Council meetings "Conventions". There is no guarantee we will receive a grant so I would caution the hosting chapters to proceed with their planning accordingly. If the Council is fortunate enough to be awarded one of these grants we will help defray some of the hosting chapters expenses (meeting room costs) in 2015.

Steve Abel, Treasurer

As was pretty well predictable, the 1 April 2014 (originally 1 Jan) scheduled 24 percent cut in Medicare and TRICARE payments to physicians got kicked down the road again (now to 1 April 2015) as has been the case with this issue over the past 12 plus years. **It should be noted, however, that other TRICARE fee and health plan changes are being proposed in the 2015 DoD Budget Proposal:**

The FY 2015 DoD budget, if approved, will shift costs to military beneficiaries over 10 years by consolidating the TRICARE Health Plans into one – resulting in much higher costs while reducing access. The "consolidation" will result in paying more and receiving less value and access. And the streamlining of healthcare plan options in the new proposal reduces choices for beneficiaries. Combine this with a new drastic fee payment structure and you have a real loss in value.

The FY 2015 DoD budget also includes raising annual Tricare fees for retired and active duty families of all ages and categories including imposing premiums for Tricare for Life (TFL) coverage. And the proposed enrollment fees are out of line with the changes already authorized by Congress. The 2001 law specified that no enrollment fee beyond Medicare Part B costs should be required for TFL beneficiaries over 65, recognizing their lengthy service as their premium – this was not intended to be an "insurance product."

The FY 2015 DoD budget also dramatically increases pharmacy co-pays to surpass the median of civilian plans., and instituted the mandatory Home Delivery Pilot program which, for a change, most will probably find beneficial and cost savings.

And the FY 2015 DoD budget also imposes means-testing of military retiree health benefits – which no other federal retirees endure. The proposed health fee schedules discriminate against military retirees. No other federal

employee or retiree pays income-based fees for service-earned health coverage, and it's rare in the private sector.

Gene Fenstermacher, Colonel USAF (Ret)
fensteg@cox.net

TRANSITIONS LIAISON

The MOAA chapters continue to assist the Transition Liaison (TOPS) Coordinator in identifying potential employment opportunities; both stateside and in Arizona as well as broadcasting job/career fairs within the confines of Arizona.

We identified additional job links for the membership to gain access to additional employment opportunities in both the public and private sectors. IAVA, Habitat for Humanity, VA, Coca-Cola, and AZJobconnection are the new links added to the web site. These links lean towards awarding positions to the service members before granting them to non-service member related.

As an additional service to our membership, have discussed the H2HJobs connection with several companies within Cochise County and have convinced several to register as employers on the site and advertise their job openings. General Dynamics, III, STG, Raytheon-SV, and COLSA were a few of the receptive companies. We believe that this will provide additional opportunities for our members and their spouses to find employment within Arizona and elsewhere, if desired.

Although MOAA has renamed "The Officer Placement Service (TOPS)" to the "Transition Liaison Coordinator", we will continue to maintain the Arizona Web site as MOAA TOPS Arizona (MOAATOPSAZ.ORG) until the current contract expires. Transition to a new web site will commence before the end of the contract year to preclude any lapses in support
Harry Bowen, CW3, USA, (R)

ESGR News

Help Wanted - ESGR

ESGR is a DOD office with the purpose to foster a culture in which all employers support and value the employment and military service of members of the National Guard and Reserves in the United States. ESGR operates in every State and Territory with a cadre of volunteers. Several years ago MOAA and ESGR entered into a MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) to cooperate together to further the mission of ESGR. In this regard, most MOAA chapters have designated an ESGR liaison to further this cooperation. The ESGR Northern Arizona Area has recently reorganized and we are seeking volunteers to join the team. Opportunities exist in our Employer Outreach and Military Outreach programs.

Employer Outreach Engage the local business community and seek their support of ESGR, provide information to employers about the applicable law protecting the civilian jobs of our Guard and Reserve, and encourage employers to hire potential employees who are veterans. Depending on one's preference these contacts can be made in-person or by phone.

Military Outreach Periodically visiting and maintaining an ongoing relationship with assigned Reserve and Guard units in the area. Provide annual briefing to these units on the applicable law and about ESGR.

Training New volunteers will receive initial training about ESGR and USERRA (Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act). Thereafter, the volunteer will receive additional training in their area of responsibility.

Who ESGR volunteers include active, retired and former service members and those without a military background. All ESGR Volunteers share the desire to serve the members of the Guard and Reserve.

Time Commitment As much as you might desire. Whether you are a full-time resident or a "Summer visitor" we can use your talents.

Compensation ESGR volunteers are "volunteers" However, mileage and expense reimbursements are provided when performing ESGR duties.

Contact For further information or to join the ESGR team contact either of the below individuals.

Bruce Hamilton, Arizona Office of ESGR,
Program Support Technician, 5500 E. Valencia Rd., Tucson, AZ 85706
Business: 520-750-5891
Cell: 602-332-5331
bruce.e.hamilton4.ctr@mail.mil

Lawrence (Butch) Wise, AZ Office ESGR, 5636 E. McDowell Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85008-3495
Commercial: 602-629-4031
Business Cell: 602-*323-4183
Fax: 602-629-4483
lawrence.a.wise12.nfg@mail.mil
Website: www/esgr.mil
Lt Col Darren Venters, USAF, Ret.

AUXILLIARY NEWS

Subsidies to our commissaries are on the 2015 budget chopping block which will mean prices will go up in stateside stores. You can help prevent that by using your commissary now and telling others who have that benefit to do the same. For millions of disabled veterans and seniors living on fixed incomes along with our young military members this would be a significant benefit cut. We are at that point...USE IT OR LOOSE IT. Our letters to our Representatives stopped the chained CPI that would have adversely affected all of us. MOAA includes letters and post cards in their magazines that helped us beat back the chained CPI. Anytime you see these in your Military Officer magazine please send them back.

I am sure you have heard or maybe know someone who has been caught in the latest senior citizen scams. We are bombarded with robocalls giving us a "free" medical alert device, or motorized wheelchair or home security. Nothing is free and if it sounds too good to be true it probably is. Protect yourself. Don't give personal info to anyone you don't know. If you happen to pick up a robocall hang up immediately. Do not press a number which they say will remove you from their list. It only lets them know they have reached a live number and will result in more calls. If you have Caller ID write down the robocall number and report the call to the FTC or if they become numerous don't hesitate to report it to the Arizona State Attorney General.

From January to November 2013 there were almost two million robocall complaints to the FTC and Arizona was second only to New Jersey in the number of complaints. Don't get scammed. Stay safe. Feel free to call me with any questions or suggestions.
Shirley Phillips, Aux. Rep. 520-298-9333

PERSONAL AFFAIRS

Chapter Personal Affairs officers should stay proactive with their members.

They should write articles for their Chapter newsletter periodically with information that is relevant and current. MOAA Nationals updates often have important info to share with members. The PA officer can sign up for national MOAA e-news from "News exchange, "legislative" and "Chapters call to Action". With these e-news the PA officer can filter information and have it available or published for their members.

The Personal Affairs officer should keep an updated roster, call individuals they know to be ill and offer assistance. They should also have available at all meetings Resource phone numbers for their area to offer members who need questions answered (that the PA officer doesn't know).

MARANA REGIONAL VETERANS CEMETERY

The PA Officer should bring at a minimum the following booklets (obtained from Nation MOAA benefits department, to each meeting.

- a) Personal Affairs workbooks.
- b) Survivors Checklist
- c) Help your survivor now
- d) Turning the corner (surviving the loss of a loved one).

The PA Officer should also hold an annual Personal Affairs workshop (held at a monthly meeting). They can either bring in a speaker regarding benefits or do it themselves. They should also have all the booklets and info available.

I have a personal affairs page on our Council website that has all the booklets and resource numbers available to our members. Other Chapter PA Officers are welcome to download this information since most of the resource numbers and such are national). Included in this talk should be Military benefits, VA benefits and Social Security benefits.

The PA Officer should always send out a survivor package which contains the booklet Survivors checklist, Turning the Corner, TAPS along with resource phone numbers and a condolence letter to all survivors when a member passes away.

The PA Officer should also have a reference library at home to use as guides to help answer questions and use as resource for helping with survivors and even just members questions. This reference material can be found in MOAA's Policy and Procedures manual under appendix J.
Steven Abel

After over seven years of coordinating with VA, state, county and various city officials, the Veterans Affairs Committee, City of Tucson has finally succeeded in locating the land and the funds for building a veterans cemetery in Marana. The question immediately comes to mind, since the work was done by the Veterans Affairs Committee, City of Tucson, why isn't the new cemetery being built in Tucson? More on that later.

For now, the important thing is that the cemetery is a reality instead of just a dream. Till now all we had was the veterans cemetery in Sierra Vista, an 80-mile trip one way. The new cemetery in Marana will be a lot closer.

When will it be completed? Groundbreaking is now set for this coming September. Construction of the cemetery and an access road should be completed in spring of 2015. We will place updates in the TERRITORIAL as we get them.

Where in Marana? The cemetery will be built alongside I-10, north of the city of Marana, and just a bit south of the Pinal Air Park Road.

Funding for the cemetery came from the federal government in the amount of \$7.6 million. The access road will be built with local funding.
Vern Pall, Past Council President



The Arizona Council of Chapters and all 8 Arizona MOAA Chapters, who were eligible, received a 2013 5 Star Level of Excellence Award.

Congratulations to All on a job well done in 2012.



MOAA Chapter Presidents and Council President receive their 5 Star LOE streamers at the Colorado Springs National MOAA meeting in November 2013.

FUTURE COC MEETINGS

FALL 2014: Grand Canyon Chapter

SPRING 2015: Green Valley Chapter

FALL 2015: Arizona Chapter

SPRING 2016: Tucson Chapter

FALL 2016: Superstition Mountain Chapter

SPRING 2017: Northern Arizona Chapter

FALL 2017: Yuma Chapter

SPRING 2018: Luke Chapter

FALL 2018: Coronado Chapter

