



The Sentinel

Arizona's First Chapter



The Arizona Chapter

13819 N. 51st Street

Scottsdale, AZ 85254

FEBRUARY 2014

CHARTERED 1956

57 YEARS OF SERVICE TO COUNTRY

EDITOR: JIM CULLISON

President's Perspective

by Jim Cullison



The Gavel Is Passed

I've been editor of this newsletter for more than five years, and at the start I never expected to be writing the chapter president's column. But here I am.

We had another successful transition to a new slate of officers and directors at the January luncheon, and the chapter now continues to move forward.

Thanks, Rob

Before we move any farther, however, I want to extend a big thank you on behalf of the chapter to my predecessor, COL Rob Welch, who led us in 2013 through a year of growth, new endeavors and national recognition. He continued the chapter's long line of leaders who have made us proud to say we are Arizona's First Chapter.

Thanks for all you have done for us, Rob, and best wishes in your new challenge as chairman of United Arizona Veterans. Rob is gone from the president's podium, but he

isn't gone from the chapter by any means. He's still our top notch webmaster and scholarship chairman.

By the way, did you know that eight of our past chapter presidents have been inducted into the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame since its inception in 2001? More evidence of the strength of our leadership, not only to the chapter but to the veterans' community as a whole.

One Fine Program

Rear Admiral James Symonds gave a superb retelling at our January luncheon of what surely ranks as a highlight of his 35-year Navy career, commanding the supercarrier USS Ronald Reagan on its initial operational cruise after the ship's launch in 2003. If you missed the presentation, there's a recap on page 3.

Followed by Another

The program lined up by John Ady for this month is equally engrossing. Air Force

Captain George Burk was the sole survivor among 14 in a plane crash in 1970. He suffered extensive injuries but overcame them and has become a sought-after motivational speaker. Don't miss hearing his story at our February 15 luncheon. Read more about Captain Burk on page 2.

Get Ready for Golf

Does the beautiful Arizona weather we've been having make you think of golf? Well, whether it does or not, start thinking about this: our annual scholarship golf tournament is not far off, so get your clubs ready.

Pat Dale has another prize-filled event planned at a different course this time. It will tee off Thursday, May 1, at Rio Verde Golf Course near Fountain Hills. Look for complete details soon by e-mail and in next month's *Sentinel*.

We live in the golf capitol of the world, right? Well, if it's not, it should be. And we must have a lot of golfers in our chapter. Problem is,

Continued on page 2

Arizona Chapter Calendar

Board of Directors meets at 1030 hours the first Thursday of the month.

Location: National Guard Distance Learning Center, 5636 E. McDowell Rd. Show ID for entry. Members welcome.

Upcoming meetings:

- February 6
- March 6

Member Meetings/ Luncheons are held on the third Saturday of the month, Social Hour at 1100, Luncheon at 1200, at McCormick Ranch Golf Club unless noted otherwise..

Upcoming meetings:

- February 15
- March 15

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President's Perspective...continued

we get heavily outnumbered on a regular basis at our own tournament by non-chapter members, all of whom are certainly always welcome. But it would make the tournament even greater if more of our members were in the field. As I said, get your clubs ready. Don't be shy.

Important! Important! Important!

Did that headline get your attention? Good. Read on, because this is really important if you plan to register for lunch, pay dues or make a donation to the chapter.

Our treasurer, Bill Roscher, will be unavailable for the next couple of months, so don't send your checks to him until notified otherwise.

Marie Fredricks has graciously agreed to accept luncheon reservations and donations until Bill is available again. Send those checks to her at the address on the reservation and donation form on page 7.

If you still have to pay dues for 2014, send that check to our membership chairman, Dave Fleming, at the address shown below.

February Program

Air Crash Changed His Life; Now It's Changing Others Lives

Capt. George Burk, USAF (Ret), probably thought he was on a routine flight on May 4, 1970, when he boarded a military aircraft with 13 others for a flight to Spokane, Washington. But that plane experienced structural failure and rapid decompression and crashed enroute.

Captain Burk, a Vietnam veteran, was the sole survivor, suffering multiple internal injuries and burns. He was hospitalized for months and not expected to walk again. He overcame that adversity and has devoted his life to inspiring others by his example.

He will be our guest speaker at the February 15 luncheon. Captain Burk is now a Scottsdale resident, author, speaker and authority on



overcoming adversity to lead a productive life. He has spoken extensively, including at West Point and the U.S. Naval Academy.

His is a message you will long remember.

Time's Running Out; Don't Forget to Renew for 2014

If you haven't renewed your 2014 chapter membership, there's still time. Just fill out the form below and send it with your check — \$20 for Regular members or \$10 for Auxiliary members — to Dave Fleming at the address shown.

If you have renewed already, thank you.

----- CUT HERE AND MAIL RENEWAL FORM WITH YOUR CHECK -----

Arizona Chapter 2014 Membership Renewal Form

Member Full Name: _____

Membership Renewal: **\$20** Regular member _____

Membership Renewal: **\$10** Auxiliary member _____ (surviving spouse)

Any Changes in your address, phone number, e-mail, etc:

Make check payable to: **AZ Chapter MOAA**

Mail renewal application and check to:

AZ Chapter MOAA

C/O Dave Fleming

7550 E. Camino Salida Del Sol

Scottsdale, AZ 86266

Taking a Supercarrier to Sea; Not Your Everyday Mission



Admiral Symonds presents the ceremonial flag to Nancy Reagan at the president's funeral.

Rear Admiral James Symonds received the assignment of a lifetime when he took command of the USS Ronald Reagan on the ship's commissioning in 2003.

Taking the supercarrier to sea would seem memorable enough, but an event that occurred back in the states during the cruise made it even more historic.

The Reagan was a leap in technology, with a redesigned superstructure for greater speed, fiber optics for communications and navigation, larger landing area and more efficient landing system.

Admiral Symonds and his wife, Ann, attended the ship's commissioning in Norfolk, a ceremony he called awe inspiring. Mrs. Reagan was there, too. The Admiral's task was to take the carrier to a home berth in Bremerton,



Admiral Symonds

Washington. However, Mrs. Reagan wanted its home to be closer to the ailing president's ranch in California, so the destination became San Diego, by way of the southern tip of South America.

As the ship was off the coast of Brazil, word was received that President Reagan had died, and the family wanted the admiral to attend the funeral as the representative of the president's namesake supercarrier. He made a whirlwind trip back to the states, where he presented the American flag to Mrs. Reagan after the folding ceremony. Then it was back to the ship for completion of the cruise.

As the crew neared the southern tip of Argentina, Admiral Symonds made the decision to traverse the Strait of Magellan, an inland route that saved time, rather than going around Cape Horn. The strait was narrow and more challenging, but the weather, a determining factor, was right, so the Reagan became the first nuclear carrier to take that route.

After that, it was up the west coast of South American and safely into port at North Island.

Admiral Symonds commanded the Ronald Reagan until 2005 and retired in 2010 after 35 years of service.

The Importance of Family To a Military Career

During his presentation to chapter members, Admiral Symonds spoke of the importance of family to a person pursuing a military career.

He complimented his wife of 40 years, Ann, for her support during the years, and said, "She is the main reason I am standing here."

He said she never complained and "liked the adventure of it," praising her as a true patriot.

A military career is a team game, he said, and the family is the team.

An Aircraft Carrier Flight Deck, Where Young Sailors Grow Up

Admiral Symonds recalled an observation he made on the Reagan's first cruise.

It involved the crew that maintains order on the flight deck. Their jersey color designates their job, with the plane director in yellow being "the cock of the walk." "One day I saw one of them take his helmet off and he was transformed from the cock of the walk to a baby-faced kid. I realized how early in their careers they get a heck a lot of responsibility."

Spotlight Speaker

Life Starts Anew at Boot Camp

Basic training is an eye-opening and life changing experience for any person entering the military. John Ady surely triggered many memories among members when he recounted his entry into the Army at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri more than 50 years ago.

It began in the fall of 1962 with a late night train ride from Chicago and a several hour delay when the train hit a cow west of St. Louis. The trip ended in



mid-afternoon the next day with a lunch of hot dogs and chips while the mess sergeant kept prodding the recruits to hurry up.

Then it was down to business with small arms and bayonet training with the World War II era M-1 Garand rifle, chemical warfare drills, bivouacking in the snow in the Ozark Mountains, and standing in many lines.

It all paid off as Pvt Ady embarked on a career that ended with retirement 32 years later as COL John Ady, USA.

Meet Our Presidents

Ira Easley, Normandy Veteran

The Arizona Chapter's 11th president was CDR Ira Easley, USN, who led the chapter in 1965.

A South Carolina native, CDR Easley joined the Navy in 1924 and had duty assignments in Washington state, California and Connecticut until World War II.



He was captain of LST 388 on D-Day, June 6, 1944, which was part of the first wave on the Normandy beach. He was awarded the Bronze Star for his actions in the first wave and 50 subsequent supply landings during the invasion.

Following the war, he commanded the USS Snohomish County (LST 1126) and USS Gordius, a landing craft repair ship. CDR Easley retired in 1955.

He later moved to California. His wife of 42 years, Murielle, died in 1974, and CDR Easley died in 1975.

Arizona Chapter Leaders for 2014 Sworn-in at January Meeting



The chapter's officers and directors for 2014 are, from left, Jim Cullison, president; John Ady, past president; Frank Hoak, 2nd vice president; Beth Cullison, director; Lee Lange, director; Bill Roscher, treasurer; Arlene Day, arrangements chair; Jim Draper, director, and Leonore Hoak, secretary. Not available were Dave Fleming, 1st vice president, and directors Nancy Burt and Rance Farrell.

Arizona StandDown

Volunteer to Help Homeless Veterans

The annual standdown for homeless and at risk veterans in the Phoenix area is fast approaching.

This is your chance to assist veterans in need by helping at the three-day event, scheduled for February 13-15 at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum on the Arizona State Fairgrounds.

The standdown offers these men and women veterans assistance with health care, legal aid, housing, clothing, state identification cards and more. They also can get meals, showers and haircuts.

Go to the website arizonastanddown.org to volunteer with registration or for a shift as an escort. These veterans have served their country, and this is our chance to serve them. If you volunteer, send an e-mail to the chapter at president@azmooa.org, so we have a record of your generosity.

We're in the News, and It's Good News

The Affiliate, MOAA's monthly newsletter for chapter leaders, featured our chapter's legislative liaison program in the January edition.

The article notes how our chapter responded to MOAA's goal to have a local liaison to every congressional district.

It further described how John Ady, our liaison to Rep. David Schweikert, has established a working relationship with the congressman and even helps select applicants seeking nomination to service academies. The newsletter also reports that Corey Harris has established contact with Rep. Ed Pastor's office as our liaison to that congressman.

Donations to Chapter Scholarship Fund

Bob Stimming \$100

Dan Germond \$50

In Memory of his wife Lynda

Rob Welch \$24

Pat Dale \$20

Ed Balaban \$20

Anonymous \$20

Here's a Salute to Our Presidents Who First Served in Uniform



February is the month when we honor our Commanders-in-Chief, the U.S. presidents.

More than half of our presidents served in the military, many during wartime and some in multiple war periods.

Some names come quickly to mind – George Washington, Ulysses Grant, Dwight Eisenhower. Andrew Jackson won recognition at the Battle of New Orleans in the War of 1812, and Teddy Roosevelt led the famous charge up San Juan Hill in the Spanish-American War.

James Monroe served in the Continental Army in the Revolutionary War, and Jackson served as a courier in that war at the age of 13. Along with Jackson, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler, Zachary Taylor and James Buchanon served in the War of 1812. Taylor also served in the Mexican War.

Several of the early presidents served in their states' militias, including Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln.

In addition to Grant, Benjamin Harrison, James Garfield, Rutherford Hays and William McKinley were Civil War veterans.

Harry Truman served in World War I, and Eisenhower's career spanned World Wars I and II. Also in uniform in World War II were John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush. Jimmy Carter was on active duty during the Korean War.

Paper's Interactive Agent Orange Map Can Be an Aid for VA Benefit Claims

The Chicago Tribune has published an interactive map and chart that shows defoliant spray missions—agent orange and others—year by year and month by month in Vietnam from 1961-71.

The information can be useful to Vietnam veterans making claims to the VA for disabilities from the effects of defoliants. The map, chart and other information can be seen on the paper's website, chicagotribune.com. Type "defoliant map" in the search box.



Legislative Update

by Gary Fredricks
National Legislative Chair

Congress Gets Down to Work

It seems that sometimes wonders never cease. In addition to taking their normal vacation stints, Congress managed to do about a year's work over just the last few weeks. As we reported last month, Congress passed a bicameral, bipartisan budget reported to cover this year and next, as well as passing the FY2014 Defense Authorization Bill late last month. After returning from Christmas break on January 6, Congress then passed an omnibus spending package (Consolidate Appropriations Act) for the remainder of FY2014 that negated the need for passing any individual FY2014 Appropriations Bills and avoided shutting down the government on January 15 when the continuing resolution was set to expire.

Where are we now? The budget that was passed succeeded in mitigating some of the effects of sequestration in the short run, but not significantly in the longer term. So, this will return to haunt us some time in the near future. It also provided for a three-month delay in the projected 24% cut in Medicare/TRICARE payments to doctors that was scheduled to cut in on January 1.

However, it also contained a significant issue in that it reduced the annual cost of living adjustments to all military retirement by 1% for all those under age 62. Thanks to extensive efforts by MOAA and other veterans' organizations, the omnibus spending package, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, then exempted medical (Chapter 61) retirees and survivors from the COLA cuts contained in the budget agreement. So, we made some headway there, but we have more to accomplish this year.

It should also be remembered that the FY2013 Defense Authorization Bill established a 9-member independent commission to review all military compensation, benefits and retirement. The commission's report was expected to contain findings and recommendations that could have major impacts on future decisions regarding military compensation, benefits and retirement. The report was originally due May 14 of this year. However, the FY2014 Defense Authorization Bill delayed the final report until February 2015, interestingly enough a date after this year's mid-term elections bring in a new congress.

So, on the immediate horizon we have the following:

- In mid-February the President's budget request for FY2015 is due to be released, starting the FY2015 Congressional agenda. This is where MOAA looks to see what the Administration priorities are and where the likely hits to defense personnel and veterans will occur.
- The federal debt ceiling is expected to be reached in late February or early March, requiring congressional relief in order to avoid potential default on our government debt.
- And, the Medicare/TRICARE cut to doctor's payments must be dealt with by April 1 in order to ensure that a potential exodus by doctors participating in the program does not occur.

The Arizona Legislature is now in session

The Arizona Department of Veterans' Services is currently tracking 33 Senate and House Bills, Memorials and Resolutions that have been introduced to date. They include the following:

HB 2147, Veterans; hiring; tax credit. Sponsor Rep. Sonny Borrelli, R-Dist 5. Would allow businesses a tax credit for hiring certain honorably discharged veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces,

HB 2177, Appropriation; veterans' services, supportive campuses. Sponsor Rep. Ethan Orr, R-Dist 9. Would appropriate \$500,000 to the Arizona Department of Veterans' Services to establish supportive campuses and to provide resources for veteran benefit counselors.

HB 2308, Tax exemption; veterans, military pensions. Sponsors Rep. Justin Pierce, R-Dist 25, and Sen. David Bradley, D-Dist 10. Exempts the full amount of an honorably discharged veteran's pension/retired pay from Arizona State income tax.

HB 2402, Military retirees; pension exclusion amount. Sponsor Rep. David Stevens R-Dist 14. Would exempt \$3,000 of military retirement/pension from Arizona State income tax in place of the current \$2,500 deduction.

HB 2457, Mental health; veterans' courts; establishment. Sponsor Rep. Eddie Farnsworth, R-Dist 12. Expand current statute authorizing the establishment of homeless courts in each county's superior court to include the authorization for veterans' courts and mental health courts.

The state legislative process requires bills to meet certain review/approval milestones to remain active and progress through the process. Last year, any bills that significantly raised costs or reduced revenue died in committee level work. Your support in contacting your state legislators on any of these or other veteran-related bills would certainly help in raising their awareness and gaining their support.

Welcome Our New Member

John D. Sentz, CAPT USN (Ret)
And his wife Mary of Gilbert

Please meet and greet out new member.

December Meeting

WHEN: February 15, 2014
11:00 a.m., Meet & Greet Social
Hour; 11:45, Lunch

WHERE: McCormick Ranch Golf Club
Scottsdale

COST: \$22 Per Person

DRESS: Business Casual

MENU: Tossed salad, bread and butter, roasted stuffed pork loin and whipped potatoes, seasonal vegetables and cherry cobbler.

Anyone with dietary restrictions or /allergies should contact Arlene Day (arlenebday@gmail.com preferred) one week prior so alternate food selections can be arranged.

PROGRAM: Air Force Captain George Burk, who survived a military airplane crash, will tell how he overcame the trauma and inspires others.

Reservations must be received by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, February 11. Use the reservation form below. Cancellations must be received the same day to receive your money back.

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CHAPTER FINANCIAL PARTICIPATION

If you would like to make a donation to one or more of the AZ Chapter Funds, include your check identified with the appropriate fund and mail to: **Marie Fredricks, 15403 E. Sunburst Dr., Fountain Hills, AZ 85268.**

General Fund: \$ _____

Scholarship Fund: \$ _____ **[a 501(c)(3) charitable fund]**

Name of Donor : _____ Identify me as a donor in the next newsletter. YES___ NO___

MEAL / MEETING RESERVATION FORM

Please reserve _____ meals for (Name) _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ (**\$22.00 per person**) for **February 15, 2014**

Make check payable to: **AZ Chapter MOAA** **Received No Later Than February 11, 2014**

Send to: **Marie Fredricks, 15403 E. Sunburst Dr., Fountain Hills, AZ 85268, e-mail garymarie@cox.net**

Keep Us Informed

Please let Chapter Secretary Leonore Hoak know when you change your address, phone number and/or e-mail address.

If you know of a member or spouse who enters the hospital or passes away, please notify one of the Chapter Officers.

Use the phone numbers listed below.



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