

President's Perspective

by Dave Fleming



Arizona Chapter Calendar

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

Location: National Guard Regional Training Institute, 5636 E. McDowell Rd. Show ID for entry. Members welcome.

Upcoming meetings:

- March 3
- April 7

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:

- March 12
- April 16

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for information on how to register.

Chapter Dues

This is your last chance to renew your chapter dues for 2016.

If you haven't already done so, please submit your dues to Charlie Bitner before March 31.

After that date, we have to drop you from our membership roster. Your membership is very important to us and we hope you will continue to be part of the Arizona Chapter. **Only 30 days left to renew!**

February Speaker

For those of you who couldn't join us at last month's luncheon, you missed an absolutely outstanding historical presentation from local historian and author, Joan Fudala.

She gave a very informative audio-visual presentation on "How Hollywood Supported World War II Pilot Training in Metro Phoenix" and how that support made our area the center of aviation training.

Continued on page 2

Legislative Letters

February and March issues of the *Military Officer Magazine* had pre-printed letters inside which MOAA National asked you to sign and mail.

Please, if you have not done so, detach the letters, add a personal note of one or two lines, and then take a few minutes to mail them in.

MOAA National stresses all numbers do count. The coming year has many challenges ahead; many involving TRICARE and medical benefits.

'Like' Us on Facebook

Who says you can't teach an old dog new tricks?

To help supplement *The Sentinel* we now have an Arizona Chapter Facebook page. We'll try to use this medium periodically to post timely information, such as meeting notices, events, ballgames, etc. Check it out on our website, azmoaa.org, and click on the Chapter

Facebook icon. Try it out and maybe you'll even end up "liking" us.

Patriotic Gala Coming

The Patriotic Gala dinner is set for April 9 this year at the Doubletree Resort in Scottsdale.

The Gala dinner is sponsored by the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame to recognize non-military individuals and private sector institutions whose actions have contributed significantly to the benefit and well-being of our military, our veterans and their families.

Some of the 2016 honorees are Sanderson Ford, Speaker of the Arizona House David Gowan and U.S. Rep. Kyrsten Sinema. This will be a wonderful event for all attendees.

Rob Welch has offered to arrange for an Arizona Chapter table, so if you can attend, let Rob know as well. Look on Page 2

President's Perspective...continued

Arizona Chapter Golf Tourney

Pat Dale is once again hosting our annual Spring Golf Tourney on Thursday, April 21, at Stone Creek Golf Club.

This is our premier scholarship fundraiser. Come on out and support this wonderful event. You don't have to be a golfer. You can sponsor a hole and come join us for a great Italian luncheon buffet!

Dave

Come to the Patriotic Gala

By Rob Welch

We currently have two full tables reserved for MOAA Arizona Chapter members, and are working on a third.

This is a highly visible signature event for the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Society, of which numerous chapter members are inductees, including its current Society President, Gene Rafanelli, and its Immediate Past President, Ron Perkins.

The date is Saturday evening, April 9, at the DoubleTree Resort on Scottsdale Road. If you haven't already signed up, please do so by March 6, as the price goes up by \$10 a plate then.

To sign up, go to <http://avhof.org/> Once you have signed up, send me an e-mail at webmaster@azmoaa.org and I will make sure that you sit at an MOAA table. Hope to see many of you there with your spouses.

February Speaker

**World War II & Hollywood
Built an Arizona Legacy**

As the winds of war began to blow in Europe, the Civilian Pilot Training Program was created in 1938. Its subsequent impact on the future of Arizona was described at the chapter's February luncheon by Scottsdale historian Joan Fudala.

The program was designed to improve the "dismal" state of air training in the country, but it soon evolved into the primary source of military pilots for the war.

In Hollywood a group of producers, agents and stars, including Henry Fonda, Cary Grant, Hoagy Carmichael and Darryl F. Zanuck, pooled their resources and looked to Phoenix.

They formed a company named Southwest Airways (no relation to today's Southwest Airlines) in 1940 and purchased the flight training contract at Sky Harbor Airport.

A year later, they built Thunderbird Field in Glendale and then Falcon Field in Mesa. Thunderbird Field II in Scottsdale came in 1942.

Over the war years about 100,000 pilots were trained in Arizona, including trainees from 29 countries such as Great Britain, China and Latin America. Arizona became "the center of the universe for flying," Joan said.

And for a country emerging from the Depression, the program provided jobs for a diverse workforce, including women serving as mechanics and parachute riggers, and members of the Pima Indian tribe.

As a plus for the flight cadets, they got to mingle and party with Hollywood celebrities.

"And it introduced thousands to the delight of living in the Valley of the Sun," Joan said.

After the war, Thunderbird Field became a technical training school for returning GIs and today is the Thunderbird School of Global Management. Falcon Field is a base for the Commemorative Air Force, and Thunderbird II is now Scottsdale Airport, where the surrounding complex of businesses known as Scottsdale Air Park is the third largest employer in the state.

Jane Fudala, left, shares a moment with Jim and Judy Draper following her presentation.

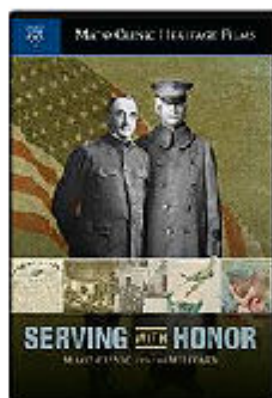




Arizona Chapter MOAA
March 12, 2016, Program
“Serving with Honor – Mayo Clinic and the Military”
Paul Schnur, MD & Barbara Schnur, RN, BSN



Paul graduated from the University of Arizona and obtained his MD from Baylor University College of Medicine. He completed his residency at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. Paul practiced medicine in Sedona and was a consultant in the Verde Valley until his retirement. He was on active duty, US Army Medical Corps, in Germany, 1964-1966 and is currently an Associate Professor at the University of Arizona and the Mayo Medical School. Dr. Schnur is an Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame member, and he and his wife Barbara will be presenting a video honoring the people of Mayo Clinic who served with distinction to support America's armed forces. Barbara obtained her RN from the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, in Philadelphia, and her BSN from Duke University in Durham, NC. She worked at Texas Children's Hospital and the Methodist Hospital in Houston, Texas, and met her future husband, Paul Schnur, a medical student at Baylor.



Mayo Clinic's service to the U.S. military began in the Civil War and continues to the present day. This film tells stories from the past and present of doctors and nurses putting themselves in harm's way, researchers developing new ways to protect combatants, educators preparing military medical personnel for battlefield duty and Mayo health care providers helping wounded warriors reclaim their lives. For more than 150 years, Mayo Clinic has been proud to serve the military.

Saturday March 12, 2016
 McCormick Ranch Golf Club

REGISTRATION must be received by 4:00 p.m. Tuesday, March 8
 \$22 per person includes lunch. Make check payable to: AZ Chapter MOAA
 Send to: Charlie Bitner, 134 E. Northview Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85020,
 Or contact Charlie at 602-943-0028 or Charles.bitner@gmail.com



LAST CALL!
Arizona Chapter
Annual Membership Renewal



AS OF MARCH 1
ONLY 31 DAYS LEFT

Membership Dues are due by March 31, 2016

After that date, we must drop you from our roster

Dues for Regular Members are \$20.00

Dues for Surviving Spouses (formerly Auxiliary) Members are \$10.00

Your membership is important to us. Please take the time to renew your membership to the Arizona Chapter of MOAA.

Make out your check to
AZ Chapter MOAA

Mail to
Charlie Bitner, Treasurer
134 E. Northview Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85020



Personal Affairs

By Lee Lange
Personal Affairs Officer

Legislative Changes Made to SBP

Two recent legislative changes regarding the Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) are of interest to military retirees who are enrolled in SBP.

Beneficiary change from “Former Spouse” to “Current “Spouse”

If you were required to designate a former spouse as your SBP beneficiary due to a divorce, this change may apply to you.

Previously, if a former spouse was designated as the beneficiary of the service retiree’s SBP because of a divorce court order and if the former spouse died, the SBP “died” with the former spouse. The SBP coverage was cancelled and the service retiree permanently lost the SBP entitlement for future use.

Now if the former spouse dies while listed as the beneficiary of the retiree’s SBP, the retiree can re-designate a current or future spouse as the SBP beneficiary.

SBP can now pay a Special Needs Trust (SNT)

Previously, the SBP survivor annuity could only pay a person. This caused problems for retirees who had an incapacitated child as their SBP beneficiary.

In many cases, the SBP survivor income would count as income against the financial need requirements that determine eligibility for state and federal assistance. SBP income would disqualify the beneficiary for critical state and federal assistance while at the same time the SBP income wouldn’t be enough to properly care for the child without the assistance.

Now, the SBP can pay an SNT established for an incapacitated child instead of a person. The new law only allows an SNT for an incapacitated child. The SNT negates SBP income from counting in the financial need requirements for state and federal assistance.

The catch is that the SNT document must stipulate that residual assets in the SNT upon the beneficiary’s death are used to reimburse the governments involved for their extra costs incurred while the child was alive and receiving assistance.

Contact DFAS customer service at (800) 321-1080 for more information.

State Legislative Update

By Lee Lange
Legislation Chairman

Veterans Choice Program at VA

I recently attended a Veterans’ Caucus meeting at the Arizona State Legislature where members of the House and Senate have formed a caucus that invites veteran and military service organizations to the Capitol to discuss state level veterans’ issues. Caucus members are very interested in supporting improvement to veterans’ benefits in the state.

The Veterans Choice Program (VCP) for veterans using VA health care was the main agenda item. Veterans receiving VA health care can use the VCP for private sector health care if their appointment wait time is more than 30 days or they live more than 40 mile from the nearest VA medical facility.

The program is now 14-months-old. TriWest Healthcare is the main contractor on this program in 28 states, including Arizona. More than 8,000 appointments a month are currently being made in Arizona with private sector providers. To manage the program, TriWest expanded from 400 employees to 2,600 in just over a year. The program has faced numerous start-up problems but is making a difference, and the groups at the meeting generally agreed.

Bills of Interest

There are several bills of interest to veterans being considered in the state legislature. Their status is as follows:

HB 2009, Veteran-owned Businesses; **Procurement Preference**

Would require the Arizona Department of Administration to establish a goal of awarding 1.5% of State contracts (approximately \$180 million) to qualified veteran-owned businesses beginning January 1, 2017, and increasing 3% or more for every year after the first year. Requires the Arizona Department of Veterans’ Services to establish a registry of veteran-owned businesses and verify the veteran status and eligibility of businesses seeking to be considered for the registry.

Primary Sponsor: Rep. Mark Cardenas, D-Dist. 19.

Major Actions: Passed by the House Military Affairs and Public Safety (MAPS) Committee on February 11. Passed by the House on February 18. Transmitted to the Senate for action.

Continued Page 7...



Legislative Update

by Lee Lange
Legislation Chairman

Health Care “Reform” Aims at Your Wallet

The proposed FY17 DoD budget includes a focus on what is being called “health care reform”. But the devil is in the details, and the budget proposal is light on specifics to address the shortcomings in TRICARE for beneficiaries but heavy on across the board TRICARE fee increases. This month I’ll focus on the potential impacts to TRICARE for Life (TFL) beneficiaries.

The DoD budget request proposes that future TFL-eligibles - specifically, those who become Medicare-eligible on or after Jan. 1, 2017 - would have to start paying an annual enrollment fee based on a percentage of the sponsor's retired pay.

Under this proposal, beneficiaries already enrolled in Medicare on Jan. 1, 2017, would be exempted from the new fee. You can draw your own conclusions whether that exemption might be reconsidered in the future. Chapter 61 (medical) retirees and survivors of service members who died on active duty would also be exempt from the new fee.

The annual enrollment fee would start at 0.5 percent of gross retired pay in 2017, increasing to 2 percent of retired pay by 2021. In the first year, the fee would be capped at \$150 for lower grades and \$200 for retired flag and general officers. As the fee increased to 2 percent of retired pay over the next four years, those caps also would increase, reaching \$632 and \$842 respectively by 2021.

TFL Enrollment Fees a Bad Idea

This plan is flat out means-testing of service-earned health care benefits. No other employer in the Federal or private sector means-tests retired employees' health benefits. What this means is that the more successful and longer serving you were in the military, the more you will pay for your health care benefit – the benefit you thought you earned through your service to your country.

MOAA is on record saying that it is inappropriate to impose additional fees on TFL-eligibles for three other reasons.

First, TFL beneficiaries are already paying the

highest fees of any military beneficiaries, as TFL requires enrolling in Medicare Part B and paying the associated premiums, which start at \$2,500 per year for a married couple and can run far higher.

Second, the expressed intent of Congress in enacting TFL was that Medicare Part B premiums would be the only enrollment fee for TFL, acknowledging that Medicare would be paying 80 percent of these beneficiaries' health costs. DoD and Hill leaders at the time were of the opinion that a career of service and sacrifice constituted a full, pre-paid premium for TFL coverage of the other 20 percent.

Third, the Pentagon's costs for TFL have dropped dramatically, from \$11 billion in FY11 to an estimated \$6.4 billion in FY17, as Defense actuaries now have 15 years of actual experience with the program and can more accurately project program costs. Rather than “spiraling out of control,” as DoD claims, health costs for this group are spiraling downward, so why the need to charge them an additional fee?

Send Your Letters to Congress

It's time for all of us to weigh in on health care “reform” and we can start by sending in the tear-out letters included in your February and March MOAA *Military Officer* magazines. There are letters included in each issue, addressed to the chairman and ranking member of the House and Senate Armed Service Committees and to our Arizona Senators and your Representative.

Take the time to tear out the letters, put your own handwritten comments on the letters, then sign and mail them. These letters make a difference and will definitely help MOAA as testimony season approaches in Washington on these budget proposals. If the committees and our Congressmen don't hear from you, they will be able say there is no problem because no one is complaining. **Act now.**

Donations to Chapter Funds

Scholarship Fund

Anonymous \$20

March 50/50 Raffle \$60

General Fund

Lee Lange \$100

(Winner of Chicago Cubs tickets auction donated by John Ady)

March Luncheon

WHEN: March 12, 2016
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: Salad, three cheese lasagna, fruit cobbler.

PROGRAM: Chapter member Dr. Paul Schnur and his wife, Barbara, R.N., will describe the Mayo Clinic's service to the military, from the Civil War to the present day.

...State Legislative Report, cont.**HB 2033, Post-9/11 Veteran Education Relief Fund**

Would create a Post 9/11 Veteran Education Relief Fund from "private donations, grants, bequests, and any other monies" to provide financial tuition assistance to qualified veterans whose tuition assistance under the Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 has expired.

The bill would create a committee appointed by the Governor to oversee the fund, under the administrative control of the Arizona Department of Veterans Services.

Primary Sponsors: Rep. Sonny Borrelli, R-Dist. 5, et al.

Major Actions: Passed by the House Military Affairs and Public Safety (MAPS) Committee January 21. Passed by the House on February 4 and transmitted to the Senate. Assigned to the Senate Public Safety, Military and Technology (PSMT) Committee.

HB 2621, Veterans State Park Appropriation

Would appropriate \$800,000 to the Arizona State Parks Board to purchase land to establish a veteran's memorial state park. The park would be located near Luke AFB and serve veterans and active duty members and their families.

Primary Sponsors: Rep. Jonathan Larkin, D-Dist. 30, et al.

Major Actions: Passed by the House Military Affairs and Public Safety (MAPS) Committee February 18.

RESERVATION CHANGE NOTICE: *Due to recent contract negotiations with McCormick Ranch, the AZ MOAA Board of Directors has agreed no member reservations for the monthly luncheon will be accepted after the Tuesday prior to the event. Likewise, any cancellations made after the Tuesday prior will be charged and not refunded.*

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: **Charlie Bitner, 134 E. Northview Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85020, 602-943-0028, charles.bitner@gmail.com.**

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/RESERVATION FORM

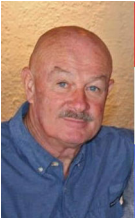
Please reserve ___ meals for (name): _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ (\$22.00/person) for the March 2016 luncheon

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

Send check to: **Charlie Bitner, 134 E. Northview Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85020, 602-943-0028, charles.bitner@gmail.com**

**Member reservations or call-ins WILL NOT be accepted after March 8.
Cancellations after March 8 will be charged and not refunded.**



Online With The Arizona Chapter
by Rob Welch, Webmaster

Our website, azmoaa.org, has been updated recently. Please take a look and let me know what you think. If you have a chance, check

out all the pages and links and let me know if there are any problems. Send comments to: webmaster@azmoaa.org

Also, note that on the right side of many pages, there is a link to our new Facebook page. This page was developed by our Chapter President, Dave Fleming. Check it out, and make sure you "like" it.

The Arizona Chapter MOAA - 2015 Board of Directors

| | | |
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Access Arizona Chapter's Internet Web Site at: azmoaa.org

Arizona Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
13819 N. 51st Street
Scottsdale, AZ 85254



azmoaa.org



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Show your colors by proudly displaying the Arizona Veterans Plate on your vehicle. Show how veterans help veterans.