



The Sentinel

Arizona's First Chapter



The Arizona Chapter

13819 N. 51st Street

Scottsdale, AZ 85254

FEBRUARY 2016 CHARTERED 1956 59 YEARS OF SERVICE TO COUNTRY EDITOR: JIM CULLISON

President's Perspective

by Dave Fleming



'16 Is Off & Running

In January we held the first Chapter General Membership meeting for 2016 at McCormick Ranch.

For those of you who couldn't join us, you missed an absolutely outstanding meal along with a very informative presentation from Col (USAF, ret) Wanda Wright, the AZ Director of Veteran's Services.

The January meeting also marked the installation of a new Chapter Board of Directors (BOD). Joining me on the BOD are Lee Lange - 1st VP; Ron Bright - 2nd VP; Paul Schnur - Secretary; Charlie Bitner - Treasurer; and Jim Cullison - Past President, along with Directors Donna Bright, Janet Stultz, Beth Cullison, Jim Draper and Bruce Kosaveach. We're committed to serving your interests as best as we know them, to keep you informed on developing

legislative issues and actions and to continue to make our Chapter an enjoyable experience for all of our members.

As I accept the reins of president from Jim Cullison, I want to take this opportunity to thank him for his outstanding contributions to the multitude of successes our chapter achieved during his two years as president. He carried the load in many different ways and for that he was presented the MOAA Leadership Award at the luncheon. Thanks, Jim, for all that you have done and continue to do.

We hope to see you in February as Bruce Kosaveach has arranged for Joan Fudala to speak to us. She is a well know local Scottsdale historian and author. Her presentation this month will be a photographic display about "How Hollywood Supported World War II Pilot Training in Metro

Phoenix". It should be very interesting.

We have several important issues coming up during the next few months that you should be aware of.

First is renewing your chapter membership for 2016. If you haven't already done so, please submit your dues to Charlie Bitner as soon as you can. As of this writing, only 60% of our members have renewed. Your membership is important to us and we hope you will continue to be part of the Arizona Chapter. **Only 60 days left to renew!**

Second is our ROTC Scholarship Program directed by Rob Welch. Rob is busy revising our process and procedures as we turn our 2016 efforts toward ASU and we begin to offer scholarships to ROTC cadets and midshipmen.

Finally, we are always looking for those to help and assist us; particularly for the job as newsletter editor. Jim has been doing it for

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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:
• January 7
• February 4

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:
• January 16
• February 20

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President's Perspective...continued

almost eight years now and is hoping for some well-needed relief. It is a creative way to get to know the members and the workings of the chapter. If you are interested, please give me a call at 480-459-6366.

Do not forget next Sunday, February 7, is the Super Bowl but more importantly, the following Sunday is **Valentine's Day**, so remember that special someone in your life.

Dave 

February Program

Hollywood Comes to Arizona

Joan Fidula, Scottsdale historian and author, will give an informative presentation on "How Hollywood Supported World War II Pilot Training in Metro Phoenix" and how that support left a lasting imprint in the Valley.



Leading producers, actors and camera men from Hollywood created a civilian company named Southwest Airways that built four basic pilot training bases across the valley to train aviation cadets for WW II service.

Southwest Airways not only provided essential wartime training and support. The company also left facilities behind that thrive today as Scottsdale Airport/Airpark, Falcon Field in Mesa, Sky Harbor International Airport and Thunderbird School of Global Management in Glendale.

Joan Fidula is a former Air Force Public Affairs Officer with nine years of active duty, including two years at Luke AFB, and 12 years in the Air Force Reserve as a PAO at the Pentagon. She has written eight books on the history of the Scottsdale area. She serves on several boards, including the Scottsdale Museum of the West, Desert Discovery Center and Scottsdale Historical Society.

January Speaker

ADVS 'in Great Shape'

"The Arizona Department of Veterans Services is in great shape."

That's the word from someone who knows, Col Wanda Wright, USAF (Ret), director of the department who was our guest speaker at the January luncheon.

The ADVS mission is to provide education, advocacy and service to veterans, and to reach out to other agencies for support. Special emphasis is given to rural areas, where there are fewer resources.



The department is divided into five divisions: Administration, Veterans Services, Housing, Fiduciary and Cemeteries. It operates 17 benefits offices across Arizona.

She said the department's programs include:

- Working with homeless veterans to get them off the street
- Developing a system to get veterans employed and working with the Department of Economic Security to that end.
- Working with community colleges to help with issues related to the GI Bill.
- Operating two veterans homes, one in Phoenix and one in Tucson, and striving for funding for a third in Yuma.
- Protecting the assets of incapacitated veterans.
- Operating a veterans cemetery in Sierra Vista, with two more to open this year, one at Marana and one at Camp Navajo.

Two current concerns are obtaining funding for a pay raise for veterans benefit counselors and making needed renovations at the Phoenix Veterans Home.



Arizona Chapter Annual Membership Renewal



**AS OF FEBRUARY 1st
ONLY 61 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 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



FEBRUARY 14, 2016

Spotlight Speaker

2 Vietnam Tours, 2 Purple Hearts for Gene Rafanelli

Gene Rafanelli, COL USA (Ret), attributes the two Purple Hearts he earned in Vietnam to “bad luck.”

Gene, our Spotlight Speaker in January, said he “never received a scratch” on his first combat tour, but things changed on his second.

As a senior advisor in the Mekong Delta, he was overseeing a road repair when an explosion killed and injured several soldiers and embedded 20 pieces of shrapnel in his back from neck to knees.

Later in the tour, Gene was in a command and control helicopter that landed so he could confer with a lieutenant on the ground. A group of Viet Cong opened fire, one round hitting Gene in the

side, exiting the opposite side and lodging in his left arm.

He suffered six broken ribs, lost part of a lung and his spleen, spent a year hospitalized and had to undergo therapy for his arm. He kept the bullet as a reminder of that fateful day.

Gene survived, as he says, “thanks to the miracles of medicine.

“The evacuation helicopter was incredible,” he said. “My hat is off to the military medical personnel. They do a great job.”

Gene Rafanelli holds the bullet from an enemy's AK-47 that was removed from his arm, resulting in his second Purple Heart Medal.



February: Short Month, Many Events

February is our shortest month, although one day longer this year because it's Leap Year, but it's not short on celebrations and events.

Starting with Groundhog Day February 2, the celebrations continue with the Phoenix Open golf tournament February 3-7, the Super Bowl on the 8th, Chinese New Year (the year of the Red Monkey) on the 8th, Mardi Gras on the 9th, Lincoln's birthday on the 12th, Valentine's Day and Arizona Statehood Day on the 14th, President's Day on the 15th, and the Oscars on the 28th.

And don't forget National Margarita Day on February 22. Frozen or on the rocks? Salt or no salt? Enjoy.



TAPS



We recently learned of the passing of one of our members:

CAPT Edward Waldmann, M.D. USN,(Ret.)
 February 6, 1926-December 14, 2015
 World War II Veteran

Our heartfelt condolences are extended to the family.

2016 Leadership Takes Office

Chapter officers for 2016 were sworn-in at the January luncheon. From left are Dave Fleming, president; Jim Draper, Beth Cullison, Donna Bright, Bruce Kosaveach and Janet Stultz, directors; Lee Lange, first vice president; Paul Schnur, secretary; Charlie Bitner, treasurer, and Jim Cullison, immediate past president. Ron Bright, not pictured, is second vice president.





Personal Affairs

By Lee Lange
Personal Affairs Officer

Enrolling in Medicare

One of our most important benefits is Medicare. For military retirees, Medicare enrollment is also the key to starting our TRICARE for Life benefit. Even though Medicare is an entitlement program, you must apply at the right time, or it's going to cost you. Below are some tips from MOAA on how to get this done.

The initial enrollment period (IEP) is a set period of time during which you are first eligible to apply for Medicare benefits. If you fail to apply during this eligibility window and do not fit into an exception category, be prepared to pay a lifetime penalty of 10 percent of the cost of your premium for every 12 months you could have had Medicare and didn't.

Whenever you have an entitlement to Medicare, you must apply and purchase during your enrollment period or be prepared to pay a penalty and potentially be without coverage. The IEP for most to apply for Medicare Part A (premium-free hospital insurance) and purchase Medicare Part B (medical insurance) is the three months before the month you turn 65, the month you turn 65, and the three months following. For coverage to start the beginning of your birth month, apply any time during the three months prior to your birth date. If you apply during any of the remaining four months, your Part B coverage will start later.

The following exception applies

If you are over age 65 and have health care coverage under a group health plan (GHP) under current employment for you or your spouse, you can apply without a late enrollment penalty during a special enrollment period (SEP). The SEP allows you to apply for Medicare penalty-free within eight months of losing GHP coverage or employment, whichever occurs first.

What happens if you fail to sign up during your IEP, despite being warned? Your option is to enroll during the general enrollment period (GEP), which runs January 1 through March 31

of each year. However, your Medicare Part B coverage will not begin until July 1 of that year. Under the Affordable Care Act, you would need to procure coverage elsewhere until your Medicare entitlement went into effect.

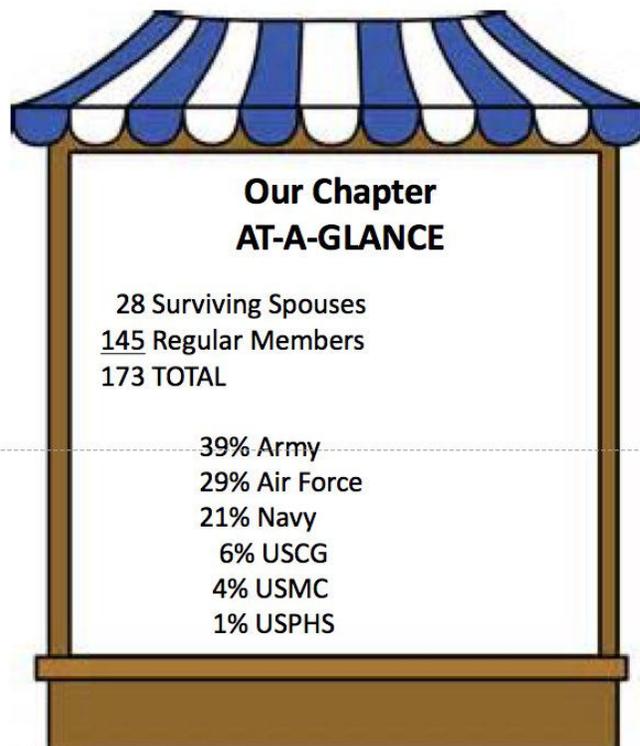
TRICARE For Life

How does this work with TRICARE For Life (TFL)? All military retirees who are approaching their 65th birthday must apply for Medicare Part A and purchase Medicare Part B in order to automatically be enrolled in TFL, commonly referred to as Medicare wrap-around coverage. Because TFL acts as your Medicare supplement, you can ignore solicitations for other Medicare supplement insurance plans.

Roughly three months prior to your 65th birthday, you should receive a postcard from the Defense Manpower Data Center reminding you to apply for Medicare. Once you are enrolled and receive your red, white, and blue Medicare card, you must visit your local military installation and update your military ID card to indicate you are covered under Medicare.

The final element is signing up for Medicare. You have three options: **online**, in person at your local Social Security office (check www.ssa.gov for an office near you), or by calling Social Security at (800) 772-1213.

Visit www.medicare.gov or www.tricare4u.com for more information.





Legislative Update

by Lee Lange
Legislation Chairman

Consumer Price Index Declines

The news is not good for military retirees looking for a cost of living adjustment (COLA) increase in 2017. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is following the trend of the past few years by dropping significantly at the beginning of the fiscal year. The big driver continues to be falling energy prices.

The December CPI declined 1.5 percent below the FY 2014 COLA baseline. Because there was not a positive COLA in FY 2015, the FY 2014 baseline is used this year. Last year, inflation for the full fiscal year actually declined by 0.4 percent. This means that the CPI must rise more than 1.9 percent in 2016 to have any chance of a COLA increase in 2017.

Legislative Timeline for 2016

The White House announced that the president's budget request will be delivered to Congress on February 9. Once the budget request is received, the ball gets rolling on the FY2017 defense bill.

Below is MOAA's estimated timeline of the FY 2017 defense bill process:

Feb 9: The president submits his annual budget proposal to Congress. MOAA expects to see another military pay raise cap, more Basic Housing Allowance cuts, and proposals to significantly overhaul military health care.

MOAA will begin analyzing the impact of the proposals on currently serving and retired members and families and begin preparing fact sheets to articulate MOAA's positions to Congress and to MOAA members. Expect to see letters and postcards in the *Military Officer* magazine along with legislative alerts calling for member action.

Late March: Six weeks after the president delivers his budget to Congress, congressional committees are required to submit their "views and estimates" of spending and revenues within their respective jurisdictions to the House and Senate Budget Committees. In short, these documents represent requests for the budget levels needed to provide for the nation's defense.

April 11-13: In the middle of the defense bill

process, MOAA will invite Council and Chapter leaders from across the country to *Storm the Hill* to meet with their elected officials on key military personnel and benefits issues.

April - May: The House and Senate Armed Services Committees go to work drafting their respective versions of the FY 2017 defense bill.

May - June: Full House and Senate pass their respective versions of the defense bill.

July - October: House and Senate negotiators work to resolve differences between their respective versions through conference committees.

July-August: MOAA provides its councils and chapters information on key issues in the defense bill to use when visiting their elected officials when they return home to do district work during the August recess.

October-December: Final defense bill passed by House and Senate and becomes law.

More updates on this process will be provided as they are received. Look for a major focus on health care in the defense bill process this year. MOAA will need the help of all of us to push back against some of the changes Congress may propose in the defense bill. Virtually all of the changes will be about beneficiaries (yes, you and me) paying more for their health care – maybe a lot more.

State Legislature Starts Work

The Arizona State legislature kicked off its 2016 session January 11, highlighted by Governor Ducey's State of the State Address.

The Governor sent his proposed 2017 budget to the legislature January 15. Arizona has an estimated \$220 million surplus that is expected to grow to more than \$600 million by the end of 2017. Governor Ducey's \$9.5 billion budget request includes modest increases in several areas. Many groups are now lining up in hopes of gaining support for their issues and tapping in to some of the state's surplus. Funding for K-12 education, restoring university funding, and Department of Child Safety funding are some of the big issues.

Meanwhile, the Arizona Council of Chapters, MOAA, has worked with the Unified Arizona Veterans on several military issues of joint

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February Luncheon

WHEN: February 20, 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, chicken mushroom crepes, herbed rice pilaf, apple pie.

PROGRAM: Scottsdale historian Joan Fudula will tell us "How Hollywood Supported World War II Pilot Training in Metro Phoenix."

...Legislative Report, cont.

interest that will be pursued in the state legislature this year. Two of those are discussed here.

Last year a significant effort was made to pass a bill establishing a veteran's education relief fund that would help veterans whose VA education benefits have expired. The bill failed but has been reintroduced as HB 2033, Post-9/11 Veteran Education Relief Fund.

The bill would create a fund made up of private donations, grants, bequests, and other monies to provide, under certain conditions, financial tuition assistance to qualified veterans whose tuition assistance under the Post 9/11 Veterans Educational Assistance Act of 2008 have expired.

A committee appointed by the Governor would oversee the fund, under the administrative control of the Arizona Department of Veterans Services. The primary sponsor of the bill is Rep. Sonny Borrelli, R-Dist. 5.

Another issue of interest is last year's bill, SB1060, which proposed raising the military retiree pension exclusion amount for retired military pay from \$2,500 to \$3,000. It passed the Senate by a wide margin but failed in committee in the House. Now the interest is in a new bill which would double the current \$2,500 amount to \$5,000. This amount reflects inflation since the original \$2,500 amount was passed in the late 1980s. Efforts are underway to identify a sponsor for a new bill.

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 February 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 February 16.
Cancellations after February 16 will be charged and not refunded.**

Welcome Our New Member

Stephen Ferrara, CAPT USN (Ret soon)
 And his wife Elizabeth of Scottsdale
 Please meet and greet our new member.

Visit Our Website for Latest Updates

If you haven't taken a look at our website lately, you might take a peek. Lots of updates have been made, including the new MOAA logo, our new Board of Directors and their contact information. It also includes a link to our state's Council of Chapters website so you can learn what our state leaders are doing. From the Council website, you can link to our sister chapters throughout the state.

The Arizona Chapter MOAA - 2015 Board of Directors and Committee Chairs

PRESIDENT Col Dave Fleming, USAF 480-459-6366	NEWSLETTER EDITOR Lt Col Jim Cullison USAF 602-482-3838	CHAPLAIN Vacant
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT Col Lee Lange, USMC 713-232-3609	ADVERTISING Lt Col Jim Cullison USAF 602-482-3838	PERSONAL AFFAIRS Col Lee Lange USMC 713-232-3609
SECOND VICE PRESIDENT LTC Ron Bright, USA 480-614-9463	ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS Lt Col Jim Cullison, USAF 602-482-3838	PROGRAMS CAPT Bruce Kosaveach, Chair 602-501-9876 Col Lee Lange, Col Dave Fleming, vice chairs
SECRETARY CPT Paul Schnur, USA 480-443-8201	HISTORIAN / PHOTOGRAPHER Lt Col Jim Cullison USAF 602-482-3838	ARRANGEMENTS LTJG Donna Bright, USN 480-614-9463
TREASURER Col Charles Bitner, USAF 602-943-0028	JROTC AWARDS LCDR Terry Tassin USN 623-931-1546	SCHOLARSHIPS COL Rob Welch USA 480-207-6446
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DIRECTORS: CDR Jim Draper USN, CAPT Bruce Kosaveach, USN; MAJ Janet Stultz, USA; LTJG Donna Bright, USN; Beth Cullison, Spouse	MEMBERSHIP Col Dave Fleming USAF 480-439-6366	WEBMASTER COL Rob Welch USA 480-207-6446
	SURVIVING SPOUSES Susan Farrell, Surviving Spouse 602-993-8556	SHARE A RIDE CAPT Frank Hoak III, USN 480-664-0047

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



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