A New Beginning

As this is my first note to all of our Chapter members, I first want to thank you for your trust and confidence in electing me your President for this year.

With the great slate of Officers, Board Members for 2018, and the Committee Chairs who are stepping up to the tasks ahead, I predict another stellar year for our Arizona Chapter. I want also to thank COL Lee Lange, USMC (ret), and the entire 2017 Leadership slate for making last year another year of Excellence.

Although the rules for the MOAA Level of Excellence Awards have changed slightly, I have no doubt of our achieving another 5 Star Award when our submission is graded. Thank you, Lee, and thank you to all who have contributed to this effort.

Changes Ahead

As this New Year gets underway, we are already beginning to see changes in the landscape ahead. The increase in luncheon cost to $25 (although this is the first raise in three years) is an example. Yet, I am uplifted by the sustained good quality and service we have seen over the last two years.

Another change you may notice is that we have a new editor for the Sentinel. Janet Lange will publish our monthly newsletter ongoing. She is experienced and savvy, and we are fortunate she is contributing her talent. We will continue to enjoy Jim Cullison’s fine photographs and articles. Change is irksome, but your new Board will endeavor to make all changes positive.

Finances Are Strong

Another positive is the strong financial health of the chapter created by our previous leaders. Our Scholarship Fund appears to be sustainable with the annual golf tournament, the many generous contributions of the membership in 2017 and our ability to generate new revenues.

Our 2018 Fundraising Committee is already planning new events and sources of revenue. See Page 2.

The new Board and Treasurer Charlie Bitner will be creating a 2018 budget which will help anticipate and plan for all the non-scholarship spending. I have always regarded this as separating the Must Do from Should Do from the Nice To Do. With the proven application of the three Ps: Proper Prior Planning, we can do all three. I’ll keep you posted on our progress.

Membership Thoughts

I know these letters must be brief. One other topic I will add to this first letter is our continued membership efforts. We live and work in a target rich environment. There may be some effective contact and follow-up measures we can initiate which will uncover new recruits in our area of operations, “close the sale” on the undecided, and retain the members we have.

Continued on page 2...
We have been gaining new members each month, and Dave Price, our 2nd VP and Chapter Membership Chair, has been very effective at completing the sign-ups and following new leads. Work with us on this. All suggestions will be thoroughly considered.

We’re Having a Fundraiser for our Scholarship Program

Portillo’s Restaurant on Shea Boulevard and 90th Street has agreed to host a fundraiser for our Scholarship Fund on Thursday, January 11. Portillo’s will donate a generous 20% of the amount of the tab of everyone who brings the flyer below on that day.

Bring family members and friends. Each separate order has to have a flyer. This is an easy way to support the fund and have a good meal at the same time.

Meet Our New President

Ron Bright, LTC USA (Ret), served 27 years in the California National Guard while pursuing a civilian career in insurance and finance.

He enlisted in the Army Guard in 1965 and was commissioned in 1968 from the California Military Academy. He commanded field artillery units and served in a variety of senior field artillery posts, at the California Military Academy and at State Headquarters.

Ron retired in 1993 and relocated to Arizona with his civilian work, where as vice president at career transition centers, he counseled and placed senior managers in new careers throughout the state. He is a lifelong Kiwanis member. Ron’s wife, Donna, is a registered nurse and former LTJG in the Navy Nurses Corps. She is our past arrangements chair.

Taking the Oath. Chapter officers for 2018 were sworn-in at the December luncheon. From left are President Ron Bright, USA; 1st Vice President Mike Rogers, USN; Secretary Dave Boyd, USAF; Director Bruce Kosaveach, USN; Treasurer Charlie Bitner, USAF, and Directors Jack Farley and Bob Hinton, both USN. Directors Jon Shawl, USN, and Pete Vietenhans, USA, and 2nd Vice President Dave Price, USN, were unable to attend.
January Luncheon

Nick Lowery: Football Pro, Scholar, Advocate for Youths

Nick Lowery, our January 20 luncheon guest speaker, is probably best known by most as the most prolific field goal kicker in the National Football League and a member of the Kansas City Chiefs Hall of Fame.

But it is his career after football that has made the widest impact. He heads the Nick Lowery Youth Foundation, which has programs to combat bullying and to help young people reach their highest level of achievement. He founded Champions for the Homeless to support the St. Vincent De Paul Society with celebrity volunteer events, and he is a board member of the Nation Building for Native Youth organization.

Nick has a Master's Degree and Fellowship from Harvard and was an advisor to Presidents George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton.

Don't delay. Make your reservations for this inspiring talk no later than January 16.

Haven't Renewed? Here’s Why It’s Important, and Easy to Do

By Dave Price
Membership Chairman

I hope this note finds you enjoying a wonderful holiday season and looking forward to the blessings of a New Year. Our chapter has remained strong, and we finished 2017 with 149 members. Thanks to all of you who helped bring in 15 new members.

Just as a reminder, membership is open to all active duty, reserve, former and retired commissioned and warrant officers of the Armed Forces, Public Health Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and membership is complimentary through 2018 for new members who join between now and May.

On the membership renewal front we've had just over half of our members pay their dues for 2018 so far. Per our Chapter Operations Manual, dues were overdue (pun intended) on January 1. So I hope you will renew your membership at your earliest convenience. Your membership is important! It gives our chapter credibility and improved access to our elected representatives with resulting positive impact on issues important to veterans, military members and families in Arizona and nationally. Your dues go into the general fund and are used for chapter operations.

You can renew using your credit card or PayPal. Instructions are located on our chapter website, azmoaa.org, under the membership tab.

To pay by mail, make your check to AZ Chapter MOAA and send it to Treasurer Charlie Bitner at the address below.

Don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about membership or corrections to our records. Thank you for your dedicated support to the Arizona Chapter MOAA.

Arizona Chapter 2018 Membership Renewal Form

Member Full Name: __________________________________________

Regular Member Renewal: $20; Surviving Spouse Member Renewal: $10.
Provide any changes in your address, phone number, e-mail, etc.

Make check payable to: AZ Chapter MOAA
Mail renewal form and check to: Charlie Bitner, Treasurer
134 E. Northview Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85020
Party Time at the Arizona Chapter

A tableful of gifts brought by members awaited the gift exchange following lunch at the chapter’s December luncheon and holiday party.

Bill Adams and wife Nancy turn in the gift they brought and receive a ticket from Marcia Leggett allowing them to participate in the gift exchange.

Decisions, Decisions
John Ady, above, surveys the array of choices before deciding which brightly wrapped gift to choose. At right, Pete Berger appears pleased with his selection, as does Susan Farrell at far right.
About 80 members attended the annual event, and the new format seemed to work well. Everyone who brought a gift for the exchange got to leave with a gift.

Jack White made his choice and prepares to see what’s inside.
TRICARE is Changing

For some time, MOAA has been working on the critical efforts required to implement major reforms to the TRICARE program. As you know from past experience, reform usually means more cost to you. The changes impact users of TRICARE Prime and Standard.

The good news is there are no changes to TRICARE For Life – for now. MOAA has been in close communication with the Defense Health Agency (DHA) and many other stakeholders to prepare for these changes and put out correct information to members.

Important changes coming Jan. 1, 2018, include:

- Consolidation of TRICARE’s existing three regions into two;
- Consolidation of TRICARE Standard and Extra into TRICARE Select;
- Shifting of TRICARE operations to the calendar year (beginning Jan. 1) rather than the fiscal year (beginning Oct. 1);
- New enrollment requirements starting with an open enrollment period December 2018; and
- New TRICARE fee structure

Of special interest to beneficiaries are TRICARE’s changes to its fee structure. These changes likely will result in fee increases for many beneficiaries, as described in this recent article on MOAA’s website, www.moaa.org, titled “DoD Wants More Predictable Fees: Predictably Higher.”

MOAA’s continued efforts to force the DHA to be transparent in its calculation of these new fees has started to bear some fruit. Some of the calculations for the new Select copayments have been re-examined and will result in some fee reductions. This is a bit of good news for beneficiaries.

If you want to keep up with all of the changes, sign up for TRICARE’s Take Command program at www.TRICARE.mil/changes.

The Wait is Over

Chapter Logo Shirts Are Back; Order Yours Now

By Rob Welch
Chapter Shirt Guru

Just checking to see if you would like to order any of the new AZ-MOAA logo golf shirts; $35 each for a $55 value polo shirt by Antigua. Add an extra buck for size 2XL $9.50 of that price goes into the Scholarship Fund.

Shirts come in Men & Women’s styles in Black, Royal Blue, or White.

Please let me know soon, as I will be placing an order immediately after the next board meeting on Thursday, January 4.

Thanks,
Rob
Robert E. Welch
17702 E Fort Verde Road
Rio Verde, AZ 85263-5345
Rob’s Mobile: 480-292-5822
Or e-mail celticop@cox.net

Donations to Chapter Funds

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<td>Roger Schartzer $50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Schluter $100</td>
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<td>Jon Ady $100</td>
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In recognition of his son, William Ady, 1LT USA (Frm), on receiving his Doctorate in Education

Welcome Our New Member

Jon V. Hitchcock, CDR, USCG (Ret)
And his wife Lorilyn of Scottsdale

Please meet and greet our new member
Defense Bill Signed – But No Budget

As reported by MOAA, President Trump signed the FY 2018 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) December 12 in a White House ceremony. The final bill authorizes a defense budget of $700 billion for DoD.

Congress approved the legislation in November, but congressional leadership did not send the bill on to the president until December in hopes Congress would be able to reach consensus and vote to raise the defense spending caps imposed by the Budget Control Act of 2011 (also known as Sequestration) which the FY 2018 NDAA exceeds, and pass a defense appropriations bill.

Instead of passing a budget, Congress has passed a continuing resolution (CR) to fund the government only through January 19, “kicking the can” down the road for a third time. This does nothing to serve the nation and the troops and their families. These stopgap strategies do not allow DoD to manage their readiness requirements or plan ahead for the next mission in a challenging and dynamic security environment.

Congress' most important responsibility under the Constitution is to provide for the common defense of the nation. With that in mind, the nation needs Congress to pass a defense budget that fully funds the FY 2018 NDAA. Doing so will enable the necessary programs that support both the troops and readiness. However, without a budget, support again will be marginalized, leaving our nation short of the requirements called for in the NDAA.

Call to Action

MOAA has put out recent calls to action to the MOAA membership asking them to contact their congressional representatives to urge them to pass a defense budget, not a CR. We need you to do this again, before another CR is passed.

5 key policy decisions in the FY 2018 NDAA that won’t happen without a budget

A 2.4-percent active duty pay raise: This pay raise, equal to the Employment Cost Index (ECI), helps keep troops' pay competitive with private-sector wages. The administration originally requested a 2.1-percent raise. MOAA influenced Congress through a very effective campaign to fully support the higher pay increase. This is the highest pay increase for troops since 2010. Even with this pay increase, a 2.6-percent pay gap remains because of capped pay raises in FYs 2014, 2015 and 2016.

Unchanged Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) calculation: The Senate tried for the second year in a row to change the calculation for BAH in a way that would have negatively impacted service members, particularly dual military families. BAH is a component of each individual service member's earned compensation, so MOAA worked this issue hard with Congress to maintain the calculation as it currently is in law.

TRICARE: Despite yearlong efforts to prevent TRICARE fee increases, the final NDAA included year-over-year increases in pharmacy copayments. Beneficiaries will see steady increases in their cost shares across all medication tiers, which will save DoD more than $2.1 billion by 2022. Most of the increases will be through the retail pharmacy sector, but beneficiaries still can obtain medications at military pharmacies for free. The new fees will include mail-order generic prescriptions as well. By 2026, costs are projected to top off at $14 for a 30-day supply of a generic medication at a retail pharmacy and a 90-day supply by mail. Further, a 30-day supply of a non-generic medication at a retail pharmacy will be $48, and a 90-day supply by mail will hit $44.

More troops authorized: The FY 2018 NDAA authorizes an additional 20,000 troops - much needed by the services in the current and projected national security environment. The Army will increase by 7,500, the Navy by 4,000, the Marine Corps by 1,000, and the Air Force by approximately 4,100. Reserve forces across-the-board will grow by about 3,400.

Lessens the “widow's tax”: Congress included a provision in the FY 2018 NDAA that provides a permanent extension to the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA). Without congressional action, 67,000 military survivors would lose $2,100 in 2018 if the allowance expired in May, as it was set to, and over $3,700 a year after that. By extending the SSIA and indexing future increases to COLA, Congress shows it is making a good-faith effort to address the widow's tax.
Meal Price for 2018 Luncheons
Another reminder that McCormick Ranch has raised the price for our monthly luncheons to $25 per person, beginning this month. It should be noted that this is the first raise in the price in three years and only the second in six years.

Keep in mind that we get a sit-down full meal with service, tip, dessert, beverage and reserved room with audio-visual equipment at a fair price. The meal price is at cost to the chapter. We do not add a surcharge for our treasury. The quality of meals has improved over the last 18 months, and excellent menus are in place for 2018.

Arizona Chapter 2018 Schedule of Meetings and Events
January:
Board Meeting on the 4th
Luncheon on the 20th

February:
Board Meeting on the 1st
Luncheon on the 17th

March:
Board Meeting on the 1st
Luncheon on the 17th

April:
Board Meeting on the 5th
Luncheon and Scholarship Presentations on the 21st
Annual Scholarship Golf Tournament, TBA

May:
Board Meeting on the 3rd
Luncheon on the 19th

June-August: no meetings but stay tuned for possible summer social event

September:
Board Meeting on the 6th
Luncheon on the 15th

October:
Board Meeting on the 4th
Picnic luncheon on the 20th

November:
Board Meeting on the 1st
Luncheon on the 17th

December:
Board Meeting on the 6th
Luncheon/Holiday Party on the 15th

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 $ _________ ($25.00/person) for the January 2018 luncheon
Make check payable to: AZ Chapter MOAA or pay by credit card at the luncheon
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 January 16. Cancellations after January 16 will be charged and not refunded.
Remembering Pearl Harbor
Lee Lange, left and Jim Draper represented the Arizona Chapter at the annual Pearl Harbor Day of Remembrance December 7 at the State Capitol. They laid our chapter wreath at the USS Arizona Memorial, joining veterans and patriotic organizations from around the Valley in the ceremony.

The Arizona Chapter MOAA - 2018 Board of Directors and Committee Chairs

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
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<tr>
<td>PRESIDENT</td>
<td>LTC Ron Bright, USA</td>
<td>480-614-9463</td>
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<tr>
<td>FIRST VICE PRESIDENT</td>
<td>CDR Mike Rogers, USN</td>
<td>925-369-4052</td>
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<td>SECOND VICE PRESIDENT</td>
<td>CAPT Dave Price, USN</td>
<td>831-233-8131</td>
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<td>SECRETARY</td>
<td>Maj David Boyd, USAF</td>
<td>202-617-0337</td>
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<tr>
<td>TREASURER</td>
<td>Col Charles Bitner, USAF</td>
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<td>IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT</td>
<td>Col Lee Lange, USMC</td>
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<td>NEWSLETTER EDITOR</td>
<td>Janet Lange, USMC Spouse</td>
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<td>HISTORIAN / PHOTOGRAPHER</td>
<td>Lt Col John Simmons, USAF</td>
<td>623-326-5352</td>
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<td>Susan Farrell, Surviving Spouse</td>
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<td>CHAPLAIN</td>
<td>COL Daniel Butler, USA</td>
<td>480-352-2682</td>
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<td>CAPT Bruce Kosaveach, Chair</td>
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Access Arizona Chapter’s Internet Web Site at: azmoaa.org

Arizona Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
41122 N. Majesty Way
Anthem, AZ 85086