

The Sentinel

Arizona's First Chapter

The Military Officer's Association of America



The Arizona Chapter Scottsdale, AZ 85250

February 2025 CHARTERED Oct 1956

68 YEARS OF SERVICE TO COUNTRY

Stephen MacDonald, EDITOR

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The Sentinel

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(MOAA).
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President's Perspective by Bruce Kosaveach



e kicked off our 2025 speaker program in fine form by having Joan Sisco, founder of Veterans First, LTD share the mission of her great non-profit with us. Our Arizona Chapter has partnered with Veterans First over the past six years with our "Freedom Isn't Free" and "Still Serving Military, Veterans, and Families" projects funded by grants from MOAA's Outreach Community Grant program. Story on page 9.

As part of our quarterly goal to assist deserving veteran run non-profit organizations, the AZ Chapter MOAA presented Joan a check for \$500. Picture on page 9.

Super Bowl LIX (that's 59) is upon us on February 9th! It will be the Kansas City Chiefs vs the Philadelphia Eagles, and we have our game pool raffle partnering with the Southwest Veterans Chamber of Commerce for some nice cash prizes and income for our chapter that goes to good causes within the veteran community! Details on page 11.

Congratulations to the winner of our AZ Chapter MOAA Lifetime Membership raffle - Steve MacDonald!

I would like to also thank John Ady and Jeff Young for making Spring Training baseball tickets available to our chapter to auction and help raise funds for our Chapter Fund. February 25th is Cubs vs Diamondbacks (see page 12),

(Continued on page 7.)



FEBRUARY 23, 1929

US ARMY JUNE 14, 1775

US NAVY OCT 13, 1775

US MARINE CORPS NOV 10, 1775

US COAST GUARD AUG 14, 1790

US PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE JAN 4, 1889

US AIR FORCE SEP 18, 1947

NATIONAL
OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC
ADMINISTRATION
OCT 3, 1970

US SPACE FORCE DEC 20, 2019

<u>Announcements!</u>

Welcome New Members!

CAPT Jeffery Bartle, USN (Ret)
CAPT Robert Boe James, USN (Ret)

January 2025 Donations

<u>Chapter Fund</u>: Charles Schluter

\$140

Congratulations to our lifetime membership raffle winner!

Steve MacDonald

Check Out Our Facebook Page!:

Don't forget to "Like" and "Follow" us!

Useful Web Links:

Chapter Home Page

Member Dues Renewal

Chapter Events

Chapter News Blog

National MOAA Website

MOAA Store

MOAA Legislative Action Center





ARIZONA CHAPTER MOAA MEMBERSHIP DUES RENEWAL FORM

2025 DUES are payable on JANUARY 1. Dues become DELINQUENT on March 1, 2025.

If you become delinquent, you can still pay your Past Dues by completing your information below and send it with your check — \$20/year for a Regular Member or \$10/year for a Surviving Spouse Member payable to "AZ Chapter MOAA" and mail to: Charlie Bitner, 134 E. Northview Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85020.

Dues for 2024 \$	Dues for 2025 \$					
Member OR Surviving Spouse Member						
Spouse Name						
Please make any CHANGES to your Contact Information below:						
Address:						

To Renew Online - Click Here!



MEMBER LUNCHEON



February 15th, 2025

"Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Society"

Pat Little-Upah, President



President. AVHOFS.



As an Army Nurse in Vietnam.



at Little-Upah was born in Oakland, CA and serves as the President of the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame Society (AVHOFS). Pat is a Vietnam Veteran who served as a US Army Nurse on Active and Reserve Duty from 1966-2004. Among her assignments were OIC of an Intensive Care Unit, Chief Nurse, and Unit Commander. Pat retired as a Colonel and was awarded the Legion of Merit in 2008

Pat has been and is involved with so many Veterans support and advocacy groups they are too many to list. For her post-military service to Veterans and their families, Pat was inducted into the AVHOFS Class of 2014. That widespread service continues today for which she will be honored at the Imprints of Honor (formerly Veterans Heritage Project) annual Salute to Service Gala on March 8th as their annual Storyteller Award.

To learn more about the AVHOFS please visit their website at https://avhof.org/.

We would like to invite any of our members attending the luncheon who have been inducted into the AVHOFS to wear their medals to honor Pat. Thank you!

Agenda: 11:00-11:45 am Meet & Greet Social Hour

11:45 am-12:00 pm Pledge, Invocation, Announcements, Business Meeting

12:00-2:00pm Lunch and Program

Place: McCormick Ranch Golf Club

7505 E McCormick Pkwy, Scottsdale, AZ 85258

Cost: \$40 Per Person; Reservations by 12PM, Wednesday, 12 Feb 2025 to Charlie Bitner

RSVP to Charles Bitner, 134 E. Northview Ave, Phoenix 85020

By email: charles@bitner36.com or contact Charlie at 602-943-0028; PAY ONLINE!

Menu: McCormick Signature Salad, Bow Tie Pasta Bolognese, Garlic Breadsticks, Lemon

Meringue Pie

Dress: Business Casual

Legislative Affairs

by Lee Lange, Legislative Chair



MOAA's Legislative Priorities for the 119th Congress

s the legislative slate resets for the 119th Congress, MOAA member engagement will become even more vital to achieving our advocacy objectives. Your advocacy ensures that MOAA and the broader community of military and veteran service organizations (MSOs/VSOs) maintain momentum for existing priorities such as the Major Richard Star Act, which would benefit tens of thousands of combat-injured veterans.

MOAA also needs our help to build support for new objectives and emerging issues, often via immediate action, to respond to the sporadic nature of the legislative process.

First step: Register as an advocate in our <u>Legislative Action Center</u>. If you're already registered, send the link to a family member or friend. Remember, the Legislative Action Center is open to all who support the uniformed services community.

While our advocacy team remains active on many issues not listed here, our priorities are shaped throughout the year depending on policy developments or emerging issues that necessitate an all-hands approach. Additionally, we share many interests with The Military Coalition and other stakeholders. MOAA leverages those relationships to expand our reach on Capitol Hill.

Here are some of MOAA's priorities for this year:

Currently Serving

Military housing: Recent reporting from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) reveals the myriad challenges service members in unaccompanied housing are facing. The health, safety, and privacy concerns outlined by the GAO show the need for action.

MOAA seeks to improve funding and condition transparency for unaccompanied housing by requiring an annual, publicly available report, which will highlight areas that require the most attention from both DoD and Congress.

Retirees/Veterans

Toxic exposure: MOAA will focus on capitalizing on our recently released report, <u>Ending</u> the Wait for Toxic-Exposed Veterans, to advocate for veterans exposed to toxic materials during their service.

While the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act has made major improvements to how toxic exposures are treated by the VA, additional measures are required. In cooperation with other VSOs, MOAA will advocate for Congress to pass legislation that shortens the time veterans must wait before their toxic exposures are acknowledged and conceded by the VA.

Family/Survivors

Spouse employment: Rates of unemployment for military spouses continue to be four to five times higher than the national average. This persistent challenge requires not only providing education and employment resources for spouses but also incentivizing businesses to hire someone who will likely move in two to three years.

The Work Opportunity Tax Credit program was established to support populations who face significant barriers to employment, and adding a military spouse target group is long overdue. Passing the Military Spouse Hiring Act will provide another important lever needed to address the critical issue of spouse unemployment.

DoD Health Care

Access to care: DoD has acknowledged that congressionally directed reforms to the Military Health System (MHS), together with U.S. medical workforce volatility, exacerbated long-standing access challenges and led to a destabilized MHS that does not consistently deliver timely care to beneficiaries.

Current patient resources for reporting access problems and getting assistance navigating the MHS are inadequate. Also, it is unclear if there are mechanisms for reporting up to the Defense Health Agency so systemic access challenges can be identified and addressed. (*Continued on page 10*.)

Personal Affairs

by Lee Lange, Personal Affairs
Officer



TRICARE 2025: New Contractor, New Challenges for Some Beneficiaries

he TRICARE West Region, which includes Arizona, is in the process of changing over health care contractors from Health Net Federal Services to TriWest. TRICARE For Life beneficiaries are not affected by this change. The changeover has, however, resulted in several reported issues with beneficiary care and billing for those under 65:

- Some beneficiaries <u>have reported problems</u> setting up payments and reaching TriWest customer service staff.
- Some reserve-component beneficiaries have been asked to pay between \$600 and \$1,500 a month to retain coverage an errant notification since corrected by TriWest.
- The former West Region contractor, Health Net Federal Services, reportedly has been swamped by "misdirected calls" seeking

TRICARE support, including some forwarded its way by the current contractor.

TriWest has pledged to make improvements to its customer service and address the high complaint volume, in addition to other policies already in place to ease the transition: A 90-day network waiver for providers (through March 31), for example, and the honoring of preauthorized referrals from Health Net through June 30th or the referral/preauthorization expiration date, whichever comes first.

MOAA remains in contact with Defense Health Agency (DHA) officials and contractors to monitor this transition, make our members aware of any coverage changes or updates, and ensure continued access to service-earned health care.

Since learning about beneficiary challenges in the West Region, MOAA has asked DHA to institute a specialty care referral waiver, as has been done during previous TRICARE contractor transitions. This would allow TRICARE Prime beneficiaries to temporarily seek specialty care without a referral to streamline access to care during the transition disruption. (Continued on page 8.)





Chapter Membership by Bob Fiegl, Chapter 1st VP and Membership Chair

Fiegl r869@gmail.com

rizona Chapter Membership Numbers:
Total Members (includes below): 129
Surviving Spouses: 18
Special Member: 1

Happy February! Don't procrastinate – get your Valentine's Day card(s) now! You know what happens to card selection when you wait too long.

Our chapter leaders invest a lot of time and effort tending to the things required to keep our organization going; it takes a lot. Most of these things are worked out of sight and out of mind of the general membership, and that's the way it should be. The members of the Board of Directors and Officers volunteer a lot of themselves out of a sense of devotion to our chapter's mission and our members. Things that are visible are our many social events. Throughout the year we have our monthly luncheons at McCormick Ranch Golf Club in Scottsdale (3rd Saturdays – next one on February 15th), weekday Happy Hours (next one on February 27th @ Maggiano's Little Italy in Scottsdale), D'Backs games mid-summer, BBQ in October, and Army-Navy game gathering in November, etc. I hope you'll make the effort to attend at least a few of this I am the keeper of our chapter's year's events. membership roster, and, sadly, there are quite a few

members who I've not had the pleasure of meeting during my 3+ years as Membership Chairman. So I'm kindly asking, if you're able, to join us at an upcoming event! Your presence will be appreciated and valued, plus we want to get to know you.

Our events create enjoyable social opportunities, but also serve as a forum to recruit new members. Our most recent recruiting event was a Happy Hour for residents at Sagewood for all veteran commissioned officers, their spouses and/or other guests on Thursday, January 30th. We hope that many of our Sagewood members were able to attend!

Lastly, annual chapter dues (\$20 regular members, \$10 surviving spouses) are due this month. Please see the various methods you can choose to pay your dues to our treasurer, Charlie Bitner. As of this writing on January 24th, less than half our members have paid their 2025 dues. If you have a question about your dues status, please email me at: fieglr869@gmail.com.

Thanks for reading! I hope to see you at one of our coming social events.

Regards,

Bob



CLICK HERE

	Fals 45th Obantan Manakan Lan	and an December Company				
	Feb 15th Chapter Member Lur	ncheon Reservation Form				
Please reserve	meals for name(s):					
Enclosed is m	y check for \$ (\$4	40.00/person) for the Feb 15th Member				
		OAA and mailed to arrive by Feb 12th,				
		Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85020, or contact:				
Charles@Bitner36.com, 602-943-0028.						
Member reservations or call-ins WILL NOT be accepted after						
Feb 12th, 2025 @ 12pm						

Cancellations after Feb 12th, 2025 at 12pm will be charged and not refunded.

TO PAY ONLINE - CLICK HERE!

President's Perspective

Continued from page 1

March 10th is Rockies vs S.F. Giants. (More details to follow on this one.)

Another of our chapter goals that we've set over the past number of years, is to increase the participation and engagement of our chapter members. The more that members of our chapter are engaged and active with chapter events, the more enthusiasm and additional participation is created. To that end, there are two things we are doing to meet that goal:

- We will be continuing our promise to have quarterly meetings/events between luncheons to include more member attendance and potential new members. I realize that many members have other commitments on the Saturdays of our luncheons, so this will hopefully allow them to participate. On February 27th is one such event that I think you will enjoy, and I hope you can attend! Details on page 12.
- Expand our Board committees to include involvement from not only Board members, but also non-Board members and spouses. Some

members and spouses have already signed up, and we thank you! We welcome your participation. Committees that you can sign up for include:

- 1. Membership.
- 2. Programs, Events & Fundraising.
- 3. Website, Facebook, Social Media.

AN ACTIVE AND ENGAGED CHAPTER IS A SUCCESSFUL CHAPTER!!

Upcoming events and programs:

February 9th – Super Bowl game pool raffle: https://business.swvcc.org/store/gamepool.

February 15th - AZMOAA luncheon.

February 25th – D-Backs/Cubs game – online ticket auction through the 18th: https://southwestveterans.dojiggy.io/ea9d02.

February 27th – Happy Hour event with Barry Goldwater, Jr.: https://azmoaa.org/operations/business-luncheon-speaker/.

All the best to you fine people,

Bruce Kosaveach

President, AZ Chapter MOAA





Personal Affairs

Continued From Page 5

MOAA has also met with TriWest leadership to share concerns about beneficiary access to care and the quality of provider networks.

If your care has been disrupted because of this changeover, please contact MOAA at legis@moaa.org. Below, find some resources addressing common challenges associated with the changeover.

Method of Payment Updates

What: TRICARE West Region beneficiaries received extensions to update their credit/debit/electronic funds transfer payment information with TriWest, but those who do not make the updates could be disenrolled back to January 1st, after the new deadlines expire.

Who: Retirees in TRICARE Prime or Select who have not updated their payment information, along with beneficiaries enrolled in TRICARE Young Adult, TRICARE Reserve Select, or TRICARE Retired Reserve, now have until Feb. 28th to do so -- the latest in a series of deadline extensions. This update does not apply to those who pay by military allotment, or to TRICARE For Life beneficiaries.

How: Health.mil offers full instructions on making the update via the TriWest online portal. Beneficiaries who cannot access the portal or have additional questions can call TriWest at 1 (888) 874-9378 to provide payment details over the phone.

Claims and Care Questions

What: Finding answers to your care-related questions will depend on when care was provided. Reaching out to the wrong contractor can result in confusion or more time on hold (or both).

Who: West Region beneficiaries with questions about claims or care received prior to January 1st, 2025, can continue to contact the Health Net Federal Services customer support

(Continued on page 9.)



Recent Chapter Events January Luncheon

Veterans First, Ltd., A Community Partner Shares Their Story

ur chapter was honored to have one of our community partners, Veterans First, Ltd as our guest speaker in January. Joan Sisco is the Founder and President of Veterans First, Ltd. She is a Marine veteran, having enlisted in 1974, and was discharged as a Sergeant in 1977. Joan has dedicated her life to supporting veterans and their families.

Veterans and organizations throughout the state recognized Joan's selfless commitments and cheered when she was inducted into the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame, Class of 2009.

Veterans First has been a participant in our annual MOAA Foundation Grant Projects, Freedom isn't Free and Still Serving: Military, Veterans, and Families.

After her presentation, President Bruce Kosaveach presented her with our first quarter charitable donation of \$500.

If you would like to learn more about Veteran's First or how you can support them, please visit their website at <u>veteransfirstltd.org</u>.



President Kosaveach presents a donation of \$500 to Joan Sisco.





Joan Sisco, Founder and President of Veterans First, Ltd.

Personal Affairs

Continued From Page 8

team through March 30th. Questions about care in 2025 should go to TriWest.

How: Find more details and contact information from Health Net (pre-2025) at <u>TRICARE-West.com</u>. Connect with TriWest (2025 and forward) at TRICARE.mil/West.

Finding a Provider

What: While DHA told Military.com that more than 90% of primary care providers carried over into the TriWest provider network in 2025, some beneficiaries and providers faced uncertainty as the new contractor took over.

Who: Beneficiaries whose providers are not part of the TriWest network can continue to see those providers until March 31st without paying out-of-network costs. After that, visits would be more expensive.

How: Check the <u>TRICARE West provider</u> directory to see whether your provider is in the network. If your provider is interested in joining the network, they can find details on the process at this link.

Legislative Affairs

Continued From Page 4

MOAA seeks a digital MHS assistance platform allowing beneficiaries to report access-to-care challenges and receive help navigating the MHS, including reporting requirements to increase visibility on barriers to access so fixable issues can be addressed.

VA Health Care

Support for caregivers: MOAA has long advocated for legislation that would improve caregiving support for veterans' families. This includes enhancements to the VA Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) and expansion of home health and long-term care services to meet current and future needs of veterans, their caregivers, and families.

This year, MOAA strongly supports the reintroduction and enactment of the Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act. This legislation acknowledges caregivers' invaluable contributions while addressing the significant economic and emotional burdens they face. By offering education, employment, and retirement opportunities, the legislation empowers caregivers to achieve financial security while potentially reducing the federal government's long-term economic burden.

Persistent Efforts

There are certain issues that MOAA will always advocate for until they are passed. Among these are concurrent receipt for combat wounded (Major Richard Star Act), Arlington National Cemetery access, and cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs).

MOAA will also continually monitor other issues and will immediately mobilize the entire association, our membership, and VSO/MSO allies to ensure these other issues are not negatively impacted. They include:

- Decrements to scheduled pay increases.
- New TRICARE or TRICARE Pharmacy Program fees.

- TRICARE cost-sharing increases that exceed military retired pay COLA or TRICARE Pharmacy Program cost sharing that exceeds common industry practice.
- Unequal decrements of compensation and benefits based on rank, age, family composition, retirement status, or disability benefits.

As the work of the 119th Congress gets underway, MOAA will continue its efforts to advocate on behalf of our members and the entire uniformed services community. We will leverage our experience and our relationships on Capitol Hill and with our partners to navigate an increasingly partisan environment.

Through our efforts, MOAA will seek to ensure that service members, veterans, and retirees and their families — who have sacrificed so much — continue to receive benefits earned through their service.

Honor Flight



Honor Flight is now serving Viet Nam War veterans who served through May 7th, 1975. For more information, visit their website at honorflightaz.org.

Arizona Chapter Mission:
Advocate for and improve
the lives of our military,
our veterans, and their
families.











*** FUNdraising Pool ***

Sunday, February 9th, 2023, 4:30 PM

Watch the Super Bowl...win \$\$...and support veterans and their families!!!

\$5.00 a Square—100 Squares per Board

For every 100 squares sold, there will be a \$50 payout at the end of each quarter based on the score. Every square purchased gives you four chances to win \$50.

Squares will be randomly assigned when purchased, and the row and column numbers will be randomly drawn after all squares are sold and filled in.

Get your squares from any SWVCC Director, on our website at



https://business.swvcc.org/store/gamepool

or by calling 602.677.2961 or 760.213.3705

On behalf of the veterans and their families who will ultimately benefit from your generosity, WE THANK YOU!





Thursday, February 27^{th,} from 4:30 to 7:00 16405 N. Scottsdale Rd., Scottsdale, AZ

With special guest
****** Barry Goldwater Jr. ******



Guests & prospective members welcomed.

Heavy hors d'oeuvres, no host bar, silent auction & raffle.

\$20.00 per person

Make checks payable to AZMOAA.

RSVP to Charlie Bitner 602.943.0028/charles@bitner36.com





Spring Training Game Auction!

Win two tickets and a VIP Parking Pass to see the Cubs & Diamondbacks Spring Training Game on Monday, February 25^{th,} at 1:05 pm at Sloan Park Field in Mesa.

Fair Market Value: \$179 Starting Bid: \$100 Bid Increments: \$10

Auction begins January 24th and ends February 18th. Proceeds benefit the AZ Chapter MOAA.

Place your bids at

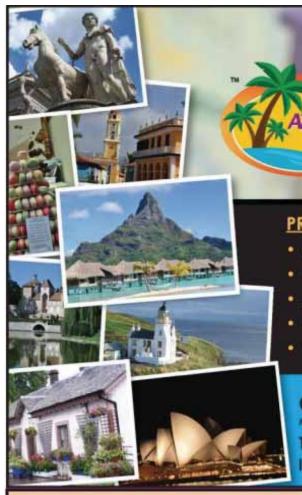
https://southwestveterans.dojiggy.io/ea9d02

Arizona Chapter MOAA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

ELIGIBILITY: Men and women who are or have been federally commissioned in one of the seven U.S. uniformed services (Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Space Force), or NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) or U.S. Public Health Services, the National Guard or other Reserve Components of those services, and Surviving Spouses of deceased individuals who would, if living, be eligible for regular membership as defined above.

(Click here for online application form.)

Your MOAA Member Number:	(National MOAA membership is required.)
	ou may request membership at moaa.org <i>OR</i> you may request o enroll you in National MOAA for a no-cost Basic Membership m.
Full Name:	950
Spouse Name:	Chanter
Street Address:	
City:	State:Zip:
Telephone #: E -Ma	ail address:
Branch of Service:	Rank:
Service Status: Active (includes Reserve/Natio	nal Guard) Retired
Former Officer	Warrant Officer
Surviving spouse of deceased	MOAA member OR eligible individual
	mber and \$10 for a Surviving Spouse. (This is separate from free membership at national, you must still pay chapter dues.)
Amount enclosed: \$ Please material properties of the properti	
How did you learn about the Arizona Chapter? AZ MOAA Chapter Membership Chairman	AZ MOAA Website The Sentinel Newsletter)
Applicant Signature:	Date:



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www.aztrailstravel.com

Who Can Join MOAA?

Men and women who are or have been federally-commissioned in one of the seven U.S. uniformed services:

Army
Navy
Air Force
Marine Corps
Coast Guard
Space Force
National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
Public Health Services
The National Guard
or other Reserve Components
of those services

Widows and widowers of deceased individuals who would, if living, be eligible for regular membership in accordance with the above.

ARIZONA CHAPTER Military Officers Association of America

CALENDAR

Board of Directors Meetings

First Thursday of each month at 10:30am
February 6th, 2025 (*Zoom Call*)
Papago Park Arizona National Guard Base
5636 E McDowell Rd
Phoenix, AZ 85008

Member Luncheon/Meetings

Third Saturday of each month at 11am
Next Meeting: Feb 15th, 2025
McCormick Ranch Golf Club
7505 E McCormick Pkwy, Scottsdale, AZ 85258

Upcoming Events

27 Feb 2025: Chapter Happy Hour 15 Mar 2025: March Member Luncheon



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100392

Access Arizona Chapter's Internet Web Site at: azmoaa.org
The Sentinel Newsletter is sent electronically

Arizona Chapter Military Officers Association of America 3537 E Tina Dr Phoenix, AZ 85050





ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED