

AZ Council of Chapters



Date: April 2013

President: COL Allen Rossow, USA (R)



2013 Storming the Hill MOAA Representatives

President's Message

The loss of our Director of Veterans Affairs, COL Joey Strickland, was the largest blow to all of our military organizations, and our veterans. Despite a large scale campaign by all the veterans organizations in the State, emails, letters, calls, and personal visits, we All Lost! The achievements that we watched him make in our cemeteries, homes, monuments, and a spirit of focus on our veterans were unparalleled. Despite a personal office call including some of our members, and the AZ Veterans Hall of Fame Board, the departure could not be reversed.

Since our Fall meeting, we were tasked to achieve a new membership challenge by recruiting National members to join our Chapters. Based on the first quarter results, very few Chapters succeeded in the cash rewards offered. Topics concerning the new model were discussed in D.C. last week during our "Storming The Hill" visit, including the requirement that new Chapter members had to be National members; the quarterly roster had to be received NLT the last day of March; and the reliance on the national roster(s) of non-chapter members.

This year, I was honored to participate in the "Storming The Hill", ably led by our own Col Gary Fredericks, his seventh tour! With his guidance, we had appointments with both of our Senators and all Representatives, or their representatives. Persistence, but it worked. And, Gary's directions to start with the Senate building, then cross the Capitol ground to the eastern most Representative Office building, then the middle building, and finally the western building, with at least 15 minutes between appointments. Sounds very detailed, but you would fail if you didn't follow his plan.

We left the hotel at 0730, arrived and lined up (30 minutes) for the Capitol steps group photo shot, and then started out. We had to go through security checks (only one door) for each building. We finished and returned to our bus a little after 1700 hours. No lunch!

Representatives Barber and Grijalva were the best examples of sleeves rolled up, leaning on the table, intently reading the brochure and, asking questions. They wanted to know!

The hand-out that we used to brief and left with them is on the MOAA website. I would encourage you to share that website with your

memberships, as I think it is the most impressive sample of what “Storming” is about. Simple messages:

- 1.8 percent pay raise (that is the law)
- health care is Not out of control.

A very special treat at this meeting, was sitting at the welcome table were Victoria and Carol! And, they recognized names. With all the excellent support that we receive from them, it was great to give them a Big Thank You! (I sent a new question in one week later, and Victoria answered within 15 minutes!)

The 2012 Communications Awards were announced – Arizona did Great!! Those Chapters will be recognized during our Council meeting. Well done to those Chapters.

We very much appreciate Nickolas’ Knight’s (Yuma chapter President) dedication and thoroughness in hosting our Council meeting this year. I hope that all will take the time to visit the unique sites like the Yuma Army Depot, the downtown, and of course, the Yuma Prison.

Here is the website – I encourage you to publish and publish it to your members, and encourage them to read it. It is a great recruiting tool....

2013 Storming the Hill Brochure,
A Bargain, Not a Liability, go to
<http://www.moaa.org/Storming/>

This brochure can also be found on the Legislative Affairs page of the AZ Council of Chapters website at
<http://azcouncilofchapters.org/legislative/legislative.htm> then just click on the Storming the Hill 2013 Brochure link.

Allen



(Left to Right) AZ Congressman Paul Gosar meets with COL Allen Rossow and Col Gary Fredricks during the 2013 Storming the Hill

Secretary's Report

Congratulations are in order for our Past Council President, COL Ken Yamanouchi, and the rest of the 2012 Arizona Council of Chapters. Since our last meeting in October I have received in the mail the 2012 5 Star LOE Award Streamer for the Arizona. Council of Chapters MOAA. I believe this was the first year Councils were eligible and Arizona was the only state which had each Chapter and it's Council receive a 5 Star Award.



COL Allen Rossow present COL Ken Yamanouchi with the National MOAA Leadership Award.

Secretary's Report (con't)

The Spring 2013 AZ Council of Chapters meeting is scheduled for May 18th, 2013 at 09:00 to be held at the Sonoran Pueblo, MCAS Yuma AZ. The Council meeting is being held in conjunction with the Yuma Chapter Monthly dinner meeting on May 17th, 2013. This dinner meeting will be held at the Desert Hills Bar & Grill, 1245 West Desert Hills Dr., Yuma AZ 85365. Social hour will start at 1800 hrs and Dinner at 1830. The dinner menu is Ham, Scalloped Potatoes, Salad and Cherry Pie and the price is \$16.00 per person. Be prepared to pay at the door, if paying by check make your check out to "MOAA" Yuma Chapter". If you need any further details please contact myself or the Yuma Chapter President Nicholas Knight at (928)-287-9915 or email at nicholas-yuma@roadrunner.com. For those individuals desiring overnight lodging and are eligible for lodging on the MCAS at Yuma (Dos Rios Inn Bldg 1088) you can call (928) 269-2262 for reservations.

The Council meeting on the 18th luncheon fee is \$ 20.00 and the menu is Cod Baked with Dill Cucumber glaze, Grilled Chicken with peach Glaze, rice pilaf and salad bar. Please make your check out to "MOAA, Yuma Chapter".

I will be sending out the Semi-Annual Chapter Presidents reports in early April and would like them returned to me NLT May 3rd 2013 (I will be out of town from May 5th until the 16th and want to have the reports, agenda's etc. distributed before I leave). If your Chapter has completed its National MOAA LOE award presentation by then you can submit that to me in lieu of the Semi-annual Chapter Presidents report.

If any Council members need another copy of the Fall Council minutes or Treasurer's report prior to the this upcoming meeting please let me know and I will email you a copy. Also if your

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Chapter has any changes to its Chapter Officers (since January 2013) please bring the new information to the council meeting so I can update the official Council roster and distribute following the meeting.

Maj Steven Abel

Important Upcoming MOAA Dates

- 1) **Oct. 11th, 2013** Fall AZ Council of Chapters mtg. preceded by Luke Dinner mtg. Oct. 10th, 2013 Dates are tentative!
- 2) **November 13-16, 2013** Annual Mtg. in Co. Springs (4/5 Star Awards).
- 3) **Spring 2014 TBD** Mini Chapter Presidents Training for Western Region Chapters.
- 4) **April 6-10, 2014** "Storming the Hill" & Council Presidents Symposium.
- 5) **October 26-29, 2014** Annual Meeting in Washington DC (4/5 Star Award).

Treasurer Notes

I want to thank all 9 Chapters for your donations last fall towards the WWII Memorial "Guns to Salute the Fallen" project. On December 7th 2012 Past Council President, CW4 Bob Delker, presented Arizona Secretary of State Ken Bennett a check with Arizona MOAA's donation of \$ 1,000. (see photo below). This donation will go to help in the restoration project and will allow for the placement of a recognition plaque at the WWII Memorial in the name of Arizona Chapters and Council of MOAA. Also below you will see the letter Secretary Bennett sent to Bob Delker as a thank you for our donation. Great job for a worthy cause everybody, Thank You for your contributions.



CW-4 Bob Delker Presents MOAA's Donation Check to Ken Bennett.

Ken Bennett
Secretary of State of Arizona

January 2, 2013

Mr. Bob Delker
Military Officers Association of America
Arizona's Council and Chapters
2653 E. Barclay Court
Green Valley, Arizona 85614

Dear Mr. Delker,

Please accept and pass along my sincere thanks to MOAA for your generous donation to the "Guns to Salute the Fallen" project. Our effort to bring historic military artifacts from the USS Arizona and USS Missouri for permanent display will honor the sacrifice of our WWII veterans and recognize the impact returning GI's had building Arizona into the great state it is.

Too often we forget about how far we've actually gotten away from honoring the Nation's fallen soldiers. They gave us the opportunity to share and promote the rights of all mankind -- the right to live under the blanket known throughout the world as Freedom. That freedom remains intact today for one simple, yet valiant reason - the men and women of our Armed Forces.

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Once again, thank you for your contribution to "Guns to Salute the Fallen." if you like, Visit www.GunsToSaluteTheFallen.com to keep up-to-date on developments surrounding the project Sign our guestbook, send your comments, and share our project with your friends and family.

Best Wishes,

Ken Bennett
Secretary of State

Treasurer's notes (con't)

I wanted to let everyone know that I think the policy of using the Fall Chapter Presidents semi-annual reports to determine membership numbers and thus the Chapters Council dues for the following year was a huge success. It was beneficial for determining the proposed budget and left no guess work as to what your Chapters dues would be for the coming year. This was the first year I had nearly every Chapters Council dues payment before the end of January and they all corresponded with the projected budget which was based on the Semi-annual Chapter Presidents reports. Thank You all for your cooperation in making the budget and dues process much less painful than in years past.

Maj Steven Abel

Personal Affairs

The Enhanced TRICARE Retiree Dental Program is available to all military retirees (including gray area retirees) and their eligible family members, non-remarried surviving spouses and their eligible children, as well as MOH recipients and their eligible immediate family members. The program covers cleanings, exams, fillings, root canals, gum surgery, oral surgery and dental accidents on the first day that coverage becomes effective; after 12 months of being in the program, it then covers crowns, bridges, partials, braces and dental implants.

The Enhanced TRDP provides every enrollee an annual maximum of \$1,200 per person, a \$1000 annual maximum for dental accidents and a \$1500 lifetime maximum for orthodontics. It is important to note that the money that the TRDP pays out for preventive and diagnostic services doesn't count against the annual maximum – those benefits are in addition to the \$1200. Retirees can find more information on the program, as well as enroll 24/7/365, online at **trdp.org**.

TRDP enrollees realize the maximum program savings (an average of 22%) when seeing a network provider. To find a network provider, as well as utilize the **Consumer Toolkit** to print ID cards, view annual maximum information, see if claims have been paid and sign up for e-mail updates, please visit **trdp.org**.

Also a reminder that all Chapter Personal Affairs Officers should hold an annual Briefing for their members and most importantly their spouses. There is an excellent guide as to what material a Personal Affairs Officer should have available can be found in the MOAA Council and Chapter Policies and Procedures Guide Appendix J
Maj Steven Abel

[TOPS](#)

The Arizona TOPS program and its employment listings have been somewhat slower than expected this year. We have added Job and Career Fairs to our website at www.moaatopsaz.org as well as adding H2H (ESGR), INDEED, and other links to our website.

I will gladly accept job listing to place on our website, just email them to me at harrybowen@aol.com . I would continue to recommend that each Chapter assign someone to go out and visit local companies, make them aware of the benefits of hiring dedicated, highly qualified professionals. These Qualified former

Military officers most often don't require any training and when hired are usually able to "Hit the ground running".

The AZ TOPS network does have two new TOPS liaisons in the State, Major Larry Singer for the Coronado Chapter and CW3 Travis Workman from the Grand Canyon Chapter P please keep the AZTOPS network in mind if you here of any job openings and forward them to me.

CW3 Harry Bowen Sr.

[Auxiliary News](#)

The Auxiliary Members Advisory Committee (AMAC) supports MOAA's goals and advises MOAA's president about survivor issues. We actively support MOAA legislative agenda, storming the Hill each year with MOAA members from across the nation. We also work with auxiliary liaisons and council and chapter presidents to promote MOAA's agenda in communities and states.

We support these military retiree and survivor goals for 2013: Oppose military benefit changes that are inconsistent with service career sacrifices; Preserve full-inflation COLA's; End the deduction of VA disability compensation from military retired pay; End the offset of VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation from the military Survivor Benefit Plan(SBP) Annuities; Implement a more equitable military disability retirement system; Restore VA DIC compensation for qualifying survivors who remarry after age 55; Reform to equalize the SBP calculation for a reservist who dies performing inactive duty training as the same for active duty deaths; Authorize survivors to retain a deceased retiree's full final-month retired pay; Authorize SBP annuities to be paid to special needs trusts for permanently disabled children; Reform the Uniformed Services Former Spouses' Protective Act; and Authorize Space A travel for a gray area Guard/Reserve retirees and qualifying survivors.

The AMAC's goal for 2013 is the elimination of the SBP/DIC offset. Sec. Bill Nelson, whose SBP/DIC amendment to eliminate the offset was not included in the 2013 National Defense Authorization Act Plan. To help, call and email your congressional representatives. Progress could be made by expanding or extending the Special Survivor Indemnity Allowance (SSIA), currently set at \$90 a month, which was funded five years ago to provide additional income to surviving spouses whose SBP had been partially or completely offset by DIC. Congress was unable at that time to secure the required funding for full repeal, but it did find the money to start the process of mitigating the offset, a so-called Band-Aid solution. If funds become available but are not enough to eliminate the offset, the 2017 SSIA sunset provision should be extended. If the SBP/DIC offset is not completely repealed, we support extending SSIA until the offset is eliminated completely.

Priscilla Clay, Auxiliary Director

VETERAN LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

The following is a summary of some key Veterans Legislation that is being considered

S. 6 - Putting Our Veterans Back to Work Act. A bill that would provide grants for hiring veterans as first responders, creating a single unified employment portal, job training benefits for older veterans, and upgrade existing transition services for service members leaving active duty.

H.R. 32 - Repeal the SBP-DIC Offset. A bill to repeal the offset of DIC payments from SBP annuities, in the belief that when service caused the death, the VA indemnity payment should be added to the normal SBP annuity, not subtracted from it.

H.R. 574 - Medicare Physician Payment Innovation Act. A bill that would avoid a 27-percent cut in Medicare/TRICARE payments to physicians by repealing the flawed formula driving the annual cuts and requiring a pilot program to find a replacement formula.

S. 234 - The Retired Pay Restoration Act of 2013.

A bill that would authorize the full concurrent

receipt of retired pay and veterans' disability compensation for military retirees, regardless of disability rating, including those with Chapter 61 medical retirements.

And then there's the President's Defense Budget

He is seeking increases in Tricare fees that would touch all beneficiaries but would fall hardest on working-age retirees under 65.

For the **Tricare for Life program**, the budget proposes an annual enrollment fee based on a percentage of retired pay. For 2014, the fee would be capped at \$150 for family coverage for most retirees and \$200 for retired flag officers.

There would be rapid increases over the following years, with annual increases of \$150 in maximum fees for most retirees and \$200 in the ceiling for flag officers. **But retirees who are already 65 at the time of the change would be exempt from any Tricare for Life enrollment fees.**

Tricare Prime enrollment fee for retirees under 65, it would increase in phases over four years, based on a percentage of retired pay, again with higher charges for retired flag officers.

For those retired below flag officer rank, minimum annual enrollment for family coverage would be \$548 in 2014, rising to \$594 in 2018. The max for anyone below flag officer rank in 2014 would be \$750 for family coverage, rising to \$1,226 in 2018.

For flag officers, annual enrollment for family coverage would be \$900 in 2014, rising to \$1,840 in 2018.

The budget also proposes to increase Tricare Prime co-pays for retirees and their beneficiaries to \$16 per medical visit not related to mental health. That would be a \$4 increase.

New annual enrollment fees are proposed for Tricare Standard and Tricare Extra for retirees under the age of 65, phased in over five years. Fees would start in 2014 at \$70 for individuals and \$140 for families and would rise by 2018 to \$125 for individuals and \$250 for families.

In 2019 and beyond, enrollment fees would increase each year by the same percentage as the annual cost-of-living adjustment in military retired pay.

In addition to the enrollment fees, it proposes what budget documents call a “modest” increase in the annual health care deductibles for working-age retirees, also phased in over five years.

The current deductible is \$150 for individuals and \$300 for families. In 2014, deductibles would jump to \$160 for individuals and \$320 for families, then would rise another \$40 for individuals and \$80 for families in 2015. From 2016 through 2018, the deductible would increase by another \$30 a year for individuals and \$60 a year for families. Beyond 2018, deductibles would increase each year by the amount of the retiree COLA.

Increases in pharmacy co-pays for all Tricare beneficiaries, would be similar to what was proposed in previous years that modestly increases the charge for generic prescriptions at retail pharmacies while dramatically increasing the cost for brand name drugs through both retail and mail order pharmacies.

One new wrinkle: The proposal sets a co-pay of \$9 starting in 2018 to fill a generic drug prescription through the Tricare mail-order program; generics purchasing through the mail-order option is now free.

Col Gene Fenstermacher, USAF, (ret)

Auxiliary Members of Arizona

The auxiliary members throughout our state has been extremely busy this past year after their outstanding support of collecting Cell Phones for our service members. They have prepared layettes for the first born children of our servicemen. Provided extra Christmas gifts under the trees during the toy drives.

Throughout the year the ladies meet together for luncheons as well as attending the regular chapter meetings. Books, magazines, candy, cookies and other items are collected and mailed to our service members. These are just a few things that our auxiliary members work together in supporting our men and women in uniform.

Priscilla Clay

ESGR

A Message from the National Chair

Much has been written about the U.S. forces drawing down and out of Afghanistan in the near future. We have already completed our wartime mission in Iraq with a resulting troop withdrawal. Does this mean the use of the Reserve Components in the future will be dramatically different and our reliance on them considerably lessened? Will our mission in ESGR be substantively reduced to reflect the new realities?

The answer to both questions is an unequivocal NO. The new National Defense Strategic Guidance supporting our nation’s National Security Policy coupled with the growing austerity of our fiscal environment envisions the doctrine of OPERATIONAL Reserve Forces as being here to stay. The “New Normal” is a term often used in this regard. While we are transitioning from today’s war paradigm to prepare for future challenges, the United States will rebalance its forces around the globe along with strengthening our reliance on our alliances and partnerships. The Defense Department is committed to deter aggression, counter terrorism, maintain a nuclear deterrent, and defend our Homeland and support civil authorities in times of national disasters. Part of the new dynamic will be a reduction in a permanent U.S. forward presence, relying instead on rotational deployments to various areas of the globe to meet whatever contingency, crisis, or nation building needs of the time – including such areas as Korea, Africa, etc.

The Reserve components will continue to be utilized in support of various partnership activities and these rotational missions. It is anticipated they will face continued, regular deployments of less frequent and hopefully shorter durations. Legislative changes have also made it possible to use all Reserve and Guard components to respond to domestic support operations, adding another dimension to Reserve service. Incorporating the new economic realities of the future into this mix makes the Reserve component a more vital, viable and essential component of our National Defense Forces – true partners with the active components.

What this means for us in ESGR is a continued high level of effort and activity to meet the needs of our core customers – America’s employers and our neighbors who serve in the National Guard and Reserve. We need to put an emphasis on our core missions -- outreach, recognition and mediation.

ESGR Outreach to employers to educate them on the new normal use of the Reserve component is important to maintain their unparalleled support for their shared employees. We need to be their advocates within the Defense establishment relaying their concerns, recommendations, and input on legislative and policy issues that would facilitate their continued culture of support for our men and women in uniform.

Another important reality we need to reinforce in our employer outreach effort is to educate employers that for us to remain a viable and ready military force, our neighbors serving in uniform and their families need the security of meaningful civilian employment – both existing jobs and new opportunities. We can “close the deal” on this aspect of our employer outreach by asking all employers to reaffirm their support by signing and proudly displaying a current ESGR Statement of Support.

We also need to redouble our efforts in our Military Outreach effort to educate the members of our Guard and Reserve that they have responsibilities under the law and if nothing else, an ethical responsibility to keep their employers informed on all requirements of their Reserve service. By holding up their end of the bargain in this regard, they will experience even greater levels of employer support while maintaining their jobs.

Additionally, we need to reach out to our military folks and assist them with their civilian employment by directing them to meaningful employment opportunities on a local level; helping them prepare for entering the workplace by assisting in improving interview and resume skills; and most importantly, asking them to recognize their employers and supervisors for the support they already receive.

We are blessed in this country with an extraordinary level of support from our employers that very often goes above and beyond the requirements of law. We all know heartwarming stories of things coworkers and employers do to support our citizen warriors and their families. Let’s make it one of our goals to

formally recognize these outstanding examples with appropriate awards -- Patriot, Above and Beyond, Pro Patria, and yes, Freedom Award nominations. Experience has shown us that employers and supervisors who are recognized are our most ardent and enthusiastic cheerleaders for Reserve component service.

Finally, in those cases where misunderstandings arise between employers and their Reserve or Guard employees, we must be ready to offer our informal mediation services provided by our dedicated Ombudsman force to nip potential problems in the bud and gain even higher levels of employer support. A proven tactic in this regard is at the end of a successful intervention, asking the employer to sign a Statement of Support and the Service member to recommend a Patriot award.

Hopefully you see our ESGR core values and missions remain unchanged and just need a renewed emphasis in today’s environment to continue our reputation of being the preeminent and most successful employer support organization for over 40 years. It is with your individual, local effort that we remain great. I personally salute you and offer the thanks and respect of the entire National and State management team of ESGR. We all serve together for the good of our great Nation.

James Rebholz
ESGR National Chair

