

AZ Council of Chapters



Date: September 2013

President: COL Allen Rossow, USA (R)



President's Message

We are looking forward our Fall meeting hosted by Pam and the Luke Chapter. They have invited all Chapter representatives to join their Chapter at dinner on 10 October. They have lined up speakers for the dinner and for our Council meeting, who should be very interesting to all attendees. Lucinda and I look forward to visiting with all the Chapter attendees. Thank You, Pam for the excellent planning that you and the Chapter have obviously accomplished.

We also will welcome our new Auxiliary Liaison to the Council. The Tucson Chapter recommended Shirley Phillips to provide that key Council member and we are very fortunate that she has agreed to join us. I hope that all will join me in welcoming her to the Council.

Storming The Hill: In April, I was fortunate to join our National Director, Col Gary Fredericks, in the annual MOAA "Storming the Hill". Accomplishments: Gary and I had office appointments with both AZ Senators and all AZ Representatives! National provided an excellent three page handout, clearly explaining three critical issues and urging our representatives to support. MOAA Legislative representatives

have all ready addressed the sub-committee on VA Health Care, and Congress has passed legislation maintaining the 1.8 percent increase in pay!

What an experience! In March, calls were made to each office requesting a 15 minute office visit with the Senator/Representative or the Legislative Director. Gary's directions were to schedule visits with our two Senators first, then with the Representatives in the House building 1, then House building 2, then House building 3 – no back tracking! Allow 15 minutes between appointments. All were approved and scheduled. Since Gary is an experienced pro, with many "Storming" tours under his belt, I had to run behind him and try to keep up! We loaded on buses to take us from the hotel to Capitol Hill, line up on the steps and hold still for a group picture. That took over 45 minutes. Then off to the Senate Office building (far side of the building), stand in line to go through the security x-ray, then up the stairs to the first office. After the Senate office visits, exit the building and cross over to the far side of the Capitol complex to the first House building, stand in line, security check, then up three or four flights to the first Representative office. Out of that building to the second Representative building, line up, security check... Each office understood the issues and Gary's elevator speech. We successfully completed the PT test, with no rest breaks, no lunch, and arrived back at the buses at dinner time for return to the hotel.

Level Of Excellence Awards: Of the 40 plus Councils, twelve were recognized with the 5-Star award – Including the Arizona Council! **For the second year!** And, **ALL** Arizona Chapters, who were eligible, were recognized as

5-Star Chapters, several for the eighth year in a row. Congratulations to All. Next year, we'll be joined by our Grand Canyon Chapter.

Arizona Department of Veterans Affairs:

Since the last Council meeting, COL Joey Strickland has been replaced as Director by Ted Vogt. Although MOAA was deeply involved with the decision by the Governor's Office, Joey remains in Arizona in another position. We wish him well. Ted Vogt is veteran of the USAF, serving as an intelligence officer, and a native of Tucson. Director Vogt served in the Arizona House of Representatives from 2010 until 2013 as a state representative for Legislative District 30 (Tucson, Sierra Vista, and Tubac).

I hope everyone has had an enjoyable and safe summer and I look forward to seeing you at the October 11th 2013 meeting.

Allen Rossow, President

Secretary's Message

The Fall Council and Luke Chapter Dinner meetings are fast approaching and it is time to make your plans to attend.

Below is the information I have regarding the upcoming Council of Chapters Meeting on October 11th, 2013 as well as the Luke Chapter Dinner information for October 10th, 2013.

The Luke Chapter Dinner meeting will be on October 10th with the social hour from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Dinner will follow immediately after the invocation and pledge of allegiance. At approximately 7 p.m. our speaker, LTC Scott A. Fredrick will begin his presentation for about 45 minutes.

The location of this dinner meeting is Grandview Terrace in Sun City West. The address is: 14515 West Granite Valley, Sun City West. I have forwarded directions previously via email. You can also check the Luke Chapter website: www.lukemoaa.org for the directions.

Dinner will consist of: Chicken Marsala, Rice Pilaf, Broccoli Spears, Garden Salad with Honey Mustard Dressing and Coconut Cream Pie. The cost of the dinner is \$23.00 per person. Please Notify Pam Wojtas, Luke Chapter President if you plan to attend the Dinner meeting (contact info is at the end of this article).

Please Mail your check to Luke Chapter MOAA, P. O. Box 5072, Sun City West, AZ 85376. Checks must be received by October 2nd, because the attendance for dinner must be called in on October 3rd. Once they have called in the number of attendees for dinner there is no canceling. If someone has to cancel they will not be able to get a refund for their dinner cost. Grandview Terrace does not have a liquor license, so they will have a limited amount of liquor available at no charge. They will also provide beer and wine. Wine will be \$4.00 per glass and beer will be \$3.00 per bottle. You also have the option of bringing your own liquor, wine or beer. Mixers will be available at no charge and Grandview will cork your wine at no charge.

The attire for the dinner is anything except blue jeans and shorts. Usually their board members wear a suit or sports coat and tie, but other members wear slacks and a sports shirt. The ladies where anything from dressy clothes to slacks and a blouse.

The Arizona Council of Chapters Meeting will be on October 11th, 2013, Time TBA Info as follows:

The Arizona Council of Chapters fall meeting will take place Friday, October 11th at Luke Air Force Base in Harlow's Lounge at Club Five Six. The meeting room is reserved 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. (start time for the Council meeting is yet TBD). There will be a continental breakfast available that morning.

The Guest speaker for the Council meeting is Dr. Alexander White a Holocaust survivor and he was a member of Shindler's list.

Club Five Six has a buffet lunch Monday through Friday, or you can order a sandwich off the posted menu. After going through the buffet line or getting a sandwich, we will have the choice of taking the food back to Harlow's Lounge or going into the dining room and eating our lunch. Everyone will pay for their own lunch.

For those individuals who require or desire overnight lodging please read the following:

For those persons with a military I.D., reservations may be made at the Fighter Country Inn (623-856-3941 ext. 1) anyone who needs additional information, please let Pam Wojtas know.

If someone prefers to stay at a hotel, there is a Hampton Inn and Residence Inn by Marriott in Goodyear which is not far from Luke AFB. If you prefer to stay closer to Grandview Terrace where the dinner will take place, there is a Hampton Inn in Surprise which is about 6 minutes from Grandview Terrace. The Hampton Inn's address in Goodyear is: 2000 N. Litchfield Road, Goodyear, AZ, 623-536-1313. The Residence Inn is located at: 2020 Litchfield Road, Goodyear, AZ, 623-866-1313. Both are about 5 miles south of Luke AFB. The Hampton Inn in Surprise is located at 14783 N. Grand Ave., Surprise, AZ, 855-271-3622. It is about 10 miles north of Luke AFB.

If you have any questions or need additional information as well as to let the Luke Chapter know you will be attending either the Chapter Dinner, Council meeting or both PLEASE contact the Luke Chapter President, Pam Wojtas either via email [at jp7wojtas@gmail.com](mailto:jp7wojtas@gmail.com) (Please Note this is a NEW email for Pam) or phone at 623-544-4477.

As always if you have any questions or concerns regarding the Council business please feel free to let me know. I look forward to seeing everyone at the Council meeting in October.

Steve Abel, Secretary

Treasure's Report

Finally some good news to report on the finances of the Arizona Council of Chapters.

Last year I presented the proposed budget for the fiscal year October 2012 to October 2013. This proposed budget showed the Council with a beginning balance as of October 2012 of \$ 2,626.47 then after adding projected revenue and subtracting estimated yearly expenses my proposed ending balance as of October 2013 was projected to be \$ 2,708.97.

Thanks to the generosity of our Council President and Vice President, who did not submit any travel reimbursement expenses for the year, and the fact we only had \$ 38.04 in administrative cost for the year (Council website renewal for 3 years) our actual end of year balance for 2013 is \$ 3,762.93. This ending balance for the 2012-2013 fiscal year is \$ 1,053.96 higher than what was projected.

A special thank you goes out to Allen Rossow and Ron Perkins for their kindness and generosity in helping us increase the Council balance for the fiscal year 2012-2013.

All Chapter Presidents please be sure to submit your Chapters Semi-Annual report, which will include your Chapters membership numbers, in a timely manner. I will need these membership numbers to establish your Chapters Dues for 2014 as well as to complete the Council's proposed budget for the 2013-2014 fiscal year to present at the October 11th Council meeting.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this Treasurer report please contact me either via email or phone.

Steve Abel, Treasurer

VETERAN LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

Top Ten Issues of Concern to Veterans

As the August ‘recess’ came to an end and Labor Day quickly passed, Congress returned to several burning issues that needed resolution:

1. Syria: By the time you see this article; the issue of ‘punishing’ the Syrian regime for atrocities against their own people will have hopefully been resolved with a reasoned and congressionally sanctioned decision. And of major concern, how will the final decision impact national security and our international leadership standing in the world?

2. Sequestration: Will Congress turn off the disproportional and harmful sequestration that has handcuffed the Pentagon’s budget and our nation’s readiness?

3. Defense Authorization Bill: Does it include the well deserved 1.8% pay raise for the troops and avoid more TRICARE fee hikes?

4. “Doc” Fix: Will Congress avert the nearly 25% Medicare/TRICARE reimbursement cut scheduled to take effect on 1 January 2014?

5. SBP/DIC Offset and Concurrent Receipt: Will Congress make any progress this year on these two inequities for **survivors** and **disabled retirees**?

6. Chained CPI: Will Congress’ **Grand Bargain** include the use of a Chained CPI that would painfully deflate the annual cost-of-living adjustment for social security, federal and military retired pay, and veteran disability compensation?

7. Grand Bargain: Will Congress come up with a bi-partisan plan to control our Nation’s out of control spending and begin nibbling away at its \$16.9 trillion dollar debt without cutting

tens of billions from the core incentive package that has induced generations of military members and families to accept the extraordinary demands and sacrifices inherent in a military career?

8. Debt Ceiling: Will Congress decide to increase the debt ceiling again later this year, allowing the nation to go further into debt?

9. Defense Appropriations Bill: Did or will Congress finally pass a reasonable budget? (- *I hope you haven’t been holding your breath*)

10. Government Shutdown: Or did or will Congress find it conveniently necessary to avert a government shutdown again by providing an interim Continuing Resolution?

All of these require a bipartisan collaborative Congress...hopefully their August ‘vacation’ put them in that mood.

Gene Fenstermacher, Colonel USAF (Ret)

TOPS

For those who may not be aware of the change, MOAA TOPS is reorganized. National has decided to merge TOPS with the Benefits Information and Financial Education to form the Transition Center. This new Transition Center will serve as a one-stop shop for national MOAA members and their spouses in transition. The department will provide financial and health care education, answer questions regarding earned benefits and entitlements, assist those filing VA claims through MOAA’s new veteran service officer pilot program, and provide career-transition support through a range of self-marketing assistance.

TOPS Liaisons will be called chapter or council transitions. The title of state networking coordinator remains unchanged. Council and confusion.

ESGR News

In the coming months, chapter and council chapter leaders are encouraged to use the new department and position titles to avoid potential transition liaisons and jobseekers will learn more about a new tool entitled MOAA Connect. This members-only online community will allow chapter and council transition liaisons and MOAA jobseekers to expand their networks and exchange ideas and information.

For the time being, I have not changed, or tried to change, the MOAAAZTOPS web site, to reflect these changes. Only after National has provided better guidance, will we get with CPT (R) Gavin Kelley and start a transition. For the foreseeable future, all job announcements or seminars or job fair announcements will be sent through the MOAA TOPS Coordinator and uploaded on the website.

It should be pointed out that there are several self-help links that we have added over the past 18 months for members and their spouses to access for assistance in obtaining answers to transition and/or job placement.

Harry Bowen, CW3, USA, (R)



(L) Harry Bowen receives the ESGR "Seven Seals Award" for "Employer Outreach Volunteer of the Year" Presented by CDR John Chernoski, Southern Arizona ESGR Chairman (R) at the May 2013 AZ CoC meeting.

Arizona ESGR Appoints New Chairmen and Directors

Arizona Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense office is pleased to announce the following selections.

- 1) John Cheronki of Green Valley, AZ as the new Arizona ESGR Chair for the Southern Arizona area.
- 2) Darren Venters of Prescott Valley, AZ as the new Arizona ESGR Chair for the Northern Arizona area.
- 3) Steven Yamamori of Goodyear, AZ as the new Arizona ESGR Chair for the Central Arizona Area
- 4) Anthony Morrison of Prescott Valley, AZ as the new Arizona ESGR Training Director.

With almost half of our Nation's Military force in the Guard and Reserves, these gentlemen will have a direct impact on these men and women and their civilian employers. " The patriotic support of America's employers and the employees they share with the nation ensures the viability of the all-volunteer force, and thus our national security. ESGR applauds employers who practice personnel policies that support employee participation in the Guard and Reserve," stated Arizona ESGR State Chairman, Tim Williamson.

Arizona MOAA congratulates all of these appointees and we wish them well in their new positions in the AZ ESGR program and we hope to continue our long standing support and cooperation with the AZ ESGR program.

Steven Abel

Darren Venters receives Prestige's award

ON July 26, 2013 Arizona Council of Chapters ESGR Director, Darren Venters (C), received the Adjutant General's Award For Meritorious Achievement while serving as the Southern Arizona ESGR Area Chair. Presenting the award was Brigadier General Ted Maxwell(L), Assistant Adjutant General, Air, Arizona National Guard and Mr. Bruce Hamilton(R), Program Support Technician, Arizona ESGR. (see Photo)



"Mr. Venters significant contributions to all aspects of the ESGR mission have increased the overall personnel readiness of all military units in the southern Arizona area as well as across the State of Arizona by ensuring our citizen warriors and their employers are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities under the auspice of the Uniformed Services Employment and

Reemployment Rights Act. Additionally, under Mr. Venters leadership, his team was able to meet all goals and objectives established for Arizona ESGR by the National Headquarters which led to his selection as a member of the Headquarters ESGR Outreach Sub-Committee. Mr. Venters also led the charge for the State of Arizona to strengthen the existing civilian employment laws for Guard and Reserve members through his work with the Arizona Legislature. Mr. Venters efforts reflect great credit upon himself, the State of Arizona, ESGR and the Department of Defense".

Bruce Hamilton, AZ ESGR, Program Support



The Arizona Council of Chapters and all 8 Arizona MOAA Chapters, who were eligible, received a 2013 5 Star Level of Excellence Award.

Congratulations to All on a job well done in 2012.

