



The Sentinel

Arizona's First Chapter



The Arizona Chapter

13819 N. 51st Street

Scottsdale, AZ 85254

APRIL 2015 CHARTERED 1956 58½ YEARS OF SERVICE TO COUNTRY EDITOR: JIM CULLISON

President's Perspective

by Jim Cullison



The Doctor's Visit

If you missed Dr. Connie, you missed a treat.

Dr. Connie, of course, is RADM Connie Mariano, USN (Ret), well-known as physician to three U.S. presidents. She was our guest speaker in March and gave a delightful talk, one mixed with humor, inspiration and lessons to live by.

She has written a book on her experience, The White House Doctor, but we got to hear the highlights first hand.

Another Fine Program

We have another first rate speaker this month, as our guest will be Dr. Randy Groth, Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army. This promises to be an informative event, as Randy is Arizona's liaison between the public and the Army.

Welcome New Members

The chapter is blessed this month with seven new members, including Dr. Connie and three others

who first joined us as guests at a luncheon. See who they are on page 3.

Brunch for Scholarships

You, your family and friends can give our scholarship fund a boost in a few weeks by going out for brunch. Rusconi's American Kitchen in north Phoenix. On Sunday, April 26, the restaurant will donate 20% of the price of your meal to the fund. Reservations required.

Beth and I have eaten at Rusconi's several times and can attest that the service is friendly and the food is superb. Come on over for brunch. It can be your good deed for the day. Details on page 2.

Golf Tourney Nears

There's still time to sign up for our April 23 chapter golf tournament, which is another way to support the scholarship fund. You can be a player, sponsor a hole or

join the group for lunch — or any combination of the three. Signup deadline is April 13. All proceeds go to the fund. See page 4.

The Gala Was Gala

Several of our chapter members attended the Patriotic Gala last month. The annual Gala is sponsored by the Arizona Hall of Fame Society to honor and recognize leaders from government, business, community groups and students who have given exceptional support to veterans.

It was gratifying to see that a number of those chapter members were principal participants in various parts of the program, including Ron Perkins, president of the Hall of Fame Society; Rob Welch, chairman of the Unified Arizona Veterans, John Sentz, Chuck Schluter and Gene Rafanelli.

The evening was truly memorable, with a color guard led by Navy Sea Cadets, patriotic music, and awards presented to community patriots who remind everyone how valued our veterans' service is to the country.

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:

- April 2
- May 7

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:

- April 18
- May 16

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Dr. Connie Mariano Made 'The Ultimate House Call'

Early in her talk at our March luncheon, Dr. Connie Mariano expressed her belief that, "it's the journey that defines us."

She then took us on a journey that led her from her native Philippines to her youth as daughter of a U.S. Navy careerist and a self-proclaimed "Navy brat" to medical school and her own Navy career. It culminated in what she referred to as "the ultimate house call" — being appointed White House physician and director of the White House medical staff. She served in that position at the end of President George H.W. Bush's term, all of President Clinton's two terms and the first part of George W. Bush's presidency.

She was deciding whether to leave the Navy when she was recommended for the White House post. There were six other candidates,



and she thought she had "blown" the interview, but she was wrong. From that experience she learned "to speak with your true authentic voice and be your true authentic self."

As for the presidents, she said they value a sense of humor and being athletic. "You get to see them when they're not in celebrity mode." And if they were hesitant to follow her medical advice, she could appeal to "a higher authority," the First Lady, "a very powerful voice to the president."

Dr. Connie said she learned the following lessons from the military: the mission comes first, respect the chain of command, take care of the troops, do more with less and serve a higher purpose.

"I can think of no higher purpose than serving one's country," she said.

She retired in 2002 as a rear admiral and now is in private practice in Scottsdale, where she says she went from "queen bee to worker bee."

Her mantra today is "treat every patient as if they were President of the United States."



10637 N Tatum Blvd
480-483-0009
(Tatum & Shea)

Scholarship Fund
Sunday, April 26th
10:00 AM - 2:00 PM



Support our MOAA scholarship fund! Make your reservation now to enjoy a wonderful brunch at Rusconi's American Kitchen, **Sunday, April 26**. Order off the regular menu with entrees ranging from \$8 to \$16. (A kid's menu is also available.) Rusconi's will contribute 20% of your bill to our scholarship fund. It's a great way to enjoy a scrumptious meal and support our scholarships at the same time. Bring your friends.

Chef Michael Rusconi is known for revitalizing the cuisine at LON's at the Hermosa Inn, and for supporting local and national charities. Please reserve your seat for Sunday, April 26, on-line at "rusconiskitchen.com" or through *Open Table* or by calling 480-483-0009.

Batter Up!**Join Us at a D'Backs Game**

We are again planning a chapter summer outing at a Diamondbacks game, 

so mark your calendars for Sunday afternoon, August 9, when Arizona plays the Cincinnati Reds at Chase Field.

We will get a group rate and military discount on tickets. So tell your friends, kids and grandkids. Watch in next month's *Sentinel* for price and other details. See you at the ballpark.

New Director Appointed at ADVS

Gov. Doug Ducey has named Col. Wanda Wright, AZANG (Ret), as Director of the Arizona Department of Veterans Services.

Col. Wright's military duties included director of staff for the Arizona Air National Guard and executive officer at the 162nd Fighter Wing in Tucson. She has nearly 30 years of active and National Guard service.

She is the first female director of the department. She has degrees in public administration, business administration and management.

Chapter Flag Disposal Project

Don't forget the Arizona Chapter's new program to provide proper disposal of tattered or worn out American flags.

Just bring your old flag to a chapter meeting and it will be delivered to a contractor who will provide proper disposal. There's no charge.



TAPS



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

CAPT William "Wally" Bigler, USN (Ret)
May 20, 1934-March 12, 2015
Chapter President, 1986

Dr. Stephen J. Wallach, M.D.
LCDR, USN (Frm)

Our heartfelt condolences are extended to the families.

April Speaker**Challenges Facing Today's Army**

Dr. Randall (Randy) Groth, Ph.D., will give us an insight into challenges facing today's U.S. Army as our guest at the April 18 luncheon.

Randy is Arizona's Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army (CASA). As such he advises the Secretary, Army Chief of Staff and commanders at all levels on public sentiment toward the Army, including advice on ways to attain understanding and cooperation between the civilian community and the Army.



He is an Army veteran, a member of MOAA and AUSA and is affiliated with Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. He is a former member of Arizona's Military Facilities Commission. He lives in Southern Arizona near Fort Huachuca.

In civilian life, Randy is CEO of AllSource Global Management, LLC, a private defense contracting company. He also owns a real estate development company and a real estate holding company.

Randy received his doctorate at the University of Arizona, taught at the graduate and undergraduate levels there, and retired in 2008 as Associate Vice President for Outreach at the U of A.

Welcome Our New Members

John Bremmer, Lt Col USAF (Ret)
of Cave Creek

Gennaro Buonocore, LCDR USN (Act)
And his wife Margaret of Paradise Valley

Dale Colie, Maj USA (Ret)
and his wife Pam of Paradise Valley

Donald Hart, COL USA (Ret)
and his wife Ellen of Anthem

Dr. Connie Mariano, RADM USN (Ret)
and her husband John of Scottsdale

Steven Weintraub, Col USMCR (Act)
of Phoenix

Gene Wikle, Maj USAF (Ret)
of Phoenix

Please meet and greet our new members.

ARIZONA CHAPTER MOAA SPRING GOLF TOURNAMENT

Join us for a morning of fun at the Arizona Chapter's annual fundraising event for the Chapter Scholarship Fund, which helps high school JROTC seniors attend college.

WHEN: Thursday, April 23. Shotgun Start at 8:00 a.m., check-in between 6:30 and 7:30..

WHERE: Stonecreek Golf Club, 4435 E. Paradise Village Parkway South (south of Cactus Rd., west of Tatum Blvd.)

COST: \$70, which includes cart, green fees, range balls, an Italian food buffet luncheon and a few bucks left over for prizes and the Scholarship Fund.

WHO: Members, guests and anyone else wishing to support the youth of the Valley of the Sun.

DRESS CODE: Collared shirts are required. Soft spikes on golf shoes. You can wear sneakers.

WHAT: Reservations and \$70 fee **must be received by April 13**. Please mail fees and the form below to **Pat Dale**, tournament chairman. Questions? Contact Pat at 480-661-5204 or e-mail at patrickdale1@cox.net

SPECIAL RULES: This event will be a single division with 12 place prizes for those with established **USGA** handicaps who provide an Official Index; others will play the **Peoria** handicap system with 10 place prizes (6 holes are randomly selected beforehand to establish handicaps based on scores on those holes). Skill prizes will be awarded on all holes (closest to pin on all par 3s and longest putt made on all par 4s and 5s).

OTHER WAYS TO SHOW SUPPORT: Donate \$25 or more and your name or organization will be posted on a hole as a sponsor. Non-golfers or those unable to play can join us for lunch for \$17.

This is a very friendly tournament. You do not have to be a good golfer to play and have fun at this event. All proceeds, including 50-50 drawings and half of skin game collections, will go to the Scholarship Fund.

----- **CUT HERE AND MAIL WITH CHECK** -----

ARIZONA CHAPTER MOAA GOLF TOURNAMENT GOLFER REGISTRATION AND ENTRY FEE

Name: _____

Phone No: _____

Email Address: _____

(Please Print)

USGA Index: _____

I would like to be partnered with: (names and official USGA Index if they have one. Others will play the Peoria Handicap System.)

Check for \$ _____ included for _____ players (\$70 each).

HOLE SPONSORSHIP (\$25 OR MORE) AND/OR LUNCH RESERVATION (\$17)

Name: _____

Phone No: _____

E-mail Address: _____

(Please Print)

Check for \$ _____ (Hole) \$ _____ (Lunch)

Make all checks to: **AZ Chapter MOAA**
Send to: Pat Dale
12633 E. Kalil Dr.
Scottsdale, AZ 85259
E-mail: patrickdale1@cox.net
Phone: 480-661-5204

Personal Affairs

By Lee Lange
Personal Affairs Officer



State Legislative Report

By Lee Lange
State Legislation Chair

New Publication Coming From MOAA

By Sharon A. DeVaney, vice chair, Auxiliary
Member Advisory Committee

Later this year, MOAA will launch a new publication titled *The Survivor's Guide*. The purpose of *The Survivor's Guide* is to assist surviving spouses as they accomplish the actions needed following a loved one's passing. It will be available in print and as a download from the MOAA website.

The guide was developed by the six surviving spouses who comprise the Auxiliary Member Advisory Committee (AMAC) at MOAA. During the past year, the AMAC brainstormed on helping others when they experience a loss. The committee decided that a guide with a list of required actions and phone numbers and a place to record dates, points of contact, and pending actions would fill the gap they had experienced.

The Survivor's Guide is similar to a worksheet. It includes a place to record burial or cremation arrangements, including the name of a funeral home and a cemetery. There is a place to list names and phone numbers of attorneys, certified public accountants, insurance agencies, and other service providers. The guide includes phone numbers for agencies such as the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, the Social Security Administration, the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System, and others.

As AMAC members developed the guide, they realized it would help if both spouses worked together to fill in the guide before it would be needed. AMAC members also emphasize the importance of telling family members or a trusted friend about *The Survivor's Guide*, where it is located, and what it contains. AMAC members stressed that the guide is not intended to replace other methods of record keeping. However, the guide is unique in that it includes information on both military and civilian agencies in one document.

We will let the chapter membership know when this new publication is available.

Military-Related Bills Await Action

As the Arizona state legislature works toward completion this year, several bills of interest to military members, retirees and veterans are decided or still in play.

Here are updates on several of those bills:

HB2611 - Consumer Flex Loans. All indications are this bill has failed in the Senate after passing the House by a narrow margin.

The bill would have allowed a new loan product with interest rates over 200%. This would have potentially put all Arizona citizens including veterans and family members at risk of falling into a debt trap with no way out. The financial industry went all out to pass this and they will likely be back.

A coalition of groups including MOAA's state council led the fight against this bill.

SB1060 - Increases the military pension exclusion from state taxes from \$2,500 to \$3,000. The bill passed the Senate by a wide margin and is now in committee in the House.

The important thing here is if the bill passes, it keeps the issue alive and moving forward. A number of states exclude all or a significant portion of military pensions from state taxes. We hope Arizona continues to move in that direction.

HB2090 - Allows the Military Family Relief Fund to provide up to \$20,000 in assistance to families of deployed Arizona service members in need. The previous amount was \$10,000. There currently is more than five million dollars in the fund. Several attempts to move money out of the fund for other funding needs were defeated. The bill passed the House and reported out favorably from committee in the Senate. Now awaiting floor action.

HB2091 - Extends in-state tuition so veterans can use GI Bill benefits in Arizona schools past the current [July 1, 2015](#), end to program. The bill has passed the House and reported out favorably from Senate committee. Awaiting Senate floor action.



Legislative Update

by Gary Fredricks
Federal Legislation Chair

Big Issues, Big Questions

Last month we left you with a series of questions with respect to ongoing national legislative issues that directly affect the military and veteran communities. As expected those issues are for the most part still a work in progress. The one question that finally did get answered was; "Will the National Guard be impacted by a failure to fund the Department of Homeland Security by March?" Congress did finally fully fund the Department for this fiscal year after much political posturing, so we are good to go there anyway.

TRICARE Payment Fix Stalled

Next up on the list is the issue of the congressionally mandated reduction in payments to doctors for Medicare/TRICARE services that currently would amount to a 21% cut on April 1. On March 26, the House overwhelmingly passed a bipartisan measure that would permanently fix the flawed payment formula. However, the Senate failed to bring the measure to a vote by the weekend, and Congress adjourned for a two-week recess.

Fortunately, due to an administrative lag time between when Medicare receives claims and when it actually makes payments, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services said if Congress acts soon after returning from recess, the government will be able to make payments to providers without imposing the pay cuts. Because TRICARE payment rates are tied to Medicare's, any action will affect TRICARE patients.

Senate leadership indicated they would take up the bill once they return in April and expect quick passage.

Sequestration Question Remains

The next milestone involves the fiscal year 2016 budget, which is due by April 15, and specifically; "Will the House and Senate Budget Committees come up with an alternative to sequestration?" Recent reports in the press indicate that both the House and Senate Budget Committees have come up with drafts that still must pass the respective full chambers

and then be reconciled. Little is available in the way of details and how sequestration is being dealt with, if at all. It's interesting to note that if the Senate actually passes their version of a fiscal year budget, it will be the first time in the last 10 years.

What About Defense Money Bills?

Then there is the action with the House and Senate Armed Services Committees over the coming weeks to come up with the FY2016 Defense Authorization and Appropriations Bills. This is where the details really start to become apparent. We know that MOAA has already been asked to testify before the committees on matters affecting military/veteran personnel issues and actions. We also know that the Administration has until about the end of April to provide their response to the Military Compensation and Retirement Modernization Commission (MCRMC) recommendations issued the end of February.

MOAA 'Storms the Hill' This Month

MOAA always targets the middle of April for its annual "Storming the Hill" where the MOAA state council leaders from across the country come together in Washington and, along with staff and Board of Director members, spend a day visiting all or nearly all 435 representative and 100 senate offices advocating for a select and necessarily limited agenda in support of our military/veteran community. Counting my tenure as President of the Arizona Council of Chapters and my tenure on the national MOAA Board, I was fortunate to have done this for the last eight years. This year we will be well represented by the current President of the Arizona Council of MOAA Chapters and our chapter's own Ron Perkins.

Due to the release timing of the MCRMC report and resultant deliberations, MOAA is a bit later than usual in coming up with its main topics for this year's "Storming", and there could still be some changes depending on how things develop. However, Ron reports that his current information from MOAA national indicates the main areas of concern are: sustain military pay and benefits, reject disproportional TRICARE fee hikes and health plan changes, and eliminate the harmful sequestration cuts. We will be eagerly awaiting Ron's take on MOAA's "Storming the Hill" for this year when he returns.

Donations to Chapter Scholarship Fund

Gene Rafanelli \$65

March 50/50 Raffle \$70

April Meeting

WHEN: April 18, 2015
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: Tossed salad, Old English fish and chips, fresh vegetable medley, bread and butter, lemon meringue pie.

Anyone with dietary restrictions or allergies contact Arlene Day (arlenebday@gmail.com preferred) one week prior so alternate food selections can be arranged.

PROGRAM: Dr. Randall Groth, Arizona's Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army, will discuss challenges facing the U.S. Army.

Reservations must be received by 4 p.m. on Tuesday, April 14. Use the reservation form below. Cancellations must be received the same day to receive your money back.

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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 / MEETING RESERVATION FORM

Please reserve _____ meals for (Name) _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ (**\$22.00** per person) for **April 18, 2015**

Make check payable to: **AZ Chapter MOAA Received No Later Than April 14, 2015**

Send to: **Charlie Bitner, 134 E. Northview Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85020, 602-943-0028, charles.bitner@gmail.com.**

**Military Milestones in April
150 Years Ago**

April 9, 1865, General Robert E. Lee surrenders at Appomattox Courthouse in Virginia, ending the Civil War.

April 14, 1865, President Lincoln is assassinated at Ford's Theater in Washington.

40 years ago

April 30, 1975, Saigon falls.

The Arizona Chapter MOAA - 2014 Board of Directors and Committee Chairs

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



azmoaa.org



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