



The Sentinel

Arizona's First Chapter



The Arizona Chapter

12122 N 110th Street

Scottsdale, AZ 85259

December 2018 CHARTERED 1956 62 YEARS OF SERVICE TO COUNTRY EDITOR: JANET LANGE

President's Perspective

by Ron Bright



With the holidays upon us and the pace of December accelerating rapidly, it is appropriate we celebrate and give thanks for the year just past. My personal journey through 2018 was a mix of highs and lows. Serving as your Chapter President was a great experience. I believe the Chapter is strong and healthy as we go into 2019, as am I. The health issues I had during the summer appear to be behind me and I look forward to the new year with optimism.

Meritorious Service Awards

Congratulations to those selected for the Chapter's Meritorious Service Award: Bruce Kosaveach, Janet Lange, Jack Farley, David Boyd and Susan Farrell. Each of you contributed to our success with outstanding commitment and have earned the applause and gratitude of us all.

The 2018 Team Support

I am grateful for the support and assistance of all of the Board Members, Committee Chairs and Chapter members who made our efforts successful.

Mike Rogers and Dave Price

were always there when needed. Mike Rogers is heading **The Homeless Veteran Project** comfort care tote bags being collected this month. Dave Price, our Membership Chair modernized our roster records to comply with National HQs and the membership committee brought in many new members.

Many thanks to Jim and Beth Cullison for their continued support of the chapter and Charlie Bitner for his great work as Treasurer.

My special thank you goes to Lee Lange for his mentorship, active leadership in a variety of committees and dedication to MOAA's Arizona Chapter and State Council. Your term as Immediate Past President has set a high standard to emulate.

December Luncheon

December's **Holiday Party and Luncheon** on the 15th will be a fun time. Our **2019 Officers and Directors will be installed** and are in the starting gate poised to begin work January 1st.

The always popular **Chinese Auction** will be a highlight. Remember to bring an item for the auction if you want to participate in the gift exchange.

In Remembrance

Sorrowfully, we remember the loss of Aino Baudu, LTJG Jesse Gersten, USN, 1st Lt Robert W Stimming, USAF (Ret), Joyce Black, Mary Elizabeth Boyd, and Carolyn Gnatovich. We were proud to call them friends and we miss them.

Looking Back on 2018

It has been an honor for me to serve as your Chapter President and to be listed among the outstanding Officers and Past Presidents who preceded me.

As I hand off the gavel to Mike Rogers, I am confident his leadership, enthusiasm, and commitment to the office will lead to another stellar year for the Arizona Chapter. He will have an outstanding Board of Directors and Committee Chairs to see him through. Thanks to all who have stepped up to serve in the new year.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

LTC Ron Bright USA (Ret)
President Arizona Chapter,
MOAA

Arizona Chapter Calendar

Board of Directors meets at 1030 hours first Thursday of the month unless noted otherwise

Location: National Guard Regional Training Institute, 5636 E. McDowell Rd. Show ID for entry. Members welcome.

Upcoming meetings:
• December 6
• January 3

Member Meetings/ Luncheons are held on the third Saturday of the month, Social Hour at 1100, Luncheon at 1145, McCormick Ranch Golf Club unless noted otherwise.

Upcoming meetings:
• Dec 15 Holiday Party
• Jan 19 Luncheon

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Membership Update

by Dave Price, Membership Chair

Welcome New Members

Dr. David Sanderson, USAF (Fmr)
and his wife Evelyn

CAPT Charles Christoph, USN (Ret)
and his wife Janet

Mr. Frank Johnson, USN (Fmr)
and his wife Sally

LtCol David Rice, USAR (Ret)
and his wife Deborah

CHAPTER DUES ARE DUE

2019 CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS ARE NOW DUE and become delinquent on January 1. If you remit by December 31, the dues are only \$18 for members and \$9 for surviving spouses.

Beginning January 1, the dues become \$20 and \$10 respectively. Please clip and mail your Renewal Form on Page 4 along with your 2019 dues to Charlie Bitner, 134 E Northview Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85020-4834.

If you have questions regarding your membership status, please contact Dave Price, Membership Chair at email: daveandsusanprice@cox.net.



USMC Reserve Program

Lee Lange and Mike Rogers collected two full boxes of toys after the November luncheon for the USMCR Toys For Tots program that provides for Christmas fun. They thank all of the members who contributed some really nice toys this year.

First-time Meritorious Service Awardees ...



Jack Farley receives a well-deserved **Meritorious Service Medal** for his two-years' service on the Golf Tournament



Susan Farrell accepts her **Meritorious Service Medal** for her dedication to Surviving Spouses



Janet Lange after being presented with her **Meritorious Service Medal** by Lee Lange

NOVEMBER SPEAKER**RimaAnn Nelson, Phoenix VA Medical Center Director**

RimaAnn Nelson was trained as a nurse and, in doing her clinical rotations at the VA, she learned to love the mission and the purpose and felt it was an honor to work there. Her career started in Salt Lake City, Utah, taking care of Veterans in Wyoming, Montana, Nevada and Utah. From there she went to St. Louis where she saw many problem areas that needed correction. She took it upon herself to correct those problems which helped the Veterans, fixed the system and allowed her to sleep at night. She then found out that protocol meant she needed to call Washington, DC first.



main campus that's right off 7th Street and Indian School Road was dedicated in 1975 and built to serve 30,000 Veterans." RimaAnn ordered weekly reports to discover what the demand might be so they could maintain access by right-sizing capacity. The reports indicated an average of 358 Veterans enrolling weekly. Records showed this year there were 1.4 million out-patient visits in a facility that is 40 years old. She is frustrated by the news reports that the VA doesn't have what it takes to serve Veterans. She went on to say, "The third week of September we were finally awarded a brand new outpatient

Next, RimaAnn was sent to Manila, Philippines to work on the benefits side to assist 30,000 Veterans who served overseas but did not choose to return home. She listened to their stories and convinced them to sign up for the benefits and healthcare they earned and deserved. She also was able to bring in legal help for the Veterans. Some felt they couldn't return home because of taxes owed. A few found out, with legal help, the government owed them!

Transfer to Phoenix

On September 25, 2016, RimaAnn was called into the office of the Secretary of the VA and told, because she made some top decisions in St. Louis, she was needed immediately for an assignment in Phoenix. Even though she still had two years left on her Manila assignment, she was urgently needed in Phoenix the following week because the VA was going to announce to Senator McCain that they had a permanent leadership team. She found out later that she was the seventh director in two years and the last two had heart attacks.

RimaAnn met with Senator McCain and congressional staffers on October 1, 2016, to talk about the plan for Phoenix. She told us about the Phoenix VA Medical Center crisis in 2014 by saying, "Nobody anticipated the growth that happened in Phoenix ... over night it exploded! When I arrived, we were serving 89,000 Veterans. Today we're pushing 96,000 veterans. The

clinic ... 203,000 square feet," revealed RimaAnn. Ground will be broken in March and it will open in 2021 on 32nd Street and Van Buren. The clinic will serve approximately 60,000 veterans with 650 employees and mainly serve primary care needs, out-patient mental health and telehealth and tele-technologies. Specialty care will be delivered using today's technologies.

Because of the crisis in 2014, it took two years but two other clinics were opened in 2017. "By the time they opened, they were bursting at the seams." A clinic in Gilbert that sees 30,000 Veterans is too small. "We almost need to double the capacity of that clinic," adds RimaAnn. She is planning applications for two more clinics in the NW and the SE sections of the valley and another application to rebuild the hospital's bed tower to add single, private rooms. In the meantime, the VA is buying care in the community to serve the Veterans. "But remember," RimaAnn adds, "our board of directors is Congress and it's Congress that approves such a building or approves projects or approves funding for this."

The new building's application in 2009 was approved in 2013 at a cost of \$16M to build but at actual contract awarding, the cost was \$34M to build. RimaAnn had to call other VA directors to request help and it worked.

**RimaAnn Nelson, Phoenix VA Medical Center Director
(Continued on Page 4)**

RimaAnn Nelson—Phoenix VA Medical Center Director
(Continued from Page 3)

New Technologies in the Works

The young 23- and 24- year-old veterans want text messages and do not want to come in for appointments. They want to be seen by Skype, Facetime, etc. and want to see specialists now. Doing this has prevented a lot of suicides. Primary care physicians may want Veterans to see their cardiologist for heart problems and right after, an endocrinologist for diabetes. That can be set up through telehealth at the new facility for a same-day tandem appointment with the new telehealth equipment. Recently a 92-year old patient who lives alone with a history of many visits to the ER and hospital was outfitted in his home with a smart pad, a blood pressure cuff, an oxygen finger sensor and a monitor. He can access a nurse or a doctor within 15 seconds using the new technology so he doesn't need to travel unless it is a real emergency.

Employment Challenges

There is a challenge for doctors in the VA because we are in the Federal Government and there is a salary cap for VA employees. The law says that no one can earn more than the President. The President's salary is \$400k but the competition in Phoenix is so great that a GI doctor in the Phoenix area earns \$1.2M.

In closing comments, RimaAnn related, "There is a need for Mentors at the VA to help Veterans who have lost their limbs or have psychological or other handicaps. Those are the people we need to help now."

in response to Jack Farley's question about whether or not negative media is fake news or not, RimaAnn answered that a good news story does not sell as well as a controversial one ... and there is good news be-

hind every single one of these stories and it is just not right. She added, "If we have work to do, I'd be happy to come up and talk about it but to not to give balanced reporting is not fair and is really hurting our Veterans. Last Veterans Day only three stations wanted to interview me. I send news stories to the media all the time but they are often not aired or published."

Board Member, Bob Hinton
recommends the following exhibition ...

Portraits of Courage, George W. Bush, Artist
A Commander in Chief's Tribute to America's Warriors
Arizona Heritage Center at Papago Park

The exhibit includes a 4-panel mural and 66-full-color portraits of 98 service members and veterans who served with honor since 9/11 and came to know the President personally since he left office.

When: [October 19 - December 29, 2018](#)

Where: Arizona Heritage Center at Papago Park
1300 North College Avenue, Tempe 85281

Hours: Monday – Thursday 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Friday & Saturday 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Closed Sundays

Admission: Adults - \$12.00
Seniors 65+ - \$10.00
Ages 7 – 17 - \$8.00
Children 6 and under – Free
Military and Veterans with ID – Free
Arizona Historical Soc. Members – Free

PORTRAITS OF COURAGE EXHIBITION HOSTS:
Arizona Historical Society
George W. Bush Institute
Sandra Day O'Connor Institute

RENEWAL FORM

There's Still Time to Save on Renewal for 2019!

It's time to RENEW your 2019 chapter membership AND there's still time to get the **Early Bird Special!** Just complete your information below and send it with your check — \$18 for a Regular Member or \$9 for Surviving Spouse Member no later than December 31. Dues return to their regular price of \$20 and \$10 respectively on January 1, 2019. Send your check made payable to **AZ Chapter MOAA** to Treasurer Charlie Bitner, Treasurer, 134 E. Northview Ave, Phoenix, AZ 85020.

Member Name _____
Please make any changes to
Address, Phone number, or Email: _____



National Legislative Update

by Lee Lange
Legislative Chair

Here we Go Again

This month's column is an extract of several updates from MOAA's government relations team. The services will soon deliver their preliminary draft of the FY 2020 defense budget in response to President Trump's recent call for a 5 percent cut across every federal department including the Defense Department. The call comes after reports from the Treasury Department show the federal deficit at record high levels. This means slashing \$33 billion from the defense budget request planned for FY 2020.

With record breaking funding levels approved in the FY 2019 budget recently signed by the President, service members and retirees can expect some roller coaster-like changes. Potential reductions could mean:

- A military pay raise for fiscal year 2020 that is below the Employment Cost Index (ECI)
- Another possible push to reduce the calculation for Basic Allowance for Housing (especially with regard to dual military couples)
- And increases in TRICARE fees for beneficiaries.

Reports indicate the new topline defense budget will be \$700 billion, not the \$733 billion that the Pentagon had been planning for most of the past year. The new topline number is down from the \$716 billion approved in the FY2019 defense budget.

DoD leadership has indicated that this will not be a one year blip, but part of a flattening of budgets over the next five years. The services will likely provide the Defense Secretary with a budget at multiple spending levels. This will highlight the potential tradeoffs that will be needed if the administration follows through with its newly proposed \$700 billion top line, or if Congress fails to reach a new budget deal for 2020.

House Leadership Changes

Congress will have the final word in the outcome of the FY2020 defense budget, once the administration's proposal hits the Hill early next year. Adding to pressure on the defense budget will

be a new Congress with the House now controlled by Democrats. Democrats will chair the House Armed Services Committee (HASC) and all subcommittees on this important body. Democratic leaders have already said that defense budgets will be coming down, perhaps even more than the President's call for a 5 percent cut. Look for plenty of uncertainty going forward.

Sequestration Threat is Back

Also requiring congressional action in FY2020 are the reductions that would come with a return of the mandated sequestration cuts required under the 2011 Budget Control Act. Without further legislative action by Congress, these reductions will also directly impact the FY2020 defense budget.

Congress is currently operating under a two-year budget deal, set to expire at the end of December 2019. If Congress fails to reach a new spending arrangement, previously agreed to budget caps will return, and DoD will be forced to take a \$71 billion budget cut on top of any other cuts planned. So, after two years of sustained growth in the defense budget, there will now be big reductions and cutbacks to defense spending. Those cuts often start with where the money is – people and their pay and benefits.

Call to Action

MOAA members need to keep up with developments and stay engaged as the administration's FY2020 budget takes shape and the proposal goes to the new 116th Congress sometime in early February 2019.

Look for future updates coming in the MOAA newsletter and be ready to take action when asked. It will take a concerted advocacy effort by all MOAA members and MOAA's coalition partners in order to stave off the potential cuts to hard earned pay and benefit programs as the FY2020 defense budget takes shape over the coming months.

Homeless Veterans Comfort Tote Bag

Mike Rogers will be collecting the Homeless Veterans Comfort Bags which were handed out at our November Meeting. If you wish to contribute and do not have a bag, you can bring your own bag with: Warm Socks, Water, Hygiene items: Toothbrush/Toothpaste, Dental Floss, Hand Wipes/Sanitizer, Shampoo/Conditioner, Razors, Shaving Cream, Chapstick, Comb, Easy-Open Protein Snacks, etc ...



Personal Affairs

by Lee Lange, Personal Affairs Officer

Changes to the Tax Code – and You

Last year's Tax Cuts and Jobs Act made some important changes to the Tax Code and the way we will file our tax returns in the future. MOAA has kicked off a five-part series on changes to the tax code and this column will be highlighting those changes over the next several months. Below are some of the things of which you should be aware in filing your 2018 tax returns next year. Consulting your tax advisor will be more important than ever.

Itemized Deductions

The tax code allows you to elect a standard deduction of a set amount. In 2017, that amount was \$12,700 for those married filing jointly. For single taxpayers, the amount was \$6,350, and for head of household, the amount was \$9,350. For 2018, the amounts increased to \$24,000 for married filing jointly, \$12,000 for single taxpayers, and \$18,000 for head of household. This means, for more taxpayers, the standard deduction will be larger than the amount they can claim if they itemize.

But if your state has an income tax, it might not be so simple. Most states pull a number from some point on the federal tax return. Many states use adjusted gross income (AGI) and those that do, normally allow you to itemize or take a state standard deduction. In many cases, if you take the standard deduction on your federal return, you must take the standard deduction on your state return.

Here's the problem: Most states' standard deduction is significantly less than the new standard deduction on the federal return. If your actual deductions are close to your federal standard deduction, you might want to elect to itemize, even though you'll pay more in federal taxes, in order to get the larger deduction on your state return. To know for sure, you'll need to calculate your taxes both ways.

Exemptions

Exemptions are eliminated under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. You will still want to determine whether your children or others are dependents, because certain credits, such as education credits

and child care credits, depend on status as a dependent. Also, the states have not yet had a chance to respond to the new rules, so you might still have exemptions on state returns.

Child and Dependent Credits

The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act significantly expanded the child credit and added a new credit for dependents. Under the changes, the child credit is increased to \$2,000 per child from the current credit of \$1,000. But perhaps even more important for those in a post-military career, the AGI limit for the credit is increased to \$400,000 for married filing jointly and \$200,000 for all others. This will open up the credit to a lot more taxpayers.

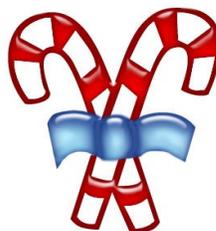
The child credit is limited to children under age 17. This is true in both the "old" tax law and the new. But the new law added an additional credit that could apply to your children (and your parents). The dependent credit is \$500 and applies to dependents who are not qualifying children. For example, if your child is in college and qualifies as a dependent, you can claim the \$500 credit.



Holiday Party

Don't miss our annual chapter holiday party and gift exchange, **Saturday, December 15**, in the McCormick Ranch Golf Club Pavilion.

If you are planning to attend and want to participate in the gift exchange, please bring **one gift per family**. Gifts need to be in the **\$20-\$25** range and **wrapped** in holiday gift bags/boxes. You may want to focus on favorite holiday gifts: adult beverages (Scotch, Irish Whiskey, Wine, etc.) Chocolates, Cookies, Gourmet Foods, Handy Gadgets, etc.



Members attending with a gift need to **check in on arrival and receive a ticket**. That ticket number will be called at random for your turn to select a gift from the gift table and then, as we have in the past, allowed gift swaps.

December Luncheon

WHEN: December 15, 2018
 11:00 am Meet & Greet Social Hour
 11:45 am Lunch

WHERE: McCormick Ranch Golf Pavillion
 Scottsdale

COST: \$25 Per Person reservation by
 4 PM on 12/11/2018

DRESS: Holiday Party or Business Casual

MENU: Bistro Beef Tenderloin, Mashed Potatoes,
 Mushroom Gravy, McCormick Signature
 Salad, Triple-Layer Fudge Cake

PROGRAM: Our Annual Holiday Party and Chinese
 Auction gift exchange and Homeless Comfort Bag
 collection. Installation of 2019 Chapter Officers.

Arizona Chapter 2018-2019 Schedule

- December 2018:**
- * Board Meeting on the 6th
 - * Holiday Party on the 15th
- January 2019:**
- * Board Meeting on the 3rd
 - * Luncheon on the 19th
- February 2019:**
- * Board Meeting on the 7th
 - * Luncheon on the 16th

NOVEMBER CHAPTER DONATIONS

Scholarship Fund

Pete Berger \$25

TAPS

*We recently learned of the passing of
 Joyce Black
 February 26, 1939 - August 7, 2018
 Wife of Member Raymond (Charles) Black
 Our heartfelt condolences are extended to
 Charlie and his family.*

TAPS

*With deep sorrow we learned of the passing
 of Mary "Elizabeth" Boyd
 March 13, 1948 - November 3, 2018
 Beloved wife of our Chapter Secretary,
 David Boyd
 We extend our heartfelt condolences to Dave
 and his family.*

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: _____

HOLIDAY PARTY/RESERVATION FORM

Please reserve _____ meals for (name(s): _____)

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ (\$25.00/person) for the December 15, 2018 Luncheon/Party. Check payable to: **AZ Chapter MOAA** at the luncheon or mail check to: **Charlie Bitner, 134 E. Northview Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85020, 602-943-0028, charles.bitner@gmail.com** by December 11. Credit Cards will be accepted At the luncheon.

**Member reservations or call-ins WILL NOT be accepted after December 11
 Cancellations after December 11 will be charged and not refunded.**

Holiday Cheer for Homeless Vets by Mike Rogers

While at the MOAA Convention I had the opportunity to discuss the needs of Homeless Veterans with the Arizona Department of Veteran Affairs. I was able to acquire cloth bags from the Veteran Affairs folks to fill with much needed items for the Homeless Vets that would help make for a better holiday season. Our members were provided with the cloth bags at the November meeting which included a shopping list inside to help provide for the homeless warriors. The filled bags need to be returned at the December meeting and will then be delivered to shelters for distribution. If you missed the November meeting, you can still help by bringing any bag with much-needed hygiene items: Warm Winter Socks, Gloves, Hat, Heat packs, Bottle of Water, Toothbrush/Toothpaste, Dental Floss, Nail clippers, Razors, Shaving Cream, Chapstick, Comb/small brush, Hand Sanitizer, Hand Lotion, Shampoo, , WetWipes, Kleenex, etc.

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

PRESIDENT LTC Ron Bright, USA 480-614-9463	NEWSLETTER EDITOR Janet Lange, USMC Spouse 571-722-4348	CHAPLAIN COL Daniel Butler, USA 480-352-2682
FIRST VICE PRESIDENT CDR Mike Rogers, USN 925-360-4052	ADVERTISING Janet Lange, USMC Spouse 571-722-4348	PERSONAL AFFAIRS Col Lee Lange, USMC 703-232-3609
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SECRETARY Maj David Boyd, USAF 202-617-0337	HISTORIAN / PHOTOGRAPHER Lt Col Jim Cullison, USAF 602-482-3838	ARRANGEMENTS Col Lee Lange, USMC 703-232-3609
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	SURVIVING SPOUSES Susan Farrell, Surviving Spouse 602-993-8556	SHARE A RIDE Vacant

Access Arizona Chapter's Internet Web Site at: azmoaa.org

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



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