

Superstition Mountain Express

MOAA Military Officers Association of America



March 2021
Volume 42, Issue 5

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The Superstition Mountain Chapter, Military Officers Association of America Inc., is a non-profit organization, IRS tax ID# 23-7430856

<http://www.smcmoaa.org/>

Please remember to share the newsletter with your spouse!



President's Comments

LTC John Bushko, USAF (Ret)

Not much has changed over the past month. I hope everyone is continuing to follow the CDC guidelines and staying healthy.

Your Board of Directors continue to meet virtually. At the last meeting, the Board agreed to purchase a Zoom account so that we have a video conference capability. The Zoom license includes a call-in capability so if you don't have access to a computer or don't wish to do the video portion, you will be able to use your phone to dial in and join the conference. We will use it for our board meetings and if things remain the same, and we are unable to meet in person, we can use the system to have a virtual membership meeting. Once we are able to have in-person meetings, we can use Zoom for those who can't make it to the meeting and to invite speakers from outside the Phoenix area to make presentations. There are already chapters around the country that conduct their meetings using Zoom.

Continued on next page



2021 OFFICERS

President, Lt Col John Bushko	480-759-1717 jabushko@earthlink.net
1st VP, CW4 Arlan Allen	602-283-5862 cw4allen@cox.net
2nd VP, Col John Marsh	480-2191020 emarsh125@gmail.com
VP Auxiliary, Mrs. Judy Bushko	480-759-1717 jdbushko@earthlink.net
Secretary, Mrs. Peggy Allen	
Treasurer, Col Thomas Ralph	
Past President, MG Dave Rataczak	

2021 COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Programs	CW4 Arlan Allen
Membership	Col John Marsh
ROTC/JROTC	Capt Ed Mangan
Personal Affairs	Lt Gregory Moore
Legislative	Capt Ritt Schiano
Newsletter	Mrs. Marlene Fox
Website	Lt. Ann Ferguson
Transition Coordinator	
Director	Maj. Austin Foote
Director	Mrs. Ann Schminke
Director	Capt. George Meegan
Director	Lt Col Sheryl Mauldin
Director	Col Karl Pfitzer
Director	Captain Al Anderer
CAS Membership	Maj Norm Poole

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I would guess that many of you have already received your COVID shots. I had my first one and am scheduled for my second through the Southeast VA Clinic. It will be great when we can gather together and socialize again. Until then, please stay safe and healthy. If you are need of any assistance, please feel free to contact me and I will do what I can to help you.

Have a happy St Patrick's Day, and drink the green beer responsibly.

John Bushko



AUXILIARY NEWS: from Judy Bushko



Even though we are not meeting to work on these projects we are still collecting items for them. If you would like to donate items or donate money, it would be greatly appreciated. There is a coupon on page 11 of this newsletter (Chapter Auxiliary Donations) with the information for sending monetary donations. Some members like to order things from Amazon and have them shipped to me or you can drop your donations off at my house (call me and I will give you my address).

We are always looking for new projects to take on, so if you have any suggestions on new ways we can help our veterans please let me know. **480-759-1717** jdbushko@earthlink.net

Please stay safe and know you are all missed,

Judy

March Congratulations



MEMBER BIRTHDAY

SPOUSE BIRTHDAY

ANNIVERSARIES

Bill Baran	8	Judy Bushko	29	James & Jeannine Grayson	10
Douglas Conger	19	Sharon Follet	9	Lucian & Laura Ferguson	12
Joseph Edstrom	19	Helen Goldblatt	1	Leonard & Mary Ann Fuchs	17
James Faull	10	Paul Prinke	8	John & Claudia Horak.	13
Joseph Goldblatt	26			Paul & Cassie Prinke	26
John Horak	7				
Ted Konfederak	7				
Ritt Schiano	17				
Cassier Prinke	12				
Patricia Scott					

**You know you're getting old when "happy hour"
means it's time for your nap!**

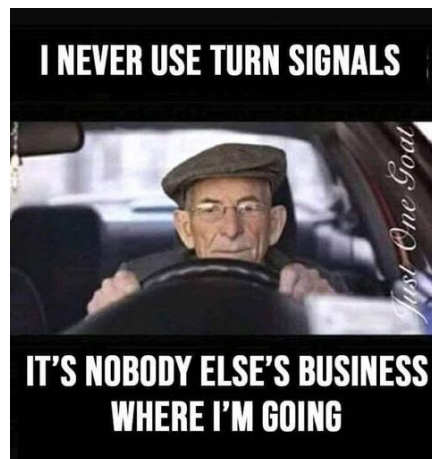


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LOOKING ON THE LIGHTER SIDE OF LIFE!

I usually put pictures from our Dinner Meetings here, but since we are not meeting right now, I thought I would put something here to remind you that we are all in the same proverbial boat!

**I'M SO OLD
I REMEMBER
MULTIPLICATION
WAS CALLED
"TIMES TABLES".**



As you get older, you've got to stay positive. For example, the other day I fell down the stairs. Instead of getting upset, I just thought, "Wow, that's the fastest I've moved in years!"



I see people around my age mountain climbing, I feel good getting my leg through my underwear with out losing my balance

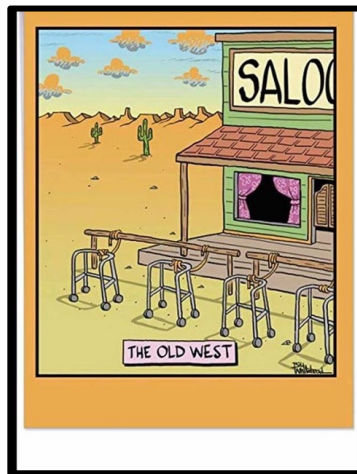
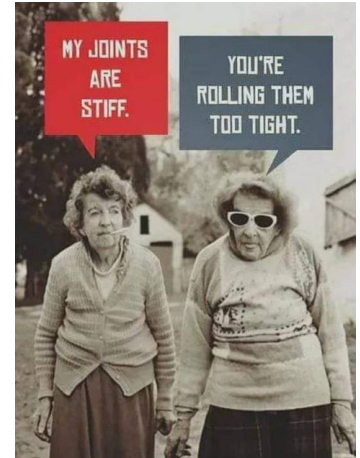


**I REALLY DON'T
MIND GETTING
OLDER, BUT MY
BODY IS TAKING
IT BADLY.**

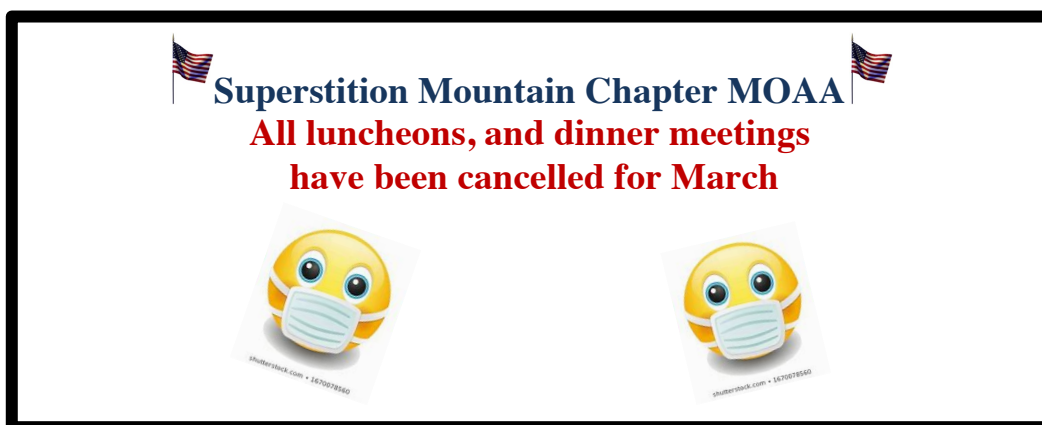


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Getting old is not for the young at heart, but it sure beats the alternative!



If any of these jokes made you laugh and brightened your day, my work is done!



Chairman Reports



1st Vice President
Arlan Allen - Programs

The latest update from Dobson's Restaurant is still the same: The Restaurant at Dobson's Golf Course will not be doing any banquet meetings until at least April, and maybe not even then. The determination to resume will be predicated on Covid numbers and number of vaccines administered. There is a possibility it will be in the Fall before banquet service resumes. We just have to wait. I will continue checking for updates.

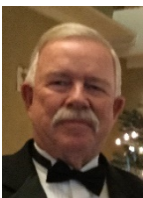
Peggy and I have received both of our Covid vaccinations. I hope you all have been able to receive yours also. Stay safe and well!

602-283-5862 - email cw4allen@cox.net.



2nd Vice President
John Marsh - Membership

Having been in the groups being vaccinated, I have had my first shot and Marilyn has finished two shots. We had no side effects other than a little aching in the upper arm on the day after the second shot. If you are having any concerns about getting the vaccine, it is key to our return to our meeting together soon. Once vaccinated, we should be able to go to a restaurant, travel on an airplane, go to a theater, etc. Not that we can disappear the mask, frequent hand washes and some distancing. But, if we do these things with other vaccinees, spread should not be significant. Concern on our part should be for those unvaccinated and continuing those protective measures around them. John M.



Treasurer
Tom Ralph



Thank you all for paying your 2021 dues when you don't have to... Unless you now tell me, I am just paying you forward for 2022. As we have

stated before, the Board of Directors approved a resolution forgiving all dues for 2021, since we did not have very many activities. Also, they passed a resolution that forgives dues for anyone turning 90 years of age as well for as long as they wish to remain active.

I hope all of you are remaining healthy and hopefully we will resume our activities in the not too distance future.

602-569-2130 or tomralph@cox.net



Personal Affairs
Greg Moore



I hope you are all doing well and are getting your Covid Vaccinations. Meredith and I will be getting our second one soon.

All veterans that are signed up for healthcare through the VA and have a medical card can get their Covid vaccinations at the VA. Call 602-277-5551 to get an appointment. You may be on hold for a half an hour or more but eventually you will get an appointment.

Things to remember...

When a veteran dies these documents will be needed and should be kept on hand.

- Full name
- SS and/or service number
- Date and place of birth
- Retired rank
- Date of retirement
- Disability rating (military/VA)
- Circumstances surrounding the death
- Next of kin
- Copy of DD214
- Copy of Death Certificate

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Legislative
Ritt Schiano



(Edited from the MOAA HQ Site)

Much has transpired with the new year and new Administration.

MOAA shares many of the interest areas with congressional leaders and looks forward to helping Congress address these matters either through legislation or oversight hearings:

- **Implementing the VA MISSION Act.** The massive bill will take years to implement but will result in more options where veterans can receive care, expand caregiver programs to veterans of all eras, enhance VA's workforce capabilities, and modernize medical facilities.
- **Expanding access to care for veterans in rural communities.**
- **Implementing several critically important measures signed into law in 2020.** These MOAA-supported laws address the rising rates of mental health conditions and veteran suicides, as well as provide health care and benefit improvements for veterans, particularly those in need.
- **Implementing the joint VA-DoD electronic health record.** This long-sought move would allow clinicians to easily access veterans' medical information.
- **Eliminating health disparities for women, minority, and underserved veterans.**
- **Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on VA's workforce.** MOAA has worked with Congress in recent years to strengthen and modernize the VA workforce and to fill ongoing critical employee shortages.
-

MILITARY RETIREMENT PAY EXEMPTION

31 States already exempt military retirement pay from state taxes. South Carolina, Kentucky, Georgia and Maryland are considering bills to exempt military retirement pay. Maryland also has additional bills that would partially exempt retirement pay if the one for full exemption fails. Montana has a bill to exempt 50% off the pay from state taxes.

Arizona currently exempts the first \$3500 of military retirement pay. Last year the governor included full exemption in his budget. But COVID

hit. Bills are active to fully exempt retirement pay, but there is little support from the Legislature.

TRICARE DENTAL PROGRAM

The FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) stops the planned transition of active duty and National Guard/Reserve families who use the [TRICARE Dental Program \(TDP\)](#) to the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP). MOAA supports this move and will continue working to ensure Congress and the Defense Health Agency (DHA) remain committed to addressing known problems with TDP networks. There are no changes to retiree dental and vision coverage – military retirees are still eligible for FEDVIP.

New VA Secretary

Denis McDonough's confirmation February 8th as the new VA secretary received overwhelming bipartisan support – an 87-7 vote. The new secretary outlined several of his priorities, many of which are in line with MOAA's and those of other veterans' organizations. MOAA's ongoing efforts to improve the VA were included in a recent [letter to President Joe Biden](#), and were outlined further in a [recap of veteran health care priorities](#).

REINTRODUCTION OF THE MAJOR STAR ACT

Nine days after Major Richard Star, USAR, [lost his battle with cancer from toxic exposure](#), Sens. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Mike Crapo (R-Idaho) reintroduced the Major Richard Star Act ([S. 344](#)) with 42 Senators as original cosponsors.

The legislation will authorize concurrent receipt of DoD retired pay and VA disability for those injured in a combat zone and forced to medically retire under Chapter 61. The Major Richard Star Act would fix the unfair offset that prevents thousands of veterans living with the wounds of war from accessing both their disability benefits and retired pay. The Military Coalition, a group of 35 organizations (including MOAA) representing more than 5.5 million servicemembers, veterans, their families, and survivors, wrote a letter of support for the bill to the House and Senate Armed Services Committees.

Contact your legislators today and monitor updates and read more about concurrent receipt at [MOAA.org](#).

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MAJOR LEGISLATURE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Since 1929, MOAA has had a number of major legislature accomplishments. Highlights of some of the major ones are listed and described on the MOAA HQ website. Please check them out.

MOAA National Legislative Action items are available to you at <http://www.moaa.org/> . Click on 'Take Action' at the top of the page.



ROTC/JROTC
Ed Mangan



I am still waiting to hear back from many of the JROTC Units. Many, if not all, of the schools have stopped all group gatherings like the Awards Night. We are still going move forward with getting our sponsors, so we will be ready if they hold something. These cadets still should get their recognition. Please contact Marlene Fox or me if you wish to sponsor a school or to donate less than the \$125.00. Everything is helpful and appreciated. Thank you.

A list of the schools we sponsor are listed below.

Ed Mangan, SMC JROTC Chairman,
emangan3@aol.com, (602) 501-0128

ROTC/JROTC Units/Schools supported by our chapter

ASU-USA, USN, USAF
Apache Junction – USN
Basha – USAF
Campo Verde – USAF
Casa Grande – USMC
Chandler – USAF
Coolidge – USMC

Desert Ridge – USAF
Dobson – USAF
Gilbert – USAF
Globe – USA
Hamilton – USAF
Higley – USAF
Marcos DE Niza – USA

Maricopa – USAF
Mesa – USAF
Queen Creek – USA
Poston Butte – USAF
Red Mountain – USA
Skyline – USA
Vista Grande – USMC
Westwood - USAF



Happy 
St. Patricks Day

*May your blessings outnumber the shamrocks that grow,
and may troubles avoid you wherever you go!*

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Auxiliary sponsored Programs



Hygiene Kits for Vets

Judy Bushko



Items we need for our kits are: Razors, Wash cloths, combs, white socks, bars of soap, regular size toothpaste and toothbrushes.

We have been asked for regular sized items as the veterans are only allowed to receive one kit a month.

Thanks for your continued support! **Over 400 kits made since we started this project!**



Cell Phones for Soldiers /Helping Heroes Home. Calling for old phones!

When you upgrade your phone, don't throw those old phones away. Bring them to us. We'll send them in to get phone time for our troops overseas. Phones don't need to work. Contact Judy Bushko 480- 759-1717 jdbushko@earthlink.net



Last Call Blankets for VA Hospital

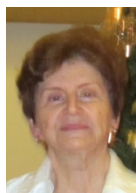
Blankets are used for covering our veterans who have passed in the room and are being moved.

They are covered with these blankets and the blanket is then given to the family. Over 50 blankets donated since we started this project!



Heart Shaped pillows for VA Hospital and Hospice of the Valley

Patients at the VA hospital that have had heart surgery use these pillows to help in their recovery. Hospice of the Valley gives them to their patient's family members for comfort and they are greatly appreciated.



Operation Paperback Books

Ann Ferguson



We send paperbacks to the troops and hard cover books are taken to the VA Hospital. Bring your books to any chapter function or contact Ann Ferguson.

480-961-9634 or email vfergusonfnp@cox.net

Since 2012, over 11400 books taken to the VA Hospital and hundreds of paperbacks have been sent out to our troops.



A Biography of Col John Marsh, USAF Retired



I am originally from Akron, Ohio though being from an Air Force family moved frequently. In 1965, I joined the USAF ROTC at the University of Southwest Louisiana and remained in the military for the next 30 years.

After serving as a line officer (engineering), I entered medical school at LSU in New Orleans supported by the Air Force. Beginning my medical career as a family practitioner, I quickly morphed to squadron flight surgeon. I served most of my medical career in USAFEurope, 11 years in two tours eventually retiring in 1995.

We moved first to Albuquerque for 23 years working for Presbyterian Hospital and Sandia National Labs before arriving in the Valley of the Sun.

My wife, the former Marilyn Stapleton, a Kentucky girl, and I celebrated our 50th anniversary, September 2019. We have three daughters, one of which resides in Phoenix, and five grandsons.

Stories of military life from our members

War Stories



“War Stories” can mean a number of things: stories about actual war incidents, remembrances of activities while in the service, and exaggerated accounts of happenings as we remember them. “The older I get, the more I remember, with greater clarity, things that never happened.”

The following actually happened – honest!

In 1967 I was a copilot of a C-130 flying out of Ubon, Thailand, as part of Operation Blind Bat. This was a flare/FAC mission chasing trucks along the Ho Chi Minh Trail. We would drop flares on trucks and suspected supply depots and then direct fighters on these targets. Missions were long: 7-8 hours in early evening or early morning, covering all nighttime hours. At the end of our mission, we would always climb to an altitude of around 15,000 feet before flying across Laos to Thailand. This would be accomplished by flying in a circle while gaining altitude.

Early one morning we started our climb, and the aircraft commander said I had control of the aircraft as he left his seat to relieve himself in the back of the aircraft. As we circled you could look down at the ground and it was pitch black; however, the sky above was turning light blue. We must have picked an area just above a 37mm anti-aircraft site, and our third pass above this site was just too tempting to pass up. The 37mm was accurate to about 8,000 feet and then would explode on contact or upon reaching 15,000 feet. As we continued the climb, a clip of five 37mm shells fanned in front of our aircraft within about 10 feet! They looked like beer cans on fire with sparks falling off. I grabbed the controls and made some erratic gyrations, moving the wings right and left, before turning the aircraft to the west toward Thailand. Our flight engineer sat between and behind the pilot and copilot. We looked at each other in shock and didn't say a word. About that time the pilot casually approached his seat and as he began to sit down looked at me with my mouth open and eyes as big as saucers. He then glanced at the flight engineer and saw the same look. “Oh, something really happened. I thought you were trying to get me to pee down my leg.” The incident ended with a burst of laughter from all of us. **Al Anderer**

USS Hancock



Thinking of a suitable memory to share from my enlisted time in the Navy, my mind went back in time to when the USS Hancock was on a WESTPAC deployment in late 1964. I was standing on the edge of the port side of the flight deck, forward of the island structure, gazing out to sea after flight ops had shut down.

All the birds were secure, and I had a few moments to do some wool gathering, before I needed to attend to working on any aircraft write-up the pilots might have submitted after recovery. It was one of those rare times when you can become captivated by the beauty of the moment--the electric blue sea was so calm that it was as glass as far as the eye could see, there was just enough of a breeze that you did not feel too hot under the sun in a cloudless sky, and the carrier had a gentle such rolling motion that you wanted to lay down and take a nap.

Suddenly, out of the corner of my eye, I caught sight of a school of flying fish break water near the bow of the ship and glide (fly?) well over the length of a football field away. Given that the flight deck of the Hancock was 63ft off the water, for the fish to register so clearly, they must have been at least two feet in length. The mood was broken when the Division Chief bellowed my name that he had some work for me. **Ed Fox**

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MOAA's Mission: The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a non-profit veteran's association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and to preserving the earned entitlements of members of the uniformed services, their families, and survivors. National MOAA, it's Councils and Chapters are nonpartisan.

MOAA National & Superstition Mountain Chapter Membership Application

Date _____ Printed Member Name & Initial _____
 Branch of Service _____ Rank _____
 Spouse First Name _____ National MOAA Number _____
 Street Address _____ City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ - _____
 Home Phone # _____ Work or Cell# _____
 Please Circle: ARMY--AIR FORCE--NAVY--MARINE CORPS- COAST GUARD--NOAA--PUBLIC HEALTH SVC
 Circle All That Apply: REGULAR-RESERVE-NATIONAL GUARD-FORMER OFFICER-ACTIVE-RETIRED-
 MALE__ FEMALE__ WIDOW-__ WIDOWER__
 Member Date of Birth MM___/DD___/YYYY_____ Spouse Date of Birth MM___/DD___/YYYY_____
 Anniversary Date _____ E-mail Address _____

MOAA National membership for 2021 has 3 types to pick from. **1. Basic--free-electronic only. 2. Premium- \$43.00 a year. 3. Life membership-fee is age dependent.** As a **BASIC Member** you will receive electronic newsletters and have opportunities to participate in grassroots activism effort. You get *Military Officer Magazine* via our mobile app. You'll also have the opportunity to attend our career fairs, networking events, and classes and to take advantage of valuable discounts on products and services. As a **PREMIUM Member** you get full access to everything MOAA has to offer, including our full spectrum of our career resources (one-on-one career counseling, résumé reviews, and interviewing advice and critiques), countless discounts on products and travel, and access to all MOAA exclusive publications and news updates. You'll be able to tap into MOAA's staff of experts for financial and investment advice, college scholarships for dependents, and much more. That's on top of all the benefits you receive at the BASIC Membership level.

Superstition Mountain Chapter membership fee is **\$25 per year**. Spouses of current members may participate in Chapter Auxiliary luncheons and activities with no fee. Chapter bylaws require Chapter members and Chapter Auxiliary members to be members of MOAA National.

For National dues, enclose check for: \$43.00 – Make check payable to MOAA National

Mail to: MOAA, Dept. 1488, Maryfield, VA 22116-9820

Enclose check for: Chapter \$25.00 or Auxiliary (SSAC) \$12.50

Make check payable to SMC of MOAA. Write 2020 dues in the memo line

Mail Chapter Application and Check to:

SMC MOAA, Tom Ralph, Treasurer

20444 N 22nd St, Phoenix, AZ 85024 - Phone 602-569-2130

For More Information Contact, Membership Committee Chairman John Marsh:

480-219-1020 memarsh125@gmail.com

Name tags are durable hard plastic, white background with MOAA logo and your name engraved in black.

To place your order, please fill out the form below.

Print first and last name	Select nametag type	
	Pin on	magnetic
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____



Chapter Auxiliary Donations

Enclosed is a donation of \$_____

This donation may be used for any Auxiliary projects _____
specifically, Hygiene Kits for Vets_____

Please make check payable to SMC of MOAA
Write *Auxiliary* in the memo line of the check

Mail to: Tom Ralph, Treasurer 20444 N 22nd St, Phoenix, AZ 85024

CLIP AND MAIL



ROTC/JROTC Donations

Enclosed is a donation of \$_____ or School Awards Sponsor \$125.00_____

If sponsoring a school, please write the school name here_____

Please make check payable to SMC of MOAA
Write *JROTC* in the memo line of the check

Mail to: Tom Ralph, Treasurer 20444 N 22nd St, Phoenix, AZ 85024



Marlene Fox
Newsletter Editor

As the Newsletter Editor, I strive to minimize errors. There will be times that mistakes occur. If you notice any errors, please let me know. I would appreciate any input on articles you might think would be appropriate for the newsletter. It would also be helpful if all address changes, corrections, or email changes were sent to me, so I can insure you receive the newsletter without delay.

marlenekfox@cox.net - 1151 N Joshua Tree Lane, Gilbert, AZ 85234, 480-854-9473

St. Patrick's Day March 17th

Today, people of all backgrounds celebrate St. Patrick's Day, especially throughout the United States, Canada and Australia. Although North America is home to the largest productions, St. Patrick's Day is celebrated around the world in locations far from Ireland, including Japan, Singapore and Russia. Popular St. Patrick's Day recipes include Irish soda bread, corned beef and cabbage and champ. In the United States, people often wear green on St. Patrick's Day.

In modern-day Ireland, St. Patrick's Day was traditionally been a religious occasion. In fact, up until the 1970s, Irish laws mandated that pubs be closed on March 17. Beginning in 1995, however, the Irish government began a national campaign to use interest in St. Patrick's Day to drive tourism and showcase Ireland and Irish culture to the rest of the world.

Superstition Mountain Express

**Superstition Mountain Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
1151 N Joshua Tree Lane
Gilbert, AZ 85234**



2021 Chapter Activity schedule - (Dates and times are subject to change)

Chapter Board	Chapter Auxiliary	Chapter Dinner,
Meetings	Luncheons	Luncheon Meetings
March 8 th – 9:30am	March 12 th – Cancelled	Sunday March 21st - Cancelled
April 12 th – 9:30am	April 9 th – 11:00am	Sunday April 18th – 4:00pm social – 5:00pm dinner
May 10 th – 9:30am	May 14 th – 11:00am	Sunday May 16th - 4:00pm social – 5:00pm dinner



Be Connected Website <https://beconnectedaz.org/>
Visit the Be Connected website and explore the different
features and other organizations in your area.