Superstition Mountain Express MOAA[®] Military Officers Association of America



Please remember to share the newsletter with your spouse!

President's Comments



LTC John Bushko, USAF (Ret)

I hope this finds everyone healthy and safe as we move on through the year. Although the Governor has removed many of the Covid restrictions we will still not be meeting in person for a while. The primary reason for this is that the Dobson Restaurant decided they would no longer host groups as they have in the past. To continue to meet there we would need to hire a caterer for our meals since they have moved all food preparation to a new food trailer outside. Bottom line, we are searching for a new location to have our meetings. If you are aware of a location where we can meet and have a meal as we have in the past, please contact Arlan or me so that we can check to see if it is available. This may mean we change our meeting time and date to accommodate the new location's scheduling. The Board anticipates a possible return to in-person meeting about June if we can find a location and coordinate the logistics for meals.

On another note, the state bill to exempt military retired pay from state income taxes has been assigned to the Ways and Means committee in the House. They have taken no action yet but you can still contact your state representative and let them know you want them to support this bill.

Continued on next page

Maj Norm Poole



CAS Membership

2021 OFFICERS **2021 COMMITTEE CHAIRS** CW4 Arlan Allen Programs President, Lt Col John Bushko 480-759-1717 jabushko@earthlink.net Membership Col John Marsh 602-283-5862 cw4allen@cox.net 1st VP, CW4 Arlan Allen **ROTC/JROTC** Capt Ed Mangan **Personal Affairs** 2nd VP, Col John Marsh 480-2191020 emarsh125@gmail.com Lt Gregory Moore Legislative Capt Ritt Schiano VP Auxiliary, Mrs. Judy Bushko 480-759-1717 jdbushko@earthlink.net Newsletter Mrs. Marlene Fox Secretary, Mrs. Peggy Allen Website Lt. Ann Ferguson **Transition Coordinator** Treasurer, Col Thomas Ralph Director Maj. Austin Foote Past President, MG Dave Rataczak Director Mrs. Ann Schminke Director Capt. George Meegan Director Lt Col Sheryl Mauldin Director Col Karl Pfitzer Director **Captain Al Anderer**



April 2021

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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/

President's message continued

The IRS moved the federal tax filing date to May 17th, although Arizona has not yet extended the filing date for state income tax as I write this. So, you still need to have them filed or request your extension by Apr 15th. I would like to wish our Christian friends a Happy Easter. Until we can again meet in person, stay safe, healthy and active.

John 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 10 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



The best way to stay healthy and happy is stay active, interact with other people, and enjoy life!



LOOKING ON THE LIGHTER SIDE OF LIFE!

I received many positive comments on this part of last months newsletter. It seems everyone needs to enjoy a good laugh now and then. Gerald Gustafson, one of our oldest members, sent me a packet of information that I am including much of in this newsletter. Thanks Jerry!



I have long thought the aging process could be slowed down if it had to work its way through Congress!



When you win, you're an old pro. When you lose, you're an old man!



You know, by the time you reach my age, you've made plenty of mistakes if you've lived your life properly.

Ronald Reagan





I think of myself as I was when I was 40 years ago. Then I look in the mirror and see an old guy and realize it's me!



It's no longer a question of staying healthy, it's a question of finding a sickness you like!

You could have heard a pin drop!

Jerry received these in 2011

JFK'S Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, was in France in the early 60's when DeGaule decided to pull out of NATO. DeGaule said he wanted all US Military out of France as soon as possible. Rusk responded, "Does that include those are buried here?" DeGaule did not respond! You could have heard a pin drop!

When in England, at a fairly large conference, Colin Powell was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury if our plans for Iraq were just an example of 'empire building' by George Bush.

Powell answered by saying, "over the years, the United States has sent many of its young men and women into great peril to fight for freedom beyond our borders. The only amount of land we ever asked for in return is enough to bury those that did not return."

You could have heard a pin drop!

There was a conference in France where a number of international engineers were taking part, including French and American. During a break, one of the French engineers came back into the room saying, have you heard the latest dumb stunt Bush has done? He has sent an aircraft carrier to Indonesia to help the tsunami victims. What does he intend to do, bomb them?"

A Boeing engineer stood up and replied quietly. "Our carriers have three hospitals on board that can treat several hundred people; they are nuclear powered and can supply emergency electrical power to shore facilities; they have three cafeterias with enough capacity to feed 3,000 people three meals a day, they can produce several thousand gallons of fresh water from sea water each day and they carry half a dozen helicopters for use in transporting victims and injured to and from the flight deck. We have eleven such ships."

You could have heard a pin drop!

A US Navy Admiral was attending a naval conference that included admirals from the U.S., English, Australian, and French navies. At a cocktail reception, he found himself standing with a large group of officers that included personnel from most of those countries. Everyone was chatting away in English as they sipped their drinks when a French admiral suddenly complained that, whereas Europeans learn many languages, Americans learn only English. He then asked, "why is it that we always have to speak English in these conferences rather than speaking French?"

Without hesitating, the American Admiral replied, "maybe it's because the Brit's, Canadian's, Aussie's, and American's arranged it so you wouldn't have to speak German!"

You could have heard a pin drop!

Robert Whiting, an elderly gentleman of 83, arrived in Paris by plane. At French customs, he took a few minutes to locate his passport in his carryon. "you have been to France before, monsieur" The customs officer asked sarcastically. Mr. Whiting admitted that he had been to France previously. "Then you should know enough to have your passport ready," she said. The American said, "the last time I was here, I didn't have time to show it." "Impossible...Americans always have to show their passports on arrival in France."

The American senior gave the Frenchman a long look. Then he quietly explained, "well, when I came ashore at Omaha Beach on D-day in 1944 to help liberate this country, I couldn't find a single Frenchman to show a passport to."

You could have heard a pin drop!



Chairman Reports



1st Vice President Arlan Allen - Programs

Planning ahead for summer! As everyone knows, the pandemic has created havoc in the hospitality industry. We are, however, looking at

two or three different locations to resume our monthly meetings. The earliest possible date for a Chapter meeting, will be June. This is tentative pending a contract with one of these locations.

With the change in locations, we may need to shift from a Sunday dinner meeting to a Saturday, or any other day of the week, luncheon meeting. I would like to hear from everyone with their opinions and concerns about a potential change to a luncheon during the week, starting around 1:00 pm. Please email me your thoughts at <u>cw4allen@cox.net</u>.

Let's all stay healthy and practice common sense, so we can come out of this pandemic as healthy as we came in!

Hope to see everyone in June, if we are able to finalize a contract.

CW4 Arlan R Allen, USA, Retired



2nd Vice President John Marsh - Membership

It seems that the COVID remains at the top of our conversation list. I am urging all members out there to partake of this free vaccination

opportunity.

Canvassing our Board and officers, thirteen out of eighteen have completed the vaccine program. There is consideration under way to return to Board meetings soon. General meetings of the membership would soon follow if a robust majority were also vaccinated. SO!! Find someplace to give you the shot and let's get together! John M.





Treasurer Tom Ralph

I really don't have anything to a report this month. There just isn't anything much going on. 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

VA must prioritize the vaccination of (1) Veterans enrolled in the VA health care system, (2) Veterans who fail to enroll but receive hospital care and medical services for specified disabilities in their first 12 months of separation from service, and (3) caregivers accompanying such prioritized Veterans. vaccines furnished Additionally, abroad are authorized to be furnished in a geographic location other than a state regardless of whether vaccines are needed for the treatment of Veterans with a serviceconnected disability. This includes those participating in a VA rehabilitation program.

To learn how to get COVID-19 vaccine from VA, visit <u>https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/84404/veterans-designated-caregivers-can-get-covid-19-vaccine-va/</u>.

Find answers to general VA COVID-19 vaccine questions at <u>https://www.va.gov/health-care/covid-19-vaccine/</u>.



Legislative Ritt Schiano



(Edited from the MOAA HQ Site)

MOAA ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Cory Titus, MOAA's director of government relations for veteran benefits and Guard/Reserve affairs, outlined the association's legislative priorities for the VA during a joint Veterans Affairs Committee virtual session on Wednesday.

MOAA was one of seven groups testifying during the hearing, joining the Blinded Veterans Association, Disabled American Veterans, Minority Veterans of America, National Association of State Directors of Veterans Affairs, National Coalition for Homeless Veterans, and Student Veterans of America to offer advice and priorities to members of the House and Senate.

MOAA'S PRIORITIES FOR THE VA

MOAA's legislative priorities for the VA in 2021:

- Strength and modernize VA's workforce.
- Eliminate health disparities for women and minority veterans to ensure health equity in accessing timely, compassionate, and quality care.
- Expand access to caregiver, palliative care, geriatric care, extended care, and hospice programs and services for veterans and wounded warriors, and their caregivers.
- Improve veteran suicide prevention programs and increase access to behavioral healthcare services.
- Improve medical exam and claims processing to meet pandemic-related and enduring challenges.
- Support our nation's economic recover through increased educational opportunities and protections to get veterans back to work.
- Pass comprehensive toxic exposure reform.
- Strengthen and protect service-connected disability compensation.

CONCURRENT RECEIPT GAINING MOMENTUM

Champions of concurrent receipt are gaining momentum in the House of Representatives with H.R. 1282 in a bipartisan manner. Even with budgetary concerns, momentum to make important progress on concurrent receipt is growing this year. Help support this momentum by calling and writing your lawmakers.

NEW VA SECRETARY CALLS FOR URGENT REVIEW

For tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans entitled to long-sought benefits connected to toxic exposure, recent statements from VA Secretary Denis McDonough hold promise, but offer few specifics. In the months ahead, MOAA will be seeking support from members and others in sharing our message of comprehensive toxic exposure reform. The VA will also research the possibility of adding hypertension as a covered disease to Agent Orange and other toxic exposures.

A Growing Number of MOAA Members Looking to Make a Difference in Their Communities are Using Their Voices to Pass Legislation in Their Home States.

MOAA has launched a virtual space for councils and chapters to come together to share their success stories and strategize around obstacles relating to state-level legislation. MOAA members can take that knowledge a step further to advocate alongside members of Defense State Liaison Offices (DSLOs).

During the webinars, MOAA members from different states share what legislation they're working on in their state, opening the conversation to share wisdom or seek help from states with similar legislative agendas.

TRICARE SELECT ENROLLMENT FEE UPDATE

A bipartisan bill would provide a partial fix for the new TRICARE Select enrollment fee, which took effect Jan. 1.

The TRICARE Select Restoration Act (S.625), introduced by Sens. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), protects the military retiree health care benefit by eliminating the TRICARE Select enrollment fee for those who retired prior to 2018 and their dependents.

HEALTH CARE FOR ADULT CHILDREN OF DISABLED VETERANS

MOAA has again joined forces with 43 other military and veterans service organizations and stakeholders to help one small but deserving cohort during these difficult times. The goal: to secure health care for

children whose veteran parents are disabled or who have died from a service-connected disability.

COVID-19 Relief Bill Includes Long-Sought Change Helping Military-Connected Students

A MOAA-supported passage in the \$1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package will close a loophole in federal education regulations that had made military-connected students the target of predatory practices by bad actors in for-profit education.

H.R. 1319, which passed the House on March 10 and was signed into law by President Joe Biden the next day, includes language that will remove this loophole, classifying DoD and VA benefits the same as other federal education assistance such as Pell Grants. MOAA joined more than 30 advocacy organizations in a letter to key lawmakers in both chambers seeking the change.

COVID Relief Legislation Stops VA Copayments, Cost Shares Through September

The VA will not collect copayments or cost shares until at least Oct. 1 as part of COVID-19 relief legislation signed into law March 11, solidifying a policy already in place at the agency.

The VA began pausing such collections, as well as collections on overpayments, in April 2020 as part of its pandemic response efforts. That policy ended in January but was reinstated by executive order later that month and confirmed by VA Secretary Denis McDonough in February.

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



MOAA members,

This has been a strange year for our JROTC program. It appears that we will only have a few awards programs out of our 22 schools. Some are just having private ceremonies. I will be providing the awards to the school military leaders.

Hopefully next year will be back to normal.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone when we came resume our monthly meetings.

Ed Mangan, SMC JROTC Chair 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 Easter from your Board!





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!



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!



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. 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



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.

Stories of military life from our members

A Vietnam War Story



During most of 1970, I was a Chinook helicopter platoon commander stationed first at Bearcat near Saigon in III Corps and later at Marble Mountain near Da Nang in II Corps. I had 8 CH-47A Chinooks and 16 pilots working for me- most of the time. One such pilot was Dennis. He was a CW3 and serving his 2nd tour in Vietnam. His first tour was as a UH-1D (Huey) pilot, a notoriously under powered helicopter that on a good day, could carry around five or six fully combat loaded troops, plus crew. This story is from his first tour of duty where he was assigned a mission to support a South Korean Infantry unit.

The South Koreans, or ROK's as they were most commonly referred (Republic of Korea- I think), were among our most respected and fierce allies. Most military organizations kept their movements secret until they moved, but the ROCs announced their movements and invited any hostiles to try and interfere with them. This attitude and sense of bravado was reinforced for me with every interaction I had with them throughout my tour. And this story does nothing but add to it.

The mission Dennis had that day was to fly out to a small landing site in a somewhat hostile area and pick up six ROK infantrymen and return them to their base camp. It must have been a standard high humidity day because when he got there and got them all loaded up, he did not have the power to take off from the fairly tight confined area. He then told the squad leader of the ROCs that two troops would have to wait until he could come back because he was not able to take off

with that heavy a load. The squad leader selected two individuals and instructed them to get out and wait for the aircraft to return

Apparently, that did not settle well with the two soldiers. As the aircraft was departing, the soldiers who were to wait, decided that they would take a few shots at the aircraft as it left.

No significant damage happened, and on the way back to the base camp, they called the ROC headquarters and reported Continued on next page

the event. They were informed in no uncertain terms that their mission was over and that the ROCs would take care of retrieving the two remaining soldiers. So, they dropped off their passengers and returned to their home station, thinking nothing more of the event- except for maybe having a great story to tell at the bar that evening.

Two weeks later, Dennis and his crew received an official invitation from the ROKs, thru channels, to come to the execution of those two soldiers. I do not know if he went or was even allowed to attend. You just never messed with the ROKs, no matter who you were! **Tom Ralph**

Exercise Sweetbriar and the Kee Bird January through March 1950



"Sweetbriar" was an exercise between a combined unit made up of the 1st Infantry Battalion of the 14th Infantry Regiment, stationed at Camp Carson, Colorado, and units of the Canadian "Princess Pats" Airborne Infantry, headquartered out of Whitehorse in the Yukon Territory. Our mission was to defeat "the live aggressor" on the ground, and with P47 Thunder Bolt aircraft in support (bombing us with small flour sacks), capture an airstrip at Northway, Alaska, driving out "the aggressor" who had invaded Alaska and North America.

I was Liaison Officer for Col Frank S. Bown to the Canadian forces. We defeated the "the aggressor" when the Canadian Princess Pats parachuted onto the airstrip and were joined by our American battalion.

Some statistics for our 1st Battalion – keeping in mind the following factors: three vehicle convoys departed Camp Carson, Colorado during January; each several days apart. (I was commander of the last one.) The infantry battalion flew from Peterson Airfield at Colorado Springs to Whitehorse in late January. This was the <u>first U.S.</u> Army winter maneuver held.

Special Order 1234567890

The Kee Bird

You have heard the wail of a siren, as an ambulance sped down the street; And maybe you've heard the lion's deep roar, Down in Africa's grim desert heat.

> Or the piercing cry of the tiger, at night as he stalks his prey; Or the locomotive's high shrill whistle, as it sped through the night on its way.

But these sounds sink to a whisper, you've heard naught, I assure you, till I've told; Of the blood curling cry of the Kee Bird, in the Arctic's cruel frigid cold.

> This bird looks just like a buzzard, it's large, it's hideous, it's bold; In the night as it circles the North Pole, crying, Kee, Kee, but it's cold.

The Eskimos tucked away in their igloos, toss fretfully in their sleep; While the huskies asleep in the snowbank, start burrowing way down deep.

> For this cry is so awe-inspiring, it freezes the blood I'm told; As this Kee Bird flies in the Artic, crying, KEE, KEE, Keerist but it's cold.

The Mounties abroad in their dog sleds, visiting the wards of the crown; Often hear this cry and stare skyward, with a fierce and sullen frown.

> For odd things happen in the Artic, and many weird tales they have told; But their voices drop to a whisper, at the cry, Kee, Kee, Keerist but it's cold.

And many brave men on this base site, strong and bold, from the Northwest state; Are taking the first train back to the homeland, to forget this fierce bird's song of hate.

> They can "take it" it seems, in the daytime, but when the midnight hour is toiled. They cover their heads in shameless fright, at the cry, "Kee, Kee, Keerist it's cold."

> > Continued on next page

So back to the states they are going, to sleep in a real bed, as of old;

To slip their strong arms around their loved ones, her fair slender form to enfold

Then off to sleep in the warm comfort, and Wifey's soft hands that will hold;

To wake, terrorized by a "Kee Bird" nightmare, as they cry, Kee, Kee, Keerist but it's cold."

No, I'll not regret leaving this Northland, when the ice breaks up, it is farewell;

I'd even risk a torpedo, to escape the Kee Birds yell.

If someday I get to heaven, Play loud on your harps of gold;

To drown out the howl of the frigid fowl, Crying, "Kee, Kee, KEERIST BUT IT'S COLD."

Chapter Donations						
Enclosed is a donation of \$						
This donation may be used for any Auxiliary projectsor ROTC Please make check payable to SMC of MOAA Write Auxiliary in the memo line of the check						
Mail to: Tom Ralph, Treasurer 20444 N 22 nd St, Phoenix, AZ 85024						

Covid Vaccines

U.S. Representative Greg Stanton sent out the following information

There is a change in how the Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) will be releasing vaccine appointments going forward. **ADHS will release new appointments every Friday at 11 a.m.** You can register for an appointment by visiting <u>podvaccine.azdhs.gov</u>, or by calling 1-844-542-8201 to be connected with someone who can assist.

Because vaccines are in such high demand and supply is limited, these appointments will almost certainly fill up fast. Consider making an account on ADHS' <u>Vaccine Portal</u> beforehand if you plan to register, it can help the process go smoothly when appointments open. If you aren't sure you're eligible, use <u>ADHS' vaccine eligibility checker</u>.

Throughout each week, additional appointments will become available due to cancellations and no-shows at state sites. You can check availability on <u>podvaccine.azdhs.gov</u>, or by calling 1-844-542-8201. Hours of

operation for the call center are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a week. You can find more information about the vaccine at <u>ADHS's website</u>.

For technical support, call (602) 542-1000 and for general information, call 2-1-1 or the Arizona COVID-19 Hotline at 1-(844) 542-8201.

If you need help or have further questions, please consult <u>my office's vaccine guide</u> (<u>en Español</u>), <u>reach out to</u> <u>my office online</u> or call (602) 956-2463.

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.

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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		
April 12 th – 9:30am April 9 th – Cancelled		Sunday April 18 th – Cancelled		
May 10 th – 9:30am	May 14 th – 11:00am	Sunday May 16 th - 4:00pm social – 5:00pm dinner		



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