

THE HIGH DESERT BUGLE

Mojave Desert Chapter
Military Officers Association
of America



VOLUME 39, ISSUE 5

MAY 2026

MAY MEETING WILL FEATURE SHIPS, SHIPS, & MORE SHIPS

CPT Byron Ward

In April, I participated in a Chamber of Commerce event called Ignite High Desert, a series of quick, 5-minute PowerPoint presentations on a wide variety of subjects. My talk was about Big Gun Radio Controlled Model Warship Combat, the hobby of building and battling large (up to 6' long) ship models armed with guns that shoot ball bearings at "enemy" vessels..



So two MOAA members, Michael and Meera, thought enough of my presentation to encourage me to do it again at a Chapter meeting, which I readily agreed to. The 5-minute format would make for a pretty lean presentation, however, so I decided to add descriptions of the country's many warship museums into the mix.

The meeting will be held at the Bear Valley Country Club on Wednesday, May 27. The social hour will begin at 1100 hours; lunch will be served at noon. The cost is \$28 per person. PLEASE RSVP before Monday, 25 May to MAJ Meera Maheswaran at 760-646-4146 or MAJ Ron Matsuda at 760-961-8257 or by email at rmatsuda@outlook.com. 🍷





Mojave Valley Chapter



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LTC Michael W. Moticha, USAR (Ret.)

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Mission Statement

The Mojave Desert Chapter of the MOAA embraces “Never Stop Serving” our uniformed service retirees, veterans, those currently serving, their families and surviving spouses, through advocacy at the Federal and State levels on issues relating to the unique challenges of uniformed service. Additionally, we are committed to volunteer engagement with the needs of the communities, jointly and individually.

The Bugle is published monthly by the Mojave Desert Chapter (TMDC), an affiliate of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) and is available to our membership in both email and postal mode.

MOAA and its affiliated chapters are non-partisan.





President's Narrative

LTC Michael W. Moticha

ANNUAL YOUTH AWARDS CEREMONY WAS A HIT

On 30 April, the Mojave Desert Chapter held its Annual Youth Awards Ceremony at the Elks Lodge 1877 in Victorville. This event is the culmination of the chapter's promotion of this local Community Project. If you did not attend, you missed a very important and heartwarming evening. See photo at right and throughout the newsletter.

This chapter project supports five High School JROTC Programs, the 18th Brigade of the California Cadet Corps, consisting of eight Middle, Junior, and Senior High Schools, and the Excelsior High Desert Young Marines' organization. Throughout the year, besides normal class time, the units hold daily and weekly training exercises, local and state competition for promotions and awards, school assemblies to honor the cadets and travel activities to boost their morale. With the Chapter Members participating in some of these activities, the cadre and cadets are able to feel comfortable in the community, knowing that they are accepted and supported in their efforts.

During the evening's program, 22 certificates of Award/Achievement, 8 sets of MOAA metals and ribbons, and seven \$500 scholarship/maintenance funds were awarded to the Cadets and unit Cadre, which consists of Advisors, Commanders, and Instructors. Included in the evening's presentations were Certificates of Achievement awarded to all by the District/Field Representatives of our local legislators, including Congressman Jay Obernolte, State Senators Ochoa Bogh and Valadares, Assemblymen

Carrillo, Harabedine, and Lackey, and San Bernardino Supervisor Paul Cook.

The evening did not go on without a few uncontrolled happenings. Our guest speaker and awards presenter, Juan Carrillo, was not able to attend due to a family emergency. However, Laura Villa, one of his Field Representatives, presented his remarks. As Chapter President, I presented the awards. Three of the Legislative Field Representatives expected to attend the ceremony could not attend. The ordered MOAA metals, ribbons, and pouches were on backorder from MOAA, still in Germany.

Despite these few bumps, the ceremony went well and was a success. I was disappointed in the Chapter Membership turn out. However, the attendance was not small at all. We had to bring out additional chairs to accommodate the 100 plus families and friends attending. The original estimate was 80.



APPLE VALLEY LEGACY MUSEUM PROJECT

In April, I visited Marcy Taylor at the Apple Valley Legacy Museum, which is part of our Community Projects. My visit was to present her with a check for \$133.00, the exact amount of donated funds in the chapter treasury. I had planned to present the check to Marcy at the Mohave Historical Society's meeting and get a photo too but was unable to attend.



President's Narrative

Continued

CHAPTER PRESIDENT TRAVELING IN MAY

As a Philatelist (stamp collector), I will be away at an International Stamp Convention in Boston, MA from 21 May until 1 June. I will miss the May luncheon and have asked our Vice-President MAJ Meera Maheswaran to take my place. I will not be available to accept requests for reservations, so don't call or email me. Meera or MAJ Ron Matsuda, our treasurer, will take phone calls.

I will also miss the Memorial Day Service on 25 May. Dignity Memorial has not put out any information as to where, when, and how as of this writing. I heard via other organizations that they might have two rather than one service. The locations are yet to be announced. This will be the first time I have missed a Memorial Day Service and wreath laying activity in some 15 years. I asked the Chapter Membership for a

volunteer to replace me and only received one affirmative reply. Dolores Payne, who attends the Memorial Day Services each year, said she would accept the responsibility for the wreath, if no one else stepped up. There are two wreaths and the rumored possibility that there may be two services. In years past, the Chapter

Members have participated in three different services. I will leave the wreaths with MAJ Meera Maheswaran, if we do not know before I leave and hope for the best. If we are notified soon, and I have volunteers, then I will distribute the wreaths to whoever the volunteers are. It would be nice to have more than one chapter member at the service(s). I leave the decision and outcome to the Chapter.



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE EVENT FEATURED 22 TALKS

On 16 April, I attended the Greater High Desert Chamber of Commerce's event called Ignite High Desert, a series of short talks about a wide variety of subjects. Also present from the Chapter were MAJ Meera Maheswaran and CPT Byron Ward, who spoke about his favorite hobby, Big Gun Model Warship Combat. Byron will give an extended version of his talk at the Chapter's monthly meeting on May 27.



ABOVE: LTC Moticha presents an ROTC Certificate of Achievement to Cadet Sergeant Noah Consecion, a student at Cobalt Institute and member of the 18th Brigade of the California Cadet Corps



President's Narrative

Continued

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION AT BARSTOW VETERANS HOME

On 18 May, 10:30 AM, at the Barstow Veterans Home, CALVET is hosting a portrait unveiling of Vietnam War veterans, honoring their service and sacrifice. This event will be followed by a 30th Birthday Celebration for the Veterans Home of California, Barstow. (See the announcement below).

Everyone is invited to this festive occasion. Due to this short notice, the chapter needs to respond by 12 May, with the total number of members planning to attend. Please call Michael W Moticha at (760) 792-5004 or contact him by email at michaelwmoticha@verizon.net if you would like to attend. Hopefully, we will have members attending this event, as it is one of our chapter's Community Projects. 🗣️



You're Invited to Celebrate a Special Milestone!

Veterans Home of California Barstow

30th

Birthday Party & Portrait Unveiling

18 May at 10:30 am
in the Front Lobby

100 Veterans Pkwy
Barstow, Ca.

VIETNAM WAR VETERANS PORTRAIT UNVEILING @ 10:30 A.M
Birthday Celebration to follow: 11:30 in the MPR
Lunch by our Culinary Team, Cake & Festivities til 3:30 p.m
RSVP by May 8 to PIO/Laura Moraco



Treasurer's Report

Maj Ronald Matsuda

We began the month of April 2026 with \$10,065.47 in our chapter's accounts. We had revenues of \$734.00 and expenses of \$4,272.00, resulting in a balance at the end of the month of \$6,331.20.

The large expenses in April were due to the scholarship presentation at the Annual Youth Awards Ceremony on 30 April. The Chapter awarded five \$500.00 scholarships and two \$500.00 maintenance awards to the Excelsior High Desert Young Marines and to the California Cadet Corps 18th Brigade. As a result, the Youth Awards Funds currently stand at \$3,374.81, while the Barstow Veterans Home has \$133.00 and the Apple Valley and Victor Valley Legacy Museums, the Parade of Pianos, and the Flight Museum have \$0.00.

Remember that dues paid to the Chapter goes exclusively for our administrative costs. Please note that our administrative costs are comparatively low as our dues are \$35.00 per year and \$10.00 for Surviving Spouses and active duty personnel. If you have a question as to whether or not you have already paid for 2026 please email me at rtmatsuda@outlook.com and I will advise you as to whether or not you have paid for 2026.

When sending dues payments please send your check, made out to TMDC-MOAA, to The Mohave Desert Chapter--MOAA, P.O. Box 785, Victorville, CA 92393-0785.

Members are encouraged to renew their dues using the form found on the last page this newsletter. If you don't use the renewal membership form, please use the memo line on your check to designate "Dues", "Youth Awards" or any of the other charities that we support. 🗣️



April Meeting

1LT Jack Barry



At the MOAA chapter meeting in April, I gave an informative presentation on a "hidden gem" here in our High Desert: The St. Joseph Monastery. Tucked away in Lucerne Valley, this 80-acre campus provides a most delightful and peaceful refuge from the stresses of our chaotic world. The campus is open to EVERYONE, with the six resident Vietnamese monks in residence prepared to help you make your visit a memorable experience. "The Heart of Jesus" (shown below, one of many huge statues) protectively overlooks the valley. When visiting, I recommend packing a picnic, and, of course, your Bible to take advantage of the many umbrella tables available on site. 📣



ANNUAL YOUTH AWARDS

Below is a complete list of the 22 distinguished students who received awards at the Annual Youth Awards Ceremony on April 30.

ACADEMY FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE, AFJROTC

Senior: Cadet Guardian Capt Jacob Cardozo
Junior: Cadet Guardian 2/Lt Sophia Gomez
Sophomore: Cadet Guardian T/Sgt Alyana Gonzalez

SULTANA HIGH SCHOOL, AFJROTC

Senior: Cadet CM/Sgt Joanna Arnsdorff
Junior: Cadet M/Sgt Roxanne Bender
Sophomore: Cadet 2/Lt Audrey Parsons

DESERT HIGH, EDWARDS AFB, AFJROTC

Senior: Cadet CM/Sgt Butch A. Amar
Junior: Cadet 1/Lt Karen E. Armstrong
Sophomore: Cadet 1/Lt Evelyn A. Miller

EXCELSIOR HIGH DESERT MARINES

Junior: YM/Sgt Christian Ochoa
Sophomore: YM/Sgt Gabriel Ochoa

VICTOR VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL, AFJROTC

Senior: Cadet CM/Sgt Juan Barrera
Junior: Cadet Capt Anthony Rios
Sophomore: Cadet 1/Lt Samantha Sanchez

OAK HILLS HIGH SCHOOL, USAJROTC

Senior: Cadet MAJ Jack Boggs
Junior: Cadet M/SGT Madison Horsburgh
Sophomore: Cadet SFC Jordynn West

CALIFORNIA CADET CORPS, 18TH BRIGADE

High School Officer: C/1LT Nicholas Lara
High School NCO: C/SGT Noah Consecion
High School 1st Year Cadet: C/CPL Jonathan Aguino,
Middle School NCO: C/CPL Timothy Aguilar
Middle School 1st Year Cadet: CDT Luke Olson Zavala



Veterans' Benefits

MAJ Jim Skirvin

DISABILITY CATEGORIES

Reservists and National Guard personnel can apply for VA benefits if they have served on active duty under Title 10 or certain Title 32 orders, such as deployments or mobilization, for at least 90 days, or have completed 6 years in the selected Reserve. Those with at least 6 years of service in the selected Reserve who were honorably discharged, retired, or transferred to Standby/Ready Reserve are able to apply for VA benefits.

To apply for VA disability benefits, apply at VA.gov to submit VA Form 21-526EZ, service medical records, and any private medical records.

As of May 2026, VA has increased efforts to reduce the number of combat suicides, and to improve disability processing times. Other key initiatives enhance pregnancy VA benefits new commercial drivers licenses for veterans.

Thirty-four health facilities have opened nationwide and 100,000 new veterans have signed up for healthcare. The new facilities should reduce wait times by 67%. 📣



On this page are photos from the April meeting courtesy of Jack Berry. Everyone is encouraged to join the fun at the next monthly meeting on Wednesday, May 27



CDR Larry W. Monroe

In Memorium

MOAA chapter member Larry Wayne Monroe, a U.S. Navy Commander, has sadly passed away. Nicknamed, "Gunner," he was born in Sidney, Ohio on May 2, 1939 and died in Boulder City, Nevada on March 31, 2026, due to natural causes.

His mother was Ruth Esther Setsor and his father, Lawrence Monroe, was an electrician who passed away in 1941. Esther remarried Chris Henke and they had a son, half brother, Thomas J. Henke. In his younger years, Larry attained the rank of Eagle Scout.

Commander Monroe was a Vietnam Veteran. During his service in the military, he served on four ships, including USS Mississinewa (AO-144) from 1957-1958, USS Canisteo (AO-99) from 1958-1959, USS Snowden (DE-246) from 1961-1962, and on the USS Midway (CVA-41) from 1971-1973.

He often talked about his VP-48 Plane Squadron, Crew 10 during his service. He was decorated with the Air Medal, the Navy Achievement Medal, and the Combat Action Ribbon. He also earned the National Defense Service Medal, the Navy Expeditionary Medal, the Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, a Presidential Unit Citation Ribbon, the Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation, and the Meritorious Unit Commendation Ribbon with 1 Bronze Star. His foreign awards include the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal and the Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation.

He graduated from Texas A & I University in 1977 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Geology. He was a Geologist in the oil indus-



try and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for several years after serving in the military.

Larry is survived by his ex-wife, Kazuko Atamura, daughters Annette Lynch and June Monroe, grandchildren Saber, Mariah, and Sebastian, great grandchildren, Isabella and Ryland, and nephew Joseph Henke and niece Jennifer Henke, both of Fort Loramie, Ohio.

He is preceded in death by his son, Brian Patrick Monroe (2014), and half brother, Thomas J. Henke (2025).

Larry was a registered organ/tissue donor, and in the 1980s, he donated a kidney to his son, Brian. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to the National Kidney Foundation at: www.kidney.org and/or Donate Life at www.donatelife.net. Registrations to be an organ/tissue donor can be made at: www.donatelife.net.

Services will be held on Thursday, May 14, at Cromes-Edwards Funeral Home in Sidney, Ohio. Larry will be laid to rest at the Graceland Cemetery in Sidney. 🕯



Chaplain's Corner

Rev. Phyllis Skirvin, PhD

POWER OF THE TONGUE

Operational Security (OPSEC)

Having a “big mouth” by sharing sensitive information online or with unauthorized Individuals is a critical violation of security regulations.

Behavioral Issues: “Loose lips” or disrespectful behavior can lead to loss of command confidence, disciplinary action, or being categorized as a “Barracks lawyer” (someone who gives bad or unwarranted advice).

Our mouth can lead to anger issues and destruction of our relationships.

Proverbs 21:23 He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity.

We must be careful about how and what we say to others as it may undermine military operations to include our family relationships, who has sacrificed their time and love for our safety and their anxious return of their military family members.

Our word from our lips has the power to both build up and destroy. God tells us the words we speak flow from our heart, revealing our true character. We must speak with love, patience, and kindness to build up others. Our words should be encouraging and healing.

Proverbs 18:21 “Death and life are in the power of the tongue”

Let your leadership be reflected by how and what you say to others, whether it be a command for the troops, or for your family’s love, support and encouragement.

May God bless you and your family and “God Bless America.” 🇺🇸



Above are two more photos of the Youth Awards Ceremony courtesy of Jack Berry. The upper photo shows Cadet 1/Lt Evelyn Miller from Desert High School, Edwards Air Force Base, receiving her certificate from LTC Michael Moticha.

INVEST IN YOUR LEGACY WITH EXCLUSIVE
EDUCATION SAVINGS

MOAA
Military Officers' Association of America

AMU
American Military University





Community Projects

Project Leaders

YOUTH FUND FOR JROTC, YOUNG MARINES, CALIFORNIA CADET CORPS



As reported by Chapter President LTC Michael Moticha on page 3, the Chapter's Annual Youth Awards Ceremony held on 30 April at the Elks Lodge on Hesperia Road went well, with a larger than expected crowd gathered to honor 22 worthy recipients from five High School JROTC unit programs, the 18th Brigade of the California Cadet Corps, and the Excelsior High Desert Marines.

APPLE VALLEY & VICTOR VALLEY LEGACY MUSEUMS

Marcy Taylor

I would like to thank the High Desert MOAA Chapter for adopting my Museum as one of your projects, and to the individual members who donated money to our fund. I got a nice surprise when LTC Michael Moticha arrived at the Museum to present me with a check in celebration of



our 11th anniversary. We also received a "Certificate of Recognition" from 1st District Supervisor Paul Cook.

You all are cordially invited to visit the Museum located at the Apple Valley Inn, Cottage 153, and to catch us at the Sunset Concerts in the Civic Center Park every Thursday in June and July, from 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. We look forward to seeing you at the San Bernardino County Fair in Building #2 from 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. all six days as we enthusiastically share our local history.

PARADE OF PIANOS

The Chapter is pleased to provide continuing support to the Parade of Pianos, an Apple Valley-based non-profit organization that aids in providing instrument instruction as well as scholarships to students in the High Desert.

The organization offers concerts throughout the year that will be announced here in the Bugle as soon as the schedule for this year is finalized.



Community Projects

Continued

BARSTOW VETERANS HOME

LTC Michael Moticha



In support of the Barstow Veterans Home, I attend the monthly "Sing-A-Longs" hosted by the High Desert Marines at 10:00 AM on the second Tuesday of each month. replacing the pool tournaments previously held by the High Desert Marines. Since I am attending the Barstow Military Affairs Committee Meeting earlier on the same Tuesday each month, it makes for a great day. In participating with the singing, we also have the opportunity to have lunch with the Veterans. This is an enjoyable meal. Visiting with the Vets, sharing military stories and personal lives, and just hanging out, makes for a great time. The Vets have expressed their appreciation for the visits and discussions in a very positive manner. They have also asked for additional Sing-A-Longs to be held. The High Desert Marines are considering this request. If changed, this will give the Chapter Members more opportunities to attend and get involved.

There are currently \$133.00 in donated chapter funds waiting to be dispersed to the Barstow Veterans Home. No decision has been made on how these funds will be used. If you have any suggestions for this limited amount of money to support the Home, please pass them on to MAJ Jim Skirvin, our Barstow Veterans Home contact.

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE FLIGHT TEST MUSEUM

The inventory of the Air Force Flight Test Museum includes over 85 historic test and prototype aircraft. Exhibits inside the museum cover such diverse subjects as the formation of the ancient lake beds, early homesteading in the High Desert, the first military use of Edwards, the historic flight that broke the sound barrier, and flight test from World War II to the present. Artifacts in the collection include aircraft propulsion systems, missiles, hardware, life support equipment, technical drawings, test reports, personal memorabilia, photographs, and wind tunnel models.



SUPPORT THE CHAPTER'S COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Members are encouraged to donate to one or more of the Community Projects in order for the membership to provide the best service we can to these worthy causes:

YOUTH FUND	\$ _____
LEGACY MUSEUMS	\$ _____
PARADE OF PIANOS	\$ _____
VETERANS HOME	\$ _____
FLIGHT MUSEUM	\$ _____
TOTAL	\$ _____

Please make checks out to TMDC/MOAA and mail to P. O. Box 785, Victorville, CA 92393, and please accept our greatest thanks for your generosity. 🙏





Most Highly Decorated

CPT Byron Ward

LTG THOMAS TACKABERRY

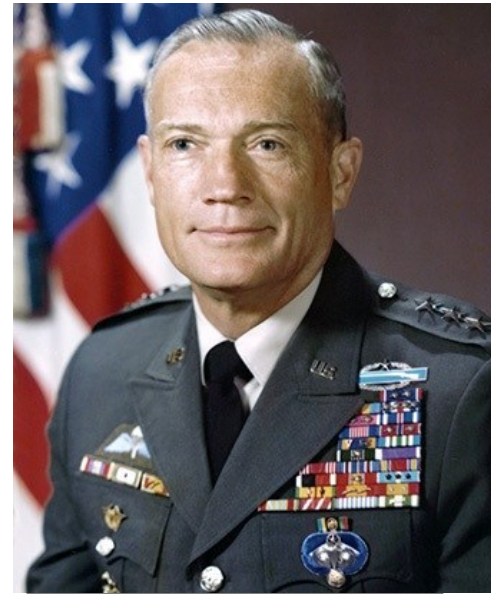
One of the U.S. Army's most highly decorated infantrymen, Thomas H. Tackaberry was born in Los Angeles in 1923 and went on active duty in 1943, although training and schooling kept him stateside for the duration of World War II. Graduating from OCS in the same month as V-J Day, Lieutenant Tackaberry held various junior officer positions at Fort Benning, Georgia, Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and Germany in the years before the Korean War.

In Korea, he saw combat as a company commander, earning two Silver Stars and, for a daring and extremely hazardous rescue of a patrol that had lost its commander, the Distinguished Service Cross.

A decade and a half later, in 1966, Lieutenant Colonel Tackaberry was back in action in Vietnam as a battalion commander with the First Cavalry Division. After one of his platoons lost its leader and became pinned down, Tackaberry personally intervened, running through intense enemy fire to reach the beleaguered unit, then leading an assault on a bunker complex, forcing the retreat of the larger enemy force. That heroic action resulted in Tackaberry being awarded a second Distinguished Service Cross.

Three years later, following a tour at the Pentagon, Tackaberry, now a full colonel, was back in Vietnam as the commanding officer of the 196th Infantry Brigade. In September, 1969, when one of his unit's strongpoints came under withering artillery and small arms fire from a large force of North Vietnamese Regulars, he flew by helicopter to the firebase

and personally took charge, grabbing an M-60 machinegun (!) and leading the attack against the dug-in enemy "until they were soundly routed." For this "outstanding leadership, extraordinary heroism and devotion to duty," Tackaberry was presented with a third Distinguished Service Cross. He also earned three more Silver Stars while serving in Vietnam.



Promotion to flag rank followed, and General Tackaberry saw service in the Office of the Secretary of the Army and as commander of the 82nd Airborne Division. After being promoted to lieutenant general, his last assignment before retirement in 1981, was commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps. His final assignments earned him a Defense Distinguished Service Medal and an Army DSM.

General Tackaberry and his wife Lilian had six children, with twin sons and two grandsons serving as officers in the Army. He died on April 3, 2017 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery. His position as the eighth most highly decorated servicemember in American history is well earned.



Next month, #7, a famous World War II PT Boat captain who earned the Medal of Honor, the Navy Cross, and an unprecedented (for a Navy man) two Army Distinguished Service Crosses. 🎖️



**THE LARGER OUR NUMBERS
THE GREATER YOUR VOICE**

FORM FOR NEW AND RENEWING MOJAVE DESERT CHAPTER MEMBERS

PLEASE CHECK ONE: **NEW MEMBER** **RENEWAL**

NAME _____
(RENEWING MEMBERS- INDICATE ANY CHANGES BELOW, OTHERWISE LEAVE BLANK)

RANK _____ **BRANCH OF SERVICE** _____

___ **RETIRED** ___ **FORMER** ___ **SURVIVING SPOUSE** ___ **ACTIVE OR NG**

SPOUSE'S NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP** _____

TELEPHONE _____ **EMAIL** _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____

**ANNUAL DUES: \$35 (FORMER & RETIRED OFFICERS)
\$10 (ACTIVE DUTY & SURVIVING SPOUSES)**

FOR NEW MEMBERS, DUES INCLUDES MEMBERSHIP IN MOAA NATIONAL. AN UPGRADE TO PREMIUM NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP, WHICH HAS A VARIETY OF ADDITIONAL BENEFITS FOR VETERANS, IS AVAILABLE FOR AN ADDITIONAL \$4.00 PER MONTH. VISIT MOAA.Org/Join FOR MORE INFORMATION.

TO COMPLETE ENROLLMENT OR RENEWAL, SCAN AND EMAIL THIS FORM TO michaelwmoticha@verizon.net, OR PRINT THE COMPLETED FORM WITH A CHECK PAYABLE TO TMD-C-MOAA AND MAIL TO

PO Box 785, Victorville, CA 92393-0785

DO NOT INCLUDE CREDIT CARD INFORMATION; WE WILL CONTACT YOU FOR THE INFORMATION TO FINALIZE PAYMENT

