



The High Desert Bugle



The Mojave Desert Chapter of



PO Box 785, Victorville, CA 92393

Volume 38, Issue 9

September 2025

PRESIDENT: LTC Michael W. Moticha, USAR (Ret.)

TREASURER: Maj. Ronald Matsuda, USAF (Ret.)

VICE-PRESIDENT: MAJ Meera Maheswaran, USAR (Ret.) **MEMBERSHIP:** Lt. Col. Thomas J. Brown, USAF (Ret.)

SURVIVING SPOUSE LIAISON: LTJG "Butch" Fahnestock, USN (Ret.) **SECRETARY:** Phyllis A. Skirvin, PhD

HISTORIAN: Maj. David A. Meyer, USAF (Ret.)

VETERAN BENEFITS: MAJ James R. Skirvin, USA (Ret.)

BOARD MEMBER: LTC Donald Amador, USA (Ret.)

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mojave Desert Chapter of 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.

You are cordially invited

to participate in our membership luncheon on Wednesday, 24 September 2025 at the Bear Valley Country Club, at 13299 Spring Valley Parkway, Victorville CA 92395. The social hour will begin at 1100 hours followed by lunch at 1200 hours. The "Michelin Star" meal will include a delicious entrée with vegetables, dessert, and a varied assortment of non-alcoholic beverages.

A vegan meal is also available upon request.

The cost is \$28.00 per person. Please make reservations by Monday, 22 September by contacting our President at micahaelwmoticha@verizon.net or (760) 792-5004 (cell).

Our guest speaker is our very own Lt. Col. Thomas Brown who will talk about the array of legal issues which Air Force Judge Advocates face and also about his own exciting experiences from 1970 to the late 1990s. He will focus on three murder cases on which he worked. One of the cases involved an Airman at George Air Force Base named Don Gillette, who was charged with first degree murder of his spouse. It was featured on *Forensic Files*, Season 10, Episode 11, and can be found on YouTube. The court reporter for that case was none other than our Chapter's member, Lee Bogert!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

LTC Michael W. Moticha



*Continuing the effort to promote our Chapter
providing 53 years of service in our High Desert*

SEPTEMBER MEETING:

During the summer months, our member participation in the monthly luncheons is typically smaller than other times of the year due to family vacations. I hope that the month of September turns out to be an exception. I would like to see a large gathering for this month's event. I am sure that everyone will want to greet and hear Lt. Col. Thomas Brown, one of our own, present his Air Force Judge Advocate array of legal issues, representative of the "Law in the Military Service." He will focus on three murder cases that he dealt with during his experiences from 1970 to the late 1990's. Come on out, enjoy a fine meal, the social atmosphere, and what Tom has to say. It is not very often that he and Carol have the opportunity to return to the High Desert and participate in one of our luncheons. Let's welcome them with a good, well-deserved turn-out.



Lt. Col. Thomas Brown

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP:

The 31 emails that I sent out to members who were delinquent in paying their dues have paid dividend. We not only received unpaid dues for previous years but also donations to our Chapter Community Projects. One of our non-active members has been living on the island of Guam, and he cancelled his membership because he does not expect to return to the United States. That's understandable. A couple of members have also moved away, joining other MOAA Chapters, and declined to renew their membership with our Chapter.

Past Due

I will take a moment to remind members, who have received their delinquent dues emails, to please respond and let the Chapter Board Members know of your intentions by 1 October 2025. Members not responding will be dropped from the Chapter's Roster. Please understand that this action is not permanent. Should you have health challenges and your health improves, or should you move back to the High Desert in the future and once again desire to participate with our Chapter, just connect with any of our Chapter's members. We all stand ready to help you out.

Please Read On!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Continued)

THE BARSTOW VETERANS HOME AND COVID:



The Barstow Veterans Home is once again having to deal with Covid. Due to the reoccurrence, the Home was placed off limits to visitors at the end of August. The High Desert Marines' monthly birthday party, scheduled for 29 August 2025, had to be cancelled. The gift card for the Veterans having birthdays in August was given out, but the cake and ice-cream, music and social activities for the Veterans was not provided. Please ensure that you are caught up on your vaccinations, if you are so inclined, to prevent you from catching the disease.

VETERANS' FISHING TRIP:

On 4 September, after I changed the Chapter Board Meeting to 3 September, I participated, with 29 other veterans, on a free fishing trip out of the Santa Barbara Harbor on the *Starfish* boat. The cost of the fishing trip was paid for by the Santa Barbara Elks Lodge #613 and the Lompoc Elks Lodge #2274. The trip for the 30 veterans cost just over \$6,000. In my anticipation of this event, I planned to stay over and spend the 5th, 6th, and 7th with my brother. His passing on 30 August negated that visit. However, I did spend time with his daughter going over Joseph's death certificate and his estate.

The weather for the fishing trip was beautiful, sunny and clear. The fishing was great. All the boat's 30 veterans caught their limit of rock fish (10) and other fish. Of the 22 fish I caught, I brought home 15 fish, which when cutup, provided me with 32.



LTC Michael Moticha's fishing catch.

**Santa Barbara Elks Lodge #613
& Lompoc Elks Lodge #2274**
Present

VETERANS' CHARTER

Free
To
U.S.
Military
Veterans

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2025
DEPARTURE: 7:00 AM RETURN 5:00 PM

"STARDUST SPORTFISHING"
SANTA BARBARA LANDING
301 W. CABRILLO BLVD, SANTA BARBARA, CA 93101

Email to SIGN UP: LopezDN@gmail.com



"Gone fishin'!"

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Continued)

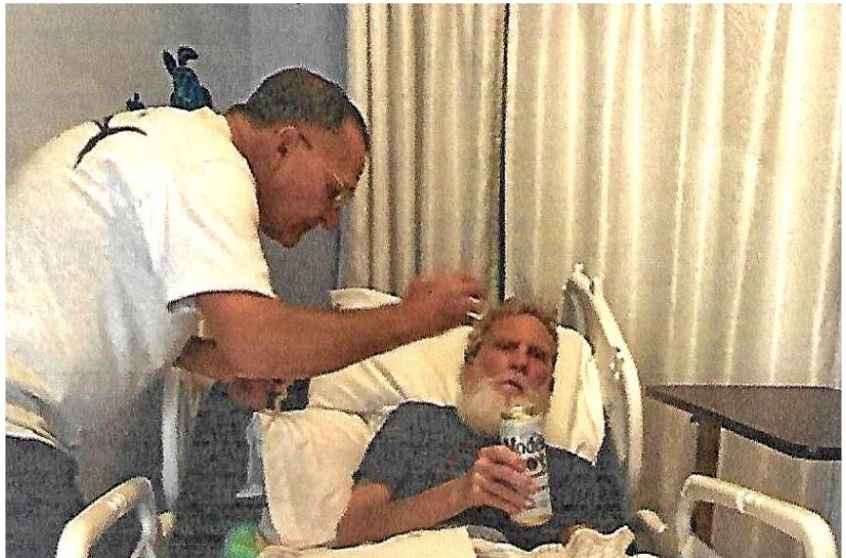
SAD NEWS:



Joseph H. Moticha

Born on 18 November 1946 in Santa Barbara CA, my brother, Joseph H. Moticha, passed away in his sleep 30 August 2025. Our Heavenly Father took him quietly away just as he brought him into this world. According to our parents, Joseph was supposed to be a girl, and the name Mary Ann Moticha was set to be used. However, Joseph was far from the female gender. Over his lifetime, he expressed his masculine identity. He was handsome, outgoing, a fraternity brother for over 50 years, an architect, a sportsman, father, grandfather, and a loving and caring individual. Following in our father's footsteps, he became a builder of homes, offices, and community structures. Joseph advanced in this profession by not only constructing the buildings but designing them as the architect. He held Board Member positions in the local American Institute of Architects and was on the City Planning and Building Commission. Joseph was very business oriented and amassed a wealth of properties and rental dwellings. Joseph will be sorely missed by his local family, daughter Jillian Wittman, son-in-law Greg Wittman, and his two grandchildren Charlotte and Oliver Wittman, the large extended Moticha family throughout the East Coast, the accumulated friends of a lifetime, and the business associates he worked with. I, too, will miss him, because he was my only brother and closest friend. We will meet again one day.

The week before Joseph passed away, he asked for a beer...no doubt on his ending "Bucket List." We brought him a *Modelo*, and he complained on his note pad that he would have preferred an American beer.



A last wish: An American beer preferred!

We will meet again one day!

TREASURER'S REPORT

Maj. Ronald Matsuda



Thank you all who have paid past dues and future dues and donated to our charities. It gave us some financial breathing room. We started August with \$4,445.12 in our account. We took in \$4,060.00 and had expenses of \$581.83, resulting in a balance of \$7,923.29, of which \$3,476.11 is in savings. Of the \$4,447.18 in the checking account, \$5,595.81 are designated for the Youth Scholarship Fund, \$75.00 for the Barstow Veterans Home, \$75.00 for the Apple Valley Legacy Museum, \$100.00 for the Parade of Pianos, and \$75.00 for the Flight Museum. Also, \$400.00 are prepaid dues for 2026 and 2027.

After writing the checks to the youth scholarship recipients on 1 May, we had to move \$600.00 from savings to the checking account to cover our expenses. While our expenses increased over the years, our dues remained \$25.00 for over 25 years. To stop the bleeding, our Board of Directors voted to increase our dues to \$35.00, starting with the year 2026. For those who had prepaid their dues for 2026 (and 2027), you do not have to pay the increased amount until after the end of your prepaid years.

Past Due

DUES FOR 2025 ARE PAST DUE!

If you have a question about whether you owe anything or not, please email at rtmatsuda@outlook.com and I will respond.

When sending dues or contributions, please make your check payable to **TMDC-MOAA**. On the "memo" line designate "Dues," "Youth Activities," or any of the other charities that we support. Thank you.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Lt. Col. Thomas Brown



Membership Retention and Growth

In order to maintain a vibrant membership, the following actions are recommended by MOAA:

1. Have a robust Mission Statement and put it on the masthead of the Chapter's newsletter and the Chapter's website.
2. Make sure the Chapter's newsletter addresses relevant issues and information for all members, spouses, and families, including all branches of uniformed service members and younger members.
3. Have a purpose beyond just meeting for a meal and comraderie to include all aspects of "Never Stop Serving" in advocacy and service to our communities and Country.
4. Recognize members and their spouses for noteworthy events, such as birthdays, anniversaries, and significant accomplishments in the community.
5. Change your programs and venues from time-to-time to provide entertainment and speakers on subjects of interest to all members.
6. Welcome New Members in the Chapter's newsletter by a short column or asking them to speak for a few minutes at a Chapter meeting on their interests and background.
7. Make it easy for members to pay their yearly dues by paying via check directly or doing it via debit or credit card through MOAA "Online Chapter Member Dues Join and Renew" tool.
8. Assign a Chapter Board Member to check your members by telephone or email on a recurring basis, particularly your members living alone (e.g., surviving spouses).
9. Have Chapter meetings in person and virtually for members (e.g., ZOOM, Facebook).

NOTE: This begs the question: "How are we doing?" Please feel free to provide feedback to: Jack Barry, BUGLE Editor at JackBarry515@gmail.com as we only have your best interest at heart.

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS REPORT

MAJ Meera Maheswaran



ARE WE RETIREES HEADED FOR TROUBLE WITH TRICARE?

Tricare's current unpaid claims and coverage gaps are creating turbulence for many military members whose doctors are dropping Tricare coverage. Indeed, changes to the military's health care program are causing disruptions which are quickly transforming into tsunami type devastations for many military families. Several thousand Tricare providers haven't been paid for months, forcing many to drop patients, reduce hours or consider closing their clinics.

However, even more unsettling issues are looming. As of Aug. 31, 2025, the TRICARE pharmacy benefit does not cover weight loss drugs for TRICARE For Life beneficiaries, individuals with direct care coverage, and certain other groups when treatment of obesity is the primary diagnosis. Those retirees who are not obese, may still need to worry! TRICARE's efforts, seemingly in violation of existing law, to end coverage of GLP-1 medications (like Wegovy and Zepbound) for TRICARE For Life (mostly Medicare-eligible) beneficiaries may well be a harbinger of things to come:

Military retirees who reach age 65 and become eligible for Medicare Part A and B are automatically enrolled in TRICARE for Life (TFL), a statutorily created DoD health benefit that functions as secondary coverage to Medicare. Congress passed TFL through the FY2001 National Defense Authorization Act (P.L. 106-398) to ensure lifetime health coverage, including access to TRICARE pharmacy benefits.

Unfortunately, the Defense Health Agency (DHA) has adopted policies that deny TFL beneficiaries coverage for certain drugs solely because Medicare does not cover them. This denial directly violates 10 U.S.C. § 1074g and Congress's stated intent to guarantee full and equal pharmacy benefits to all TRICARE beneficiaries, regardless of Medicare eligibility. See 10 U.S.C. § 1074g(a)(2), (a)(4); 32 C.F.R. § 199.21(h)(2)(ii), (k)(1).

It also rests on a misreading of 32 C.F.R. § 199.17(f)(3) and its reference to 10 U.S.C. § 1079(a)(10) and NDAA 2017 § 729, neither of which authorizes a plan or age-based split in the pharmacy benefit.

This plan definitely looks like a first step towards taking away more of the health care we were promised when we signed up and served. As "they" set up a two-tiered system - keeping the coverage for younger retirees and service members and their families - this seismically shifts the cost of effective medications onto 65+ retirees and violates laws passed in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2001. Twenty-five years ago, Congress and DOD integrated the Medicare eligible cohort into a single TRICARE pharmacy program - the TRICARE Senior Pharmacy Program ("TSPP") and created Tricare for Life and the Tricare Senior Pharmacy Program for Medicare eligible retirees. Congress thus fixed a problem and ensured Medicare eligible retirees would regain the same pharmacy access as all other Tricare enrollees. (10 U.S.C. § 1086(d)(2), § 1074g); However, we are now moving backwards to a less equitable period.

Those of us who plan to live past 65 - who are and surely will be impacted by this - should immediately contact their elected representatives and help reverse this disturbing step back to a darker time.

SURVIVING SPOUSES REPORT

Lindsay Fahnestock, DrPH, MPH



Personal Toolkit for Everyday Living for Surviving Spouses

This is just another essential reminder of very important information that many of you might require in the near future.

Many of us appreciate having the ability to access information that will provide us with accurate and safe references for the problems and advice we need for our everyday lives. In the July 2023 issue of *Military Officers*, there is an outstanding article by Captain Paul J. Frost, who is MOAA's program director for Finance and Benefits.

There are many important apps that can be accessed through the Defense Health Agency (DHA) and TRICARE. We are able to acquire them on several devices such as a tablet, a watch, a desktop, or even our cell phone. For the initial inquiry, go to the following webpage www.tricare.mil/resources/gopaperless/mobileapps. Here is a partial list of several suggestions by Captain Frost that might be of particular importance to your specific lifestyle needs:

- Humana Military (TRICARE East): beneficiaries and eligibility
- Express Scripts: pharmacy info
- MyCare Overseas (international SOS): medical services overseas
- QuickSTART: program to quit smoking
- Breathe2Relax: manage stress
- Tactical Breather: stress relief through exercises
- PTSD Coach: deals with symptoms of PTSD
- Pain and Opioid Safety: provides guidelines
- BIOZEN: monitors biosensor devices
- Provider Resilience: ways to prevent "burnout and compassion fatigue"
- MissionFit: fitness program for the Air Force
- DHA Medication Adherence: assists with the understanding of prescribed medications

Always remember that MOAA is here to help with any issue that you might have. Never think you're alone, or that your problem isn't relevant. The resources are available for you. Again, we appreciate all of the research for this article by Captain Paul J. Frost, AFC, USN (Ret), MOAA's program director for Finance and Benefits.

Wishing all of you a very safe and blessed upcoming Fall season!

Butch Fahnestock, Surviving Spouses Chair

SURVIVING SPOUSES REPORT

(Continued)

There are also websites to find various activities happening locally. Hesperia offers various senior activities such as Bingo, Pinochle, Pool, and luncheons.

<https://www.hesperiaparks.com/senior-activities>

If you are more of a techie, you can always get involved with a social interest group or blogging site. Facebook can be a good way to get connected. Every type of interest group exists there from cooking groups, and sports groups, to even classic art groups.

Following these various techniques will help you become a true social group aficionado. People will soon be coming to you to ask what community event is going on in the neighborhood. Have a safe and wonderful holiday season! =)

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Glass, T. A., De Leon, C. M., Marottoli, R. A., & Berkman, L. F. (1999). Population based study of social and productive activities as predictors of survival among elderly Americans. *Bmj*, 319(7208), 478-483.

Huxhold, O., Fiori, K. L., & Windsor, T. D. (2013). The dynamic interplay of social network characteristics, subjective well-being, and health: the costs and benefits of socio-emotional selectivity. *Psychology and aging*, 28(1), 3.



*Socializing throughout life
is a key to your overall well-being.*



*Try to get or stay involved with various groups
in which you feel a connection. MOAA is a great place to start!*

GOOD
FRIENDS ARE
LIKE STARS:
YOU DON'T
ALWAYS SEE
THEM BUT
YOU KNOW
THEY ARE
THERE.

VETERANS' BENEFITS REPORT

MAJ Jim Skirvin



Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret)
MOAA President and CEO

September marks National Preparedness Month, so we're asking our community to stand with us and ensure **The MOAA Foundation** is prepared and ready to respond to the needs of our community.

Every applicant tells a story. A family seeking safe housing after a flood. A wounded warrior with PTSD unexpectedly without a job. A disabled veteran's home and wheelchair ramp damaged in a tornado. MOAA can step in quickly, providing financial relief at just the right time, while also restoring hope and dignity. That's the kind of impact your gift can make.

Your donation to The **MOAA Foundation** means a military family won't wait for help. It means a survivor knows they haven't been forgotten. means someone who served this country receives the same loyalty they return.



MOAA's Foundation helped the D'Juan family in their crisis.

D'Juan served six years in the Air Force. He lives in Georgia with his wife, their 13-year-old son who has ADHD, and his 80-year-old mother-in-law. Earlier this year, his wife became disabled and could no longer work. Without her income, their financial situation quickly spiraled as bills piled up, the mortgage fell behind, and a fallen tree led to costly septic repairs. With the weight of being the sole provider and caregiver for his entire family, D'Juan felt overwhelmed. Thanks to support from MOAA's Crisis Relief Program, he was able to catch up on critical expenses and breathe a little easier while continuing to care for his loved ones.

The MOAA Foundation's **Crisis Relief Program** provides financial grants to military and veteran families when they need it most, often after they've exhausted all other options. These are individuals and families who may not be eligible for support from service relief societies or the VA, whose lives have been upended due to job loss, medical emergencies, and natural disasters. What we often see is heartbreaking, and it's why this program matters so deeply. D'Juan's story is just one of how your support makes an impact.

Please send your donation for this worthy cause to:

With heartfelt gratitude,

MOAA
201 North Washington Street | Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: (800) 234-6622



CHAPLAIN'S REPORT

A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO A WAR HERO

Ensign Donald M. McPherson



Ensign Donald McPherson earned the Congressional Gold Medal and three Distinguished Flying Crosses during his service as a US Navy Pilot aboard the aircraft carrier USS Essex in the final battles of World War II.

Contributor, Kevin Dupuy

Kevin Dupuy is a National Edward R. Murrow Award-winning producer and Director of Digital Content at The National WWII Museum.

Donald McPherson, believed to be America's last surviving "ace" from World War II, passed away on 14 August 2025. He was 103 years old.

McPherson enlisted on 5 January 1943, after the Navy waived a two-year college requirement for its aviation cadet training program. He earned his commission and wings at Corpus Christi, Texas, on 12 August 1944. He was assigned to fly a Grumman F6F Hellcat fighter and was a part of Fighter Squadron 83 when it was transferred to the USS Essex in March 1945, during the battle for Okinawa.

On his second evening aboard the Essex, McPherson recalled watching Japanese kamikaze bombers based on Kyushu in southern Japan attack the fleet. One bomber clipped the Essex's radar tower before crashing into a nearby island. Another bomber seriously damaged the USS Hancock.

"This sure made us wonder what we had gotten ourselves in for," McPherson recalled.

McPherson completed his first combat mission—a 300-mile flight to strike on an airfield at Nittigahara—on 19 March 1945. During the raid, his division, known as "Wonder-5" destroyed Mitsubishi G4M 'Betty' bombers on the ground. As he was pulling out from the attack, his plane's engine stalled, and it was struck by anti-aircraft fire. McPherson was able to fly the plane back and successfully land on the USS Essex.

"Upon inspection of the damage to the airplane, we found that a 20mm cannon shell had penetrated the fuselage about a foot behind my back and severed one of the cables that controlled the tail surface," he recalled.

Between March and June 1945, VF-83 flew 6,560 sorties from the Essex. McPherson's group was credited with destroying 220 Japanese planes in the air and 72 on the ground. McPherson would become an ace after shooting down two Aichi D3A Val dive bombers near Kikai Shima off Okinawa on 6 April 1945. He would go on to destroy three Kawanishi E7K float biplanes, which were flying as kamikazes, on 5 May 1945.

McPherson was able to marry the "love of his life" Thelma Johnston, on 17 August 1944 after completing his training. After the war, he returned home to Adams, Nebraska, to work as a letter carrier. He is survived by his two daughters, a son, along with many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

McPherson was an active member of the Adams United Methodist Church, as well as the local American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars. He also served as organizer, promoter, and coach for the Adams Summer Baseball and Softball leagues.

The Associated Press reports that the community later named the ballfield McPherson Field in honor of him and his wife.



*Ensign
Don McPherson, US Navy*

HISTORY REPORT

Maj. David A. Meyer



Last month there was an aerial photo of George Air Force Base near its beginning in 1943 as Victorville Army Air Field. Below is a photo of George AFB near its end. This picture was taken in the mid-1980s and shows part of George AFB below the aircraft and parts of Victorville and Apple Valley in the background. George AFB closed in December of 1992 due to a decision by the 1988 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) Commission after the end of the Cold War.



Shown are three USAF F-4Es from the 35th Tactical Fighter Wing stationed at George Air Force Base. The lead aircraft is from the 21st Tactical Fighter Squadron. On the left wing is a 20th Tactical Fighter Squadron bird and on the right wing is the Wing Commander's aircraft. Ron Matsuda and I were Instructor Pilots in the 21st. The 20th Tactical Fighter Squadron trained aircrews for the German Air Force.

PERSONAL AFFAIRS REPORT

MAJ Jim Skirvin



SEVEN ACTIONS THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

1. Men (especially), out of courtesy to the fairer sex, always put the toilet seat back down when through.
2. When you decide to make coffee, add a pinch of salt to the grounds. Why? Adding salt to coffee activates our sensory receptors. Sodium ions found in salt prevent the taste buds from sending signals to the brain for the bitter flavor. At the same time, this mechanism enhances the sweetness of the coffee.
3. When you go the gas station to fill your gas tank, it is advisable to keep your gas tank at least half full to ensure the safety and longevity of your vehicle's fuel systems. Why? For several reasons:

Prevents sediment buildup: Keeping the tank full helps prevent sediment from clogging the fuel pump and filter, which can lead to engine damage.

Avoids condensation issues: An empty tank can lead to condensation, which can freeze and cause fuel lines to freeze, preventing the engine from starting.

Maintains fuel pump efficiency: A full tank allows the fuel pump to operate more efficiently, reducing wear and potential failure.

Reduces the risk of air intake: Keeping the tank full prevents air from being sucked into the fuel system, which can cause overheating and other mechanical issues.

4. When it's meal time and you are preparing to offer rice, take a glass and fill it with as much rice as you think you might need. Next, pour cold water into your cooking bowl with twice as much water as the measured rice. Place the bowl with water and rice in the microwave and cook for 20 minutes. You will have perfect rice every time.
5. When you decide to paint your walls—especially if it has been a while—purchase a box of TSP (Trisodium Phosphate) and mix with warm water. Wearing sturdy rubber gloves, wipe down the walls/area. Why? Using TSP on walls before painting is important because it effectively removes dirt, grease, and mildew, providing a clean surface that ensures better paint adhesion. It is an essential step in paint preparation, resulting in longer-lasting and more professional-looking results.
6. When you get your coffee and it has a “seam” on the top of the cup, always line up the spout hole with that seam. Why? To avoid spilling coffee on yourself. That bit of wisdom is especially valuable during night driving.
7. When you complete your “business” in the bathroom and use the last tissue, always replace the empty roll with a new one. Why? That is known as common courtesy in respecting the next person.

These are seven actions of many I have learned in my 75-plus years. I hope you find them likewise beneficial.

Jim Skirvin

SEPTEMBER'S SPECIAL DAYS

18 September

United States Air Force Birthday



UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BIRTHDAY is celebrated annually on September 18, commemorating the day it was officially recognized as an independent branch of the U.S. armed forces. This day is significant not only to those serving in the Air Force but also to all Americans who value the work and dedication of the men and women in this branch.

18 September

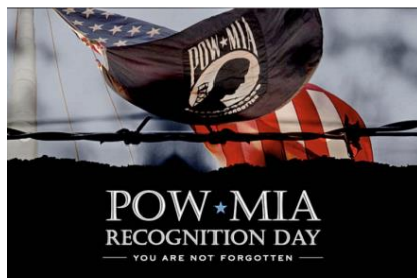
United States Air National Guard Birthday



AIR NATIONAL GUARD BIRTHDAY: On 1 November 1915, the Guard's first genuine aviation unit was established. That outfit, known today as the 102d Rescue Squadron, New York Air National Guard (ANG), is recognized as the ANG's oldest unit. The National Security Act established the ANG as a separate reserve component on 18 September 1947, concurrent with the creation of the U.S. Air Force.

19 September

Pow/MIA Recognition Day



POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY remembers and honors those Americans who were prisoners of war and those who served and never returned home. It is commemorated on the third Friday of every September, a date that's not associated with any particular war. In 1979, Congress and the president passed resolutions making it official after the families of the more than 2,500 Vietnam War POW/MI. As pushed for full accountability. DOD's POW/MIA Accounting Agency continues the search for the missing, fulfilling the nation's promise to leave no service member behind.

28 September

Gold Star Mothers & Family Day



GOLD STAR MOTHERS AND FAMILY DAY, originally Gold Star Mother's Day, specifically honors mothers who lost a son while serving in the United States Armed Forces. Observed on the last Sunday in September, this day recognizes the special sacrifice these mothers have made and the ongoing grief they carry. The day provides an opportunity for Gold Star mothers to connect with others who understand their unique experience. Many communities organize special events, memorial services, and support gatherings where these mothers can share their stories and find comfort in shared understanding. Gold Star Mothers and Family Day also educates the public about the ongoing impact of military service on families. While we often focus on veterans and active service members, this observance reminds us that military sacrifice extends beyond the individual to encompass entire families.



MOAA LUNCHEON PRESENTATION

"America's Mighty Military"

Jack Barry, 1st Lt. USAF

Ladies and Gentlemen, this presentation is of a different nature and caliber of what we all may be used to or expecting. It is inspired by the most significant Arms Race experienced by the Cold War Arms Race sparked on September 15, 1969 when we successfully landed on the moon. Space became the new battlefield.

By definition, an arms race occurs when two or more countries increase the size and quality of military resources to gain military and political superiority over one another. The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union is perhaps the largest and most expensive arms race in history; however, others have occurred, often with dire consequences. Whether an arms race increases or decreases the risk of war remains debatable: some analysts agree with Sir Edward Grey, Britain's foreign secretary at the start of World War I, who stated "The moral is obvious; it is that great armaments lead inevitably to war."

Nuclear Arms Race

The United States' decision to use the atomic bomb was made after great debate, but still led to a massive loss of human life.



Though the United States and the Soviet Union were tentative allies during World War II, their alliance soured after Nazi Germany surrendered in May 1945.

The United States cast a wary eye over the Soviet Union's quest for world dominance as they expanded their power and influence over Eastern Europe, and the Soviet Union resented the United States' geopolitical interference and America's own arms buildup.

Cold War Arms Race Heads to the Space Race

The U.S. competition with the U.S.S.R. for technological dominance spurred the U.S. on to the first-ever landing on the moon. The Soviet's launch of the first Sputnik satellite on October 4, 1957, stunned and concerned the United States and the rest of the Cold War arms race soon became the Space Race.

You may have seen the documentary by world renowned documentary filmmaker David L. Wolper titled *"The Race for Space"* released in 1959. I had the good fortune working with David 1966-1968 as a trouble shooter for his *National Geographic* and *Jacques Cousteau* TV series and two feature films: *"The Bridge at Remagen"* and *"If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium"* both released in 1969.

Missile Gap of the 1950s and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 further fueled the Race.

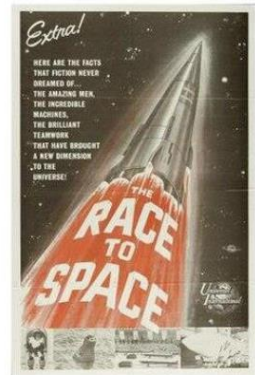
Defending a country is serious business. And nobody takes this duty as seriously as the United States. Having what is arguably the strongest military globally, the American government spends good money (a whopping \$997 billion for defense in 2025) on various military expenses.



Among the most-costly of these is its wide array of war-ready aircraft, submarines, and vehicles. Here, we've compiled a list of the most expensive and impressive of these tools of defense. From a multibillion-dollar carrier aircraft to almost invisible planes, be prepared to learn about military vessels you never thought existed.



Sputnik launched October 4, 1957.



"The Race for Space"



MOAA LUNCHEON PRESENTATION

"America's Mighty Military" (Continued)



USS Gerald R. Ford

USS Gerald R. Ford – Cost: \$13.3 Billion

The most expensive aircraft carrier ever built and arguably the costliest individual weapon in service today, the USS Gerald Ford is America's flagship. At 1,106 feet long, the Gerald R. Ford is the first in the Gerald Ford-class ship, which began construction in 2005. The total cost is estimated to have been around \$12.8 billion in manufacturing costs, as well as an additional \$4.7 billion in research and development costs.

Seawolf-Class Submarine –USS Connecticut--Cost \$3.5 Billion

The Seawolf-class submarine was made at the tail-end of the Cold War as a new and improved version of the Los Angeles-class submarines. Thus, it was designed with features like speeds of up to 35 knots and endure icy environments.



The USS Connecticut



The B-2 Spirit

Northrop Grumman B-2 Spirit – Cost: \$2 Billion

The Northrop Grumman B-2 Spirit looks like something straight out of a sci-fi movie. Thanks to its flying wing design, it can go practically undetected by radar technology despite being 69 feet long and having a wingspan of 172 feet. What's more, the B-2 Spirit is a quiet aircraft and can only be heard coming once it's already passed overhead.

The aviation world witnessed history on June 21, 2025, when seven **B-2 Spirit Bombers** executed Operation Midnight Hammer. These flying fortresses penetrated Iranian airspace undetected, delivering devastating bunker-buster bombs to nuclear facilities. It was the most significant demonstration of American air power in decades. This wasn't just another military operation. It was validation of a technology that many considered too expensive, too complex, and too ambitious when development began in the late 1970s. The **B-2 Spirit bombers** has proven its critics wrong time and again. There are 19 in our arsenal, which are scheduled to be retired by 2032, with the B-21 Rider replacing it.

Boeing AH-64 Apache – Cost: \$13 Million

When Boeing manufactured the AH-64 Apache, it promised durability. And it looks like the company delivered, seeing as the helicopter has become the United States Army's go-to all-weather chopper. It lives up to its job title as an attack helicopter.

The informative presentation offered attendees the opportunity to learn where their tax dollars go, reflecting on just a smattering of the many, many "tools" in our Country's military arsenal.



The AH-64 Apache



The **BUGLE** is published by TMDC of MOAA, which is 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 affiliates are non-partisan and non-profit.



Never Stop Serving

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

APPLE VALLEY LEGACY MUSEUM



*“Why don’t you reach out
and touch somebody’s hand,
make this world
a better place if you can.”*



1st. Lt. Jack Barry

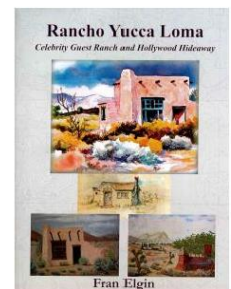
Mindful of Diana Ross’ iconic song lyrics, our own 1st. Lt. Jack Barry is doing just that on behalf of MOAA and the Apple Valley Legacy Museum. And the Mohahve Historical Society, both of which he is an active member. Having come to Apple Valley in 1946 at age six, Jack is one of the few “Old Timers” still hanging around.

You may recall his fascinating presentation titled *“The Early Days of Apple Valley”* in which he shared what it was like to live in the Valley back in the 1940s and ‘50s, from a then-youngster. Word of this presentation spread rapidly and in July he made Part 1 of three of that presentation to the **Apple Valley Kiwanis Club**. He will be returning to the Kiwanis Club this month to present Part 2, with Part 3 tentatively scheduled for October. The **Delta Kappa Gamma** group—retired and active teachers—has scheduled Jack for their January 2026 meeting. Additionally, the **Seniors With Inquisitive Minds (SWIM)** has expressed interest in scheduling Jack for their meeting.

His *“Early Days”* program includes many historical photographs, most all from the digital archives of the Mohahve Historical Society. Over the past two years, Jack has been applying his photographic expertise by restoring, categorizing, and building a digital photo library for the Museum and Society—with some 2,100 images filed thus far.

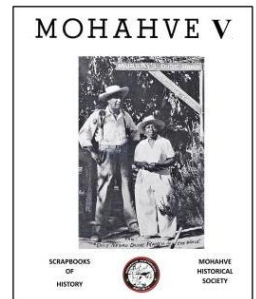
The motivation for the digital library is to provide a platform on which individuals will be able to search and download historic photos and documents to meet their needs. Even more importantly, the library preserves priceless historical materials which could be easily lost, misplaced, or destroyed.

Over the past 18 months, Jack has also been applying his writing, publishing, and commercial art training by preparing 11 Society publications for re-printing. This required scanning previous editions, re-editing as deemed necessary, and producing finished new production art to send to the printer. The Mohahve Historical Society has a collection of historical books worthy of special note, like: *The Story of Rancho Yucca Loma*; *Bridges Spanning the Mojave River*; *The Arduous Road*; and the *History of Victor Valley*. These are in addition to their very popular *Mohahve Historical Books* series, the latest one being *Mohahve 7* which was just published this summer.



In August, Jack presented to us his *“America’s Mighty Military Arsenal”* program, revealing the amazing military equipment available in our arsenal to protect this great Country of ours.

So, Jack is now “armed and dangerous” and ready to “reach out and touch someone” on behalf of not only MOAA but also the Apple Valley Legacy Museum and the Mohahve Historical Society.



“One of the great joys of retirement is giving back to our community in significant ways.”

~ Jack Barry ~

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

FLIGHT MUSEUM/EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE



Flight Museum is currently under construction.



Invest in our Future

The Air Force Flight Test Museum is in the midst of its most exciting transformation since 1992, when the Flight Test Museum Foundation (FTMF) erected the current facility at the corner of Rosamond and Lancaster boulevards on Edwards Air Force Base.

An aggressive fund-raising campaign is under way to move and expand the Flight Test Museum to outside the base's West Gate. The new museum will still be located on Air Force property but outside the base security fence making it accessible to the general public.

At its completion, the \$7.75 million project will improve the experience for museum guests and provide a world-class venue for an aerospace-related science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education program.

The 75,000 square foot facility must be funded completely by private contributions. It will include enough indoor exhibit area to house the majority of the Flight Test Museum's collection of historic aircraft and its many thousands of artifacts. Other indoor areas will include a classroom for aerospace-related STEM education programs, gift shop, museum offices and artifact restoration area. The new facility will also be large enough to host special functions and events.

The Foundation confirmed its support for the project and the initiation of efforts to secure necessary funding. "The location of the new museum will provide unencumbered access for aviation aficionados and greater opportunities for use by the educational organizations in southern California," Former FTMF Chairwoman Lisa Gray said. "Our future STEM programs will be designed to engage youth in aerospace-related learning opportunities."

"We look forward to the community supporting what will be the largest single fund raising project for the museum," Rex Moen, Capital Campaign Chairman said. "We are confident people will make an investment to preserve flight test history and inspire future generations."

Order an Engraved Brick Today!

For a donation of \$100, your name, or that of someone you wish to honor or remember, will be engraved on a brick lining Century Circle. This display area overlooks the future home of the new Air Force Flight Test Museum, to be located just outside the West Gate of Edwards Air Force Base.

Your engraved brick will affirm for posterity your Esprit de Corps with the pilots and engineers who risk their lives developing the capabilities needed to protect our freedom.

And your gift will help the Air Force Flight Test Museum preserve flight test history and heritage, and forever attest to the honor, courage, and commitment that embodies the motto of Edwards AFB: "Ad Inexplorata," Latin for "Toward the Unexplored."

You may purchase as many bricks as you like. For each \$100 gift, you will receive a special certificate of completion recognizing your contribution and confirming the inscription(s) you have submitted as they will appear on the engraved brick(s). You will also receive a one year enrollment as a "Friend of the Flight Test Museum," normally \$50.00 annually. Space for bricks is limited so order now.

Museum Mission Statement

The Air Force Flight Test Museum (AFFTM) is an Air Force Field Museum operating within the guidelines of the USAF Heritage Program. Its mission is to collect, interpret, preserve, and display the material history of Edwards Air Force Base, its antecedents, and the history of flight testing at Edwards.

Foundation Mission Statement

The mission of the Flight Test Museum Foundation (FTMF) is to raise funds to support the development of the Air Force Flight Test Museum at Edwards AFB, California and the museum's Blackbird Airpark Annex at USAF Plant 42 in nearby Palmdale. The foundation's fund-raising efforts focus primarily on museum improvements, new construction, exhibits, aircraft acquisition and restoration, and educational programs.



Air Force Flight Test Museum "Heritage Walk"



*Be a part of
Edwards AFB history
and help support the NEW
Flight Test Museum
with an inscribed brick on the
Flight Test Heritage Walk
located at
Century Circle West Gate*

COMMUNITY PROJECTS

FLIGHT MUSEUM/EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE

(Continued)

Flight Test Museum Foundation Brick Order Form

(Example)

S	m	i	t	h		F	a	m	i	l	y								



Brick - up to 3 lines (please print clearly)

Purchaser's Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Zip:** _____

Home Phone: () _____ **Cell Phone:** () _____

Email: _____

Purchase Options:

To pay by credit card, please contact the museum at: (661) 258-1658. We accept Mastercard, Visa, Discover and American Express.

By check, please make payable to Flight Test Museum Foundation and mail with this form to: Flight Test Museum Foundation, P.O. Box 57, Edwards CA 93523

To purchase online, go to www.afftcmuseum.org

Flight Test Museum Foundation
P.O. Box 57, Edwards CA 93523
(661) 258-1658

Email: giftshop@flighttestmuseum.org
www.afftcmuseum.org

Details for the Inscribed Brick

Be a part of Edwards AFB history with an inscribed brick on the Flight Test Heritage Walk, located at Century Circle, Edwards AFB West Gate. It's a great way to honor or memorialize that someone special, and also help the Flight Test Museum Foundation raise funds to support expansion of the Air Force Flight Test Museum. Help us with our mission to "Preserve Flight Test History to Inspire Future Generations" through a world-class aerospace-related science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) program.

Buy a brick with up to three lines of copy for installation on the Flight Test Heritage Walk surrounding Century Circle. This will be a prime location for our many visitors to see your tribute.

These 4" x 8" bricks are of the highest quality and engraved to last a lifetime. After installation, a certificate of completion and membership card will be provided.

Donation of \$100 Per Brick

Donations are tax deductible under the FTMF's 501 (c)(3) status as a non-profit organization. Please contact the FTMF at (661) 258-1658 or email: giftshop@flighttestmuseum.org

Your \$100 donation includes:

- An inscribed brick.
- A special certificate of completion recognizing your contribution.
- A one year enrollment as a "Friend of the Flight Test Museum," normally \$50.00 annually.

The Flight Test Museum Foundation is a private organization. It is not a part of the Department of Defense or any of its components and it has no government status.

A Worthy Project: Carpe Diem!

This is a unique opportunity to be significant in establishing a rich legacy for the world.



NB-52B, S/N 52-008



Beechcraft UC-45J, BuNo 67161



Lockheed F-104A, S/N 50-0801

Presented by the High Desert Marines

**Celebrate the 250th Birthday of Our Beloved Corps
with an Evening of Ceremony, Music, Food & Dance**

Guest of Honor: Major General Jason Q. Bohm, USMC (Ret.)

**Tickets— \$85 in Advance
November 8th, 2025**



4:30 PM—COCKTAILS

5:45 PM—CEREMONY

6:30 PM—DINNER

7:45 PM—GUEST OF HONOR ADDRESS

8:30 PM—10:30 PM DANCING

PLEASE CONTACT US FOR MORE DETAILS

OR TO PURCHASE TICKETS:

HIGHDESERTMARINES.COM

HIGHDESERTMARINES09@GMAIL.COM

CALL or TEXT: 442-284-3074

No Tickets will be Sold after October 30th

HILTON GARDEN INN VICTORVILLE, 12603 MARIPOSA ROAD, VICTORVILLE, CA 92395

REMEMBER:

If you are unable to attend this grand function, you have the opportunity to bless a young Marine who deserves and wants to attend but cannot afford the fee. Purchase a ticket for him/her!

MOAA MEMBERS ON VACATION

We've all heard it said: "I joined the service to see the world." Many of us did, many didn't...but it's never too late to travel. We offer these as proof from members who made the time for vacations.



Suzanne Bughman (in striped red shirt, front row right) joins the Rodehaver (her maiden name) Family Reunion in Wisconsin.



MAJ Meera Maheswaran pauses at the beach in Jaffna to catch a second wind on her family's whirlwind trip to Sri Lanka and beyond.



MAJ Meera Maheswaran with her "buddy"



MAJ Meera Maheswaran's twilight visit to Stanford University



MAJ Meera Maheswaran with her family at the hill country.



MAJ Meera Maheswaran's daughter Nesha picked tea leaves at the Bluefield Plantation in Nuwara Eliya.

MOAA MEMBERS ON VACATION

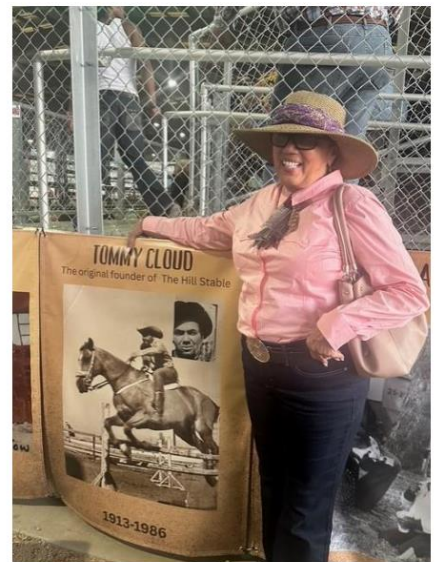
And the fun continues!



The summer of 2025 (June thru Labor Day) was very active for J. Michael F. Yates, USA, Retired. He had his last days in Visalia CA as the Deputy Commander, Fifth Area of the American Legion 2024-25 (NOTE: He was past 25th District Commander 2019-20)! Then they were off to the Rodeo in Norco CA to honor the History of Black Rodeo Riders. That done, they flew to Cleveland OH for a family reunion. That was followed by travel to Fort Huachuca AZ (home of the Buffalo Soldiers) to see their son graduate from the Military Intelligence AIT. They returned to their home in San Diego safely.



Rodeo honoring Black Rodeo Riders in Norco.



Family reunion in Cleveland.



*Fort Huachuca AZ Home of the Buffalo Soldiers
And their son's graduation from Military Intelligence AIT.*

MOAA MEMBERS ON VACATION

And the fun continues!



Maj. (USAF) Sheldon "Stack" and Gail Stacklehouse journeyed to Medora, North Dakota, to celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary and the Medora Musical's 60th Anniversary, along with a scrumptious pitchfork steak dinner. Sounds like a joyous time!!!



Margaret McConnell in Squamish, British Columbia with her grandson, Soren, and her daughter, Cora.



Time in paradise: Bora Bora



One of our newest members is Maj. Byron Ward, who took his lovely bride to the Island of Bora Bora in celebration of their anniversary. Life is tough, but someone's gotta live it, you know.

MOAA MEMBERS ON VACATION

LTC Michael Moticha

As a stamp collector, my most enjoyable activity during the year is traveling to and participating in the *First Day Ceremonies* for each new stamp issued by the United States Postal Service. My one additional outing each year is the major stamp convention held by the American Philatelic Society (APS) or the American First Day Cover Society (AFDCS). You have to be a stamp collector—a devout hobbyist—to really understand and appreciate the value I derive from planning and attending the ceremonies and shows that I participate in. During the last 12 months, I have traveled to and taken part in stamp issues for Alex Trebek, Betty White, Ansel Adams, John Wooden, Betty Ford, and others. One wonderful result of being at these ceremonies is the opportunity I have to meet and associate with the families and personal representatives of the individual that the stamp is being issued for. It is like my own history channel—not on the television, but in real life.



Over a hundred dealers were present.



The Road to Boston 2026



This year's annual Great American Stamp Show was held in Schaumburg IL, just southeast of Chicago. Presentations of the stamps issued for *Boston 2026*, the *12th International Philatelic Exhibition* of the United States, held every ten years and a new machine-less stamp, the *Luna Moth*, were held. *The United Nations*, *The National Duck Stamp Society*, *Rattlesnake Island*—located on Lake Erie—and the *250th Anniversary of Delivering Mail* also held ceremonies.

The show—lasting four days—and my trip—lasting a week for Board Meetings and other activities—could have gone on forever. There never seems to be enough time to complete everything I want. Every show has more activities than I am able to attend. I have to prioritize those events that I want to participate in and give up some that you would have liked to have visited.

I enjoyed my trip and the many friends from across the United States who I met up with during the show. The experience is like holding a reunion each year with the stamp collectors and dealers I have made friends with over the years. Most of them I only see once each year. I was able to find two roommates for the week, reducing my hotel costs to \$398.00 for the six nights. This allowed me additional funds to spend at the show for items I wanted. I always end up spending more than I should. I am now booking flight and hotel reservations for *Boston 2026* in May. Once again, I am looking forward to new and exciting activities with my philatelic hobby.



Celebrating the Boston 2026 stamp.

MOAA LUNCHEON GALLERY



*CWO4 Bill Lundenelius (center) with new members
CWO4 Thomas Stevens and MAJ Peter Kim*



Welcome!



*LTC Michael Moticha
shares about his amazing trip to the
International Stamp Convention.*



*Three lovely surviving spouses:
Rosanne Smith, Dolores Payne, & Margaret McConnell*



Because of summer vacationers, we were small in attendance but mighty in spirit.

MOAA LUNCHEON GALLERY



Miriam Munoz & MAJ Meera Maheswaran



New members Felisa & CWO4 Thomas Stevens



Rosanne Smith & LTC Michael Moticha

*Great fellowship
is priceless!
Come join us.*



Delightful opportunity items to win!



Sonia Miranda



Winner Meera Maheswaran



Another "Michelin Meal" to enjoy! A vegetarian meal is available upon reservation request.



Winner & new member Peter Kim



Winner Lee Bogert



A feast to behold



Delicious Meal!



Winner Jerome Johnson

THE MOJAVE DESERT CHAPTER

P. O. BOX 785, VICTORVILLE CA 92393



RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP FORM FOR THE NEW YEAR/ THE MOJAVE DESERT CHAPTER/MOAA

REMINDER!

Our Dues Year is January 2025 through December 2025

Please make check payable to **TMDC/MOAA**.

Your prompt renewal will help ensure that our chapter will have the funds to meet our expenses and plans for upcoming functions and activities.

LAST NAME _____ FIRST _____ DATE _____

RANK _____ BRANCH OF SERVICE _____

___ RETIRED AND FORMER OFFICER \$25.00 \$ _____

___ ACTIVE DUTY: \$10.00 \$ _____

___ SURVIVING SPOUSE: \$10.00 \$ _____

At this time, you may also make donations to our various Community Projects, supported by the chapter, as listed below.
The funds collected for these activities go directly for their support and are not used for any other expenditures

___ YOUTH FUND FOR JROTC, YOUNG MARINES, CALIFORNIA CADET CORPS: \$ _____

___ APPLE VALLEY LEGACY MUSEUM/VICTOR VALLEY LEGACY MUSEUM: \$ _____

___ PARADE OF PIANOS (POP): \$ _____

___ BARSTOW VETERANS HOME: \$ _____

___ FLIGHT MUSEUM (EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE) \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Note: Chapter members may pay up to three years in advance for 2025, 2026, 2027.

Accordingly let us know by multiplying your dues by one, two, or three.

PLEASE NOTE ANY CHANGES TO YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION BELOW:

ADDRESS _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

TELEPHONE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____



THE LARGER OUR NUMBERS THE GREATER YOUR VOICE.

WHY MOAA CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP MATTERS



MEMBERSHIP ENROLLMENT FORM FOR MOAA NATIONAL & THE MOJAVE DESERT CHAPTER

FULL NAME _____

RANK _____ BRANCH OF SERVICE _____

___ ACTIVE ___ RETIRED ___ RESERVE ___ FORMER ___ NATIONAL GUARD ___ SURVIVING SPOUSE

SPOUSE'S NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____ TELEPHONE _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

TO ENSURE THE DELIVERABILITY OF MOAA COMMUNICATIONS,
PLEASE PROVIDE A PERSONAL EMAIL

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF MOAA? ___ YES ___ NO ___ UNKNOWN

NOT A MOAA NATIONAL MEMBER YET? CHECK HERE
TO RECEIVE A BASIC MEMBERSHIP AT NO COST TO YOU.



And, for only \$4.00 per month, you can upgrade to **PREMIUM** membership, giving you immediate access to a full spectrum of career and financial resources, exclusive publications, college scholarships for dependents, and countless discounts on products and travel.
Visit: **MOAA.Org/Join** to learn more.

How did you hear about MOAA chapter involvement? _____

Are you a member of any other MOAA Chapter? ___ YES ___ NO

If YES, which one(s)? _____

TO COMPLETE YOUR ENROLLMENT: Fill in this form, scan and email it to:
michaelwmoticha@verizon.net as an attachment. Or, print it out, fill in by hand, and
with a check payable to **TMDC-MOAA**, mail to:
PO Box 785, Victorville CA 92393-0785.

Do not include credit card information. We will contact you to finalize payment.

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES & INFORMATION:

Dues Year Is January
2025 through
December 2025

ANNUAL FEE \$25.00

