



The High Desert Bugle



The Mojave Desert Chapter of



PO Box 785, Victorville, CA 92393

Volume 38, Issue 10

October 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, 22 October 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, 20 October by contacting our President at micaaelwmoticha@verizon.net or (760) 792-5004 (cell).

Our guest speaker is Todd Anton, a staunch supporter of Veterans, who was our keynote speaker at our Annual Youth Awards Ceremony earlier this year. Todd will presenting his powerful vision of helping grieving veteran families in their time of loss, a concept that is most worthy of our support and active participation. Anton's jeep is fully restored and has a WWII Bantam Jeep trailer, too. Together, they look amazing. Anton envisions volunteering his Jeep and trailer to local cemeteries and veterans' families to be used for funeral services. You will not want to miss this program!!!



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

LTC Michael W. Moticha

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



OCTOBER MEETING:



Todd Anton

You will not want to miss this month's Chapter luncheon on 22 October, at the Bear Valley Country Club. Todd Anton, our guest speaker and awards presenter in May at our Annual Awards Ceremony for the Youth in our Community, will be presenting his new vision of supporting the veterans in the High Desert. Todd is also bringing along Dan Tate, the CEO of the Don Ferrarese Foundation, which has a deep interest in our veterans. From 2017 the Foundation has supported local students with scholarships, recognized Veterans from the High Desert, and sponsored the Santa Sleigh Christmas, fulfilling the wish lists of hundreds of local children. This luncheon and its presentation will be a *"Supporting Gold Mine"* and you will have the opportunity to see into the past and future of true altruistic support and an excellent example of our Chapter's motto: **"NEVER STOP SERVING."** So, come on out, enjoy an outstanding meal, a wonderful program and help support your chapter.

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP:

Our Chapter's membership and accompanying roster has both increased and decreased this month due to actions taken by us on the Chapter Module at National MOAA. The 62-member roster of last year will be near 52 once all changes have been completed. Corrections could not be officially made during the last year, until the new Chapter Module programs were tested and approved by MOAA.

Lt Col Tom Brown, the Chapter's Membership Chairman, has finally been able to input our changes. The deletions include a number of members who have left the Chapter at their own request, due to moving out of the area or not wanting to actively participate any longer. Others have been dropped from the roster due to non-payment of dues for a few years and not being responsive to emails or phone calls. We have also had members pass away during the year, reducing the roster.



On a positive note, we have had increases to our membership. Surviving Spouses have taken their husband's place on the Chapter roster as members. Efforts have been made in recruiting for the Chapter. I have personally brought in four new members and MAJ Meera Maheswaran one. As I have always stressed, each Chapter member has the responsibility to recruit. Let's all make the effort to bring our Chapter roster back up in numbers by recruiting one new member, Officer, CWO or Surviving Spouse, during the next year.

Please Read On!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Continued)

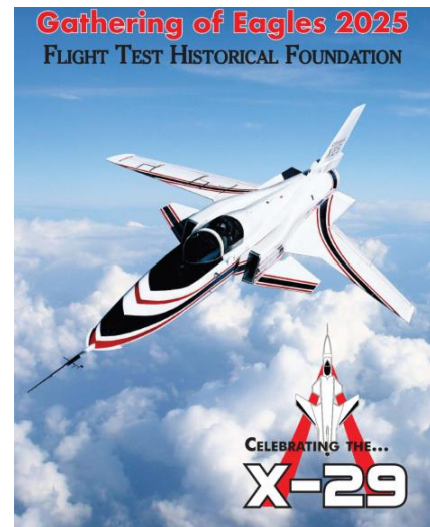
PARADE OF PIANOS



One of our Chapter's Community Projects is showing off their capabilities next month. The Parade of Pianos is having their 2025 Fall Concert on 9 November at 1500 hours, at the Church of the Valley (the Sanctuary), 14933 Wakita Boulevard, Apple Valley. Admission is **FREE** and there will be opportunity drawings and refreshments. As you know, we support the Parade of Pianos, a non-profit 501c3 organization, providing students of all ages that are interested in music, with free instruments and lessons. Those students will be performing in the concert. Come on out for an enjoyable afternoon of music and entertainment and help support our community project.

FLIGHT TEST MUSEUM

Another of our community projects is the Flight Test Museum at Edwards Air Force Base. As one of their funding programs, the flight Test Historical Foundation is holding their "Annual Gathering of Eagles Gala" on 1 November, at 1700 hours, at the Hellenic Center, Landcaster. This year's program is celebrating the **X-29** aircraft, first flown in 1984 with forward-swept wings, breaking the sound barrier on a level flight. The evenings agenda will include a dinner, Eagle and Falcon Award Recognition, a panel discussion with Q&A, and other awards and scholarship presentations. There will also be a silent auction and a printed historical program. The dinner and evening's activities will cost \$100 per attendee. If you have an interest in Air Force history, the development of airplanes or are just looking for a great military service night out, The Gathering of Eagles event is the place to be.



VETERAN EVENTS

Wednesday 5 November, at 1700 hours, the Kiwanis Tri-Community will host their **"31st Annual High Desert Veterans' Dinner"** at Serrano High School's gymnasium 9292 Sheep Creek Road in Phelan to honor and appreciate the men and women who have served our Country. The dinner is run by junior and senior high school students as a way to bridge the gap of appreciation from generation to generation. To learn, more:

www.hdveteransdinner.com/Veterans' Dinner 2025

Friday 7 November, at 1000 hours to 1400 hours, the Veteran Resource Center, at Victor Valley College, in partnership with the High Desert Veterans Center, will hold their **"10th Annual Veterans Day Event."** The venue is the Educational Event Center, Victor Valley College's Lower Campus, 12395 Mojave Fish Hatchery Road, Victorville. The program will be celebrating all Veterans, Gold Star, and Blue Star Families. The event will include a meal, cooked by the Texas Roadhouse, opportunity drawings, and entertainment. The Veterans Car Show that has been part of this event in the past will be held the next day, 8 November, at 1100 hours, at the Singh Center for the Arts, 22311 Bear Valley Road, Apple Valley. It will be listed as the Rotary **"2nd Annual Veterans Car Show and BBQ."**

Mark your calendar and come on out for an enjoyable time!

Please Read On!



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

(Continued)

HUMAN KINDNESS

Would you believe human kindness still exists in this crazy mixed up world of ours. I just have to tell you about this incident. The other day I was in the check-out line at Staples to buy ink for my printer. I shop there due to their rewards program. I had \$29.00 in rewards to spend for turning in empty ink cartages and previous purchases. The gentleman in front of me had finished paying for his purchases, and the clerk gave her attention to me. I complained to her about the price of ink going up again. The gentleman, who had not walked away, heard me and turned to the clerk and asked if I could use the coupon he was holding. The young lady said, "Yes," and the gentleman handed me a piece of paper and walked away and out the door. The paper was a coupon received for returning an AMAZON product to Staples. The clerk told me that the gentleman could not use the coupon because he did not have an account at Staples. The coupon saved me an additional \$21.00 on my purchase. How about that. When all was said and done, the ink cost me \$98.78 instead of \$153.33. I didn't get the gentleman's name or even get to shake his hand and say "thank you."



Life is full of surprises.

be
KIND
TO OTHERS.

"Happy trails to you until we meet again!"

EDITOR'S REPORT

1st. Lt. Jack Barry



Keeping Our Chapter Informed



With the blessings and encouragement of our Chapter President Michael, I am honored and privileged to serve you in the capacity of our **BUGLE** Editor.

You may count on my striving to brilliantly use my God-given talents and learned skills in 50 plus years in the arenas of photography and publishing to present our dynamic, growing Chapter to look its best before our members and other organizations.

Please know that on behalf of our MOAA Chapter, I welcome your feedback, be it for: suggested program topics; articles and/or topics of interest to you; constructive criticisms; and whatever may be on your mind. I/We will do our best to respond accordingly and in a timely manner.

This edition of our BUGLE is packed with lots of pertinent articles and veteran events. Please make the time to read through to learn how best you can participate joyfully and significantly.

Yes, I agree. The "October Calendar" is insane! I do believe that there is a holiday or event for anything you can think of...even contemplating your navel button! Of course, I definitely prefer calendars as was presented in our September BUGLE.



As part of our outreach and acknowledgement program, we seek your gracious cooperation in providing us with the month of your birth (in due respect to our ladies, we are not asking for year!!!) and wedding anniversary, if appropriate. AND, were you to kindly send us a nice portrait of yourself, that, too, would be greatly appreciated.



We realize that many of our members choose only to financially support the effective work our National and High Desert Chapter do for the benefit of veterans. That is indeed a viable asset to our MOAA organization. Everyone is encouraged to participate in ways of their own choosing. But know, too, by not participating in our monthly luncheon meetings, you are missing out on warm-hearted, concerned fellowship and great program presentations.

We look forward to a brighter future made so by your presence.



The **BUGLE** is published monthly 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.

Love and enjoy life! It has an expiration date this side of Heaven.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

Lt. Col. Thomas Brown



Why Join MOAA?



Why Join MOAA?

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is the Country's leading organization preserving and protecting service-earned benefits for uniformed service members and their families. Those who belong to MOAA not only lend their voices to a greater cause, but they also gain access to extensive benefits tailored to the needs and lifestyles of military officers. MOAA members proudly hail from every branch of the uniformed services. To them, we have made the same promise that they have made to their Country; Never Stop Serving.

More About MOAA:

MOAA's greatest mission is to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through the tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our Nation's Capitol. MOAA's experts in Washington are there to support legislation which benefits the military community and are equally vigilant when fighting to stop legislation that threatens our livelihood.

The larger our numbers, the greater our voice.

Membership is open to active duty, former, retired, and National Guard and Reserve commissioned and warrant officers of the uniformed services and their surviving spouses.

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 comradery 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).

TREASURER'S REPORT

Maj. Ronald Matsuda



*Thank You
for Your Continuing
Support*



We began the month of September with \$8,878.87 in our chapter's account. We had revenues of \$889.00 and expenses of \$800.00, resulting in an ending September balance of \$8,967.87.

After the successful presentation of our 2025 Youth Scholarships on 1 May 2025, our 2025 Youth Awards fund is now at \$5,621.81. The youth awards are funded entirely by contributions made by our members and some other fine organizations.

The funds for the Barstow Veterans Home, Apple Valley Legacy Museum, and the Flight Museum are \$100.00 each. The Parade of Pianos has \$125.00.

Remember that your dues go exclusively for our chapter's administrative costs. Please note that our administrative costs are comparatively low—our dues being \$35 a year, and \$10 for surviving spouses and active-duty personnel. You help us live our motto of ***"Never Stop Serving."***



Our \$35 dues for 2026 are due by December 31, 2025.

When sending dues payments or contributions please send your check to: TMDC-MOAA, PO Box 785, Victorville CA 92393-0785. Make checks payable to TMDC-MOAA. In the "memo" line please designate "Dues," "Youth Awards," or any of the other charities that we support.

Thank You!

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS REPORT

MAJ Meera Maheswaran



H.R. 2102 *Major Richard Star Act*



Contact your legislators and urge them to support the Major Richard Star Act, which would authorize combat-injured veterans to receive their earned Department of Defense retirement pay for years of service and their Veterans Administration disability compensation for lifelong injury.

Currently, these combat-injured (and often seriously disabled) veterans are subject to a cost-saving offset where their retirement pay is reduced for every dollar of VA disability received. To reduce earned retirement pay because of a combat disability is an injustice; the compensation for these injured veterans is not the place to achieve savings.

The **Major Richard Star Act** aims to provide concurrent receipt of veterans' disability compensation and retired pay for combat-disabled veterans, addressing a long-standing disparity in benefits.

PURPOSE OF THE ACT:

The Major Richard Star Act is designed to amend Title 10 of the United States Code, allowing certain veterans—specifically those medically retired with combat-related disabilities—to receive both their full military retirement pay and VA disability compensation without offset. This means that veterans who were injured in combat and have less than 20 years' service will no longer have their retirement pay reduced by the amount of their disability compensation.



Major Richard Star

BACKGROUND:

The act is named after **Major Richard Star**, an Iraq and Afghanistan veteran who passed away from service-connected cancer in 2021. His story highlights the struggles faced by many veterans who are denied full benefits due to bureaucratic rules that penalize them for injuries sustained in service.

WHO QUALIFIES?

The act primarily targets **Chapter 61 retirees**, which includes veterans who were medically retired due to combat-related injuries and have a disability rating of at least 30%. To qualify for the benefit under this Act, veterans must be receiving **Combat-Related Special Compensation (CRSC)**.

LEGISLATIVE STATUS:

Introduced in March 2025, the **Major Richard Star Act** has garnered significant bipartisan support, with over 185 co-sponsors in the House and 43 sponsors in the Senate. This broad coalition reflects a shared commitment to rectify the injustices faced by combat-disabled veterans.

IMPLICATIONS:

The act addresses a critical financial disparity for veterans, allowing them to receive the full benefits they have earned without the burden of offsets that previously reduced their retirement pay. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that around **50,000 veterans** may benefit from this legislation, which aims to provide much-needed financial relief.



In summary, the **Major Richard Star Act** represents a significant step towards ensuring that combat-disabled veterans receive the full compensation they deserve for their service and sacrifices.

Introduced in House (03/14/2025)



LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS REPORT

Continued

President Trump Signs Order to Rename the Department of Defense as the Department of War



By Jason Breslow of NPR

President Trump signed an executive order on Friday to give the Department of Defense a new name: the Department of War.

Speaking from the Oval Office, Trump said the rebranding reflected a new tone for the country and its military.

A White House fact sheet explains that under the executive or "secondary title" for the Department of Defense.

According to the fact sheet, the order will also authorize Defense Department officials to substitute the word "war" into their titles. For example, the Secretary of Defense could use the title Secretary of War.

Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth appeared to acknowledge the change in a post on social media on Thursday, writing simply, "DEPARTMENT OF WAR."

President Trump had previously signaled that a change was in the works. During an appearance in the Oval Office last month, Trump said that War Department "just sounded to me better."



*A view of the Pentagon on 13 December 2024,
in Arlington VA.*

Trump does not have the authority to change the department's name without congressional action. The legal name was established by Congress in 1949, when it renamed the newly unified military service branches under a new "Department of Defense" following World War II.

In a statement to NPR, constitutional scholar Steve Vladeck confirmed that, while the president is free to *refer* to the Pentagon by whatever name he chooses, its "legal name can't change without Congress." After signing the order on Friday, Trump indicated that the administration would ask Congress to codify the change into law but also said, "I'm not sure they have to."

Almost from the country's founding, the army was overseen by the War Department, but the sprawling agency took on its current name following an act of Congress in 1949. At the time, the change marked the culmination of an effort by President Harry Truman to unify the Air Force, Army and Navy under the umbrella of a single department.

As the largest department in the U.S. government, even just changing signs, seals and titles could prove costly. In 2023, an Army official told Congress that an effort to rename only nine Army bases would cost taxpayers \$39 million.

NOTE: Danielle Kurtzleben and Quil Lawrence contributed to this report.

SURVIVING SPOUSES REPORT

LTCG Frank Fahnestock



Putting a Stop to Loneliness During the Holidays

Contributor: Lindsay Fahnestock, DrPH, MPH



As we approach the fall and winter seasons, we have much to be thankful for, indeed. As the weather begins to cool, the numbers of creepy critters start to decline, and colors in nature transition to beautiful orange and red hues. For many, the thought of pumpkin spice lattes and delicious apple treats becomes a signature delight.

For some, however, the beginning of the holiday season may include feelings of loneliness and even depression. One study found that upwards of 38% of individuals over the age of 65 reported some degree of loneliness (Steed et al., 2007). A segment of these individuals also specified that weekends and holidays contributed to their feelings of loneliness.

To avoid feelings of isolation and sadness, we can take various steps to limit these sometimes-persistent feelings. These include:

- **Check on others!** If you are feeling lonely, someone else is most likely feeling the same way. Give your friends a call and see how they are doing. This simple gesture can also lead to a get-together, which could entail some hot apple cider or pumpkin spice lattes!
- **Join some craft-making opportunities!** These opportunities become more common around this time of year and are typically fun and holiday-focused (like creating a fall or winter centerpiece). You may even make new friends.
- **Start a thankfulness journal.** This type of opportunity can help you focus less on the negative aspects of your life and more on the positive ones.
- **Give back to your community (locally or globally).** These opportunities can be as simple as writing greeting cards, sending gift baskets to deployed military personnel, or even filling a box to send through Operation Christmas Child. This can also help cultivate your thankfulness.
- **Invite others you may know** and start your own holiday traditions by possibly hosting a gathering. It doesn't have to be fancy or elaborate. It can be as simple as having hot chocolate and watching your favorite Christmas movie. Or maybe you can build gingerbread houses together and have your own friendly competition.
- **Lastly, maybe you can bring some joy and comfort** into your home by putting up some decorations and experiencing wonderful, quiet moments filled with self-reflection. These moments can include sitting by a comforting fireplace, playing music, or reading your favorite book.



*Reach out and touch someone
and make new friends!*

References:

Steed, L., Boldy, D., Grenade, L., & Iredell, H. (2007). The demographics of loneliness among older people in Perth, Western Australia. *Australasian Journal on Ageing*, 26(2), 81-86.

CHAPLAIN'S REPORT

Phyllis Skirvin, PhD



Dealing with Grief

Letting God Hold Your Grief



Whether you're mourning a loss, a broken relationship, or a season that's come to an end, grief needs space—and so does healing. Thankfully, God doesn't ask us to grieve alone. He invites us to bring the weight of our sorrow to Him.

"The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."

~ Psalm 34:18 ~

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted."

~ Matthew 5:4 ~

In today's prayer, we ask God to meet us in the quiet, aching places of our hearts. We don't need to have the right words or the perfect strength. We just need to let Him hold our grief—gently, faithfully, completely.

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 to 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 cause overheating and other mechanical issues.



How to save money at the gas pump!

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

HISTORY REPORT

Maj. David A. Meyer



What's Hidden Beneath Our Commander-in-Chief's White House?



The White House is one of the most famous and instantly recognizable buildings in the world. Even if you've never actually taken the public tour of the East Wing and the Residence, you're likely still familiar with much of the building through news broadcasts, documentaries, movies, and TV series — although the latter two are normally shot on soundstages in Hollywood.

But beneath the pristine North Lawn and the Ionic columns of America's most famous residence lies a world that few will ever see. Under the White House, hidden from the general public, is a surprising amount of infrastructure providing an eclectic array of services, from secret tunnels to high-tech command centers and even a florist.



Donaldson Collection/
Michael Ochs Archives via Getty Images

PRESIDENTIAL EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER

The most famous feature hidden beneath the White House is the Presidential Emergency Operations Center (PEOC). It was originally constructed as a relatively simple bunker during World War II to protect President Franklin D. Roosevelt in the event of an aerial attack on Washington, D.C. The bunker was later used during the 9/11 attacks, when a number of key personnel were evacuated from their offices in the White House to the PEOC. Afterward, extensive renovations turned the PEOC — located under the East Wing and accessible via a secret elevator — into a far more sophisticated

control center. While we don't know the extent of what's down there, we do know that there are televisions, phones, and all the necessary communications facilities for managing emergency situations.

TUNNEL NETWORK

It's believed that an extensive tunnel system connects the White House to other key government buildings, though the total length remains classified.

Please Continue Reading



Print Collector/ Hulton Archive via Getty Images

MOAA LUNCHEON PRESENTATION

"Life of a Judge Advocate"

Our guest speaker was Lt. Col. Thomas J. Brown, one of our very own members. Tom talked about Air Force Judge Advocate's array of legal issues they deal with and then about his experiences from 1970 to late 1990. Tom focused on three cases involving murder that he dealt with. One of them at George Air Force Base in which an airman named Ron B. Gillette was charged with first degree murder of his spouse, Beatriz. It was featured on Forensic Files, Session 10, Episode 11, which can be found on You Tube. The court reporter then was one of our members Lee Bogert.

Tom Brown was born into a military-focused family, as his father worked as an aircraft engine engineer for the Army Air Corp at Wright Field in Dayton, Ohio during World War II when Tom was born in December 1943. Throughout his younger years his father would take him and his older brother to Military Aircraft events and an occasional ride in a smaller aircraft.

Tom developed a strong interest in the US Air Force seeking to be a pilot via Air Force ROTC at Ohio State University in the mid-60s.

During his time at Ohio State, Tom lost his 20/20 eyesight which was required to be a pilot in the Air Force. So, he changed his focus to becoming an Air Force Judge Advocate. He applied to several law schools in his senior year at Ohio State and selected the University of Cincinnati Law School, which was close to home and his father's position as a jet engine engineer at GE in Evandale Ohio. Tom graduated with a Juris Doctor Degree in 1969 and passed the Ohio Bar Examination in his first try, which the Air Force required. Tom also married his wife Carol in August 1969.



Tom reported for his first assignment as a Judge Advocate in January 1970 at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls Montana in the middle of temperatures below zero Fahrenheit. Tom went on to a 21-year career as an Air Force officer and served two times overseas in England and Japan and at five other U.S. bases where he served as Defense Counsel, Prosecutor, Staff Judge Advocate, and Military Judge. Tom ended his time in the Air Force at the end of 1990 after he was offered a position to take over as CEO of a military Credit Union which later changed their charter to a regional charter in eastern San Bernardino County where he worked for 18 years.

Tom has been a MOAA life member 14 years and Chapter President three times. In 1995 Mojave Desert Chapter won "Chapter of the Year" when MOAA was "The Retired Military Officers of America."



Beatriz Gillette

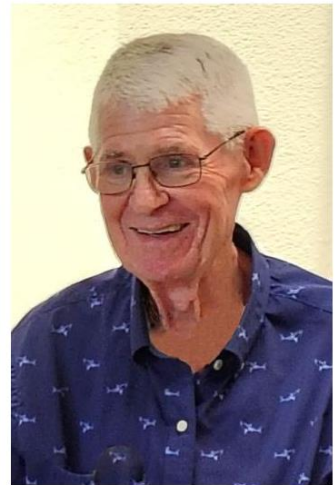
"The Death Mask Case"

This was the featured murder case Tom presented involving Ronal B. Gillette and the murder of his wife Beatriz, so he could marry his real "love." The story is definitely a "Who Done It" spectacular of piecing together initially circumstantial evidence with a last-minute breakthrough by a Forensic Expert.

It's well worth watching the 30-minute program:

Forensic Files, Session 10, Episode 11.

Just google it!



Lt. Col. Thomas J. Brown

MOAA LUNCHEON GALLERY



Maj. Ron Matsuda and High Desert Marine Pat Hagler warmly greeted us.



Alfredo Miranda of Senator Valladare's office promotes the Annual Veterans Resource Center Veterans Dinner.



Welcome!



LTC Michael Moticha shares information of a Grand Opening.



*Three lovely surviving spouses:
Margaret McConnell, Suzanne Bughman, Dolores Payne, and Rosanne Smith*

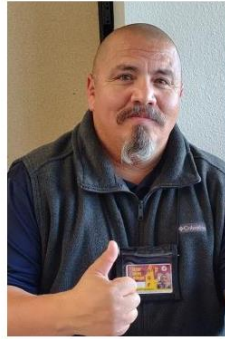


There was a great group paying tribute to Lt. Col. Thomas Brown sharing his days of JAG service in the Air Force.

MOAA LUNCHEON GALLERY



High Desert Marine Commander Mark Hotchkiss chats with High Desert Marine Lee Kinney.



Esteban Penameza representing the Veterans Resource Center



It was great to have LTC Butch Fahnestock and his lovely wife Debbie back with us.

*Great fellowship is priceless!
Come join us.*



Delightful opportunity items to win!



LTC Donald Amador and MAJ James Skirvin



Winner Meera Maheswaran



This chocolate cake is absolutely decadent!



Winner Mike Seixes



Winner Pat Hagler



A feast to behold



Delicious Meal!



Winner Jerome Johnson

OCTOBER'S SPECIAL DAYS

October 1

International Coffee Day
International Music Day
National Black Dog Day
National Hair Day
National Homemade Cookie Day
National Raccoon Day
World Vegetarian Day

October 2

International Day of Non-Violence
International Walk to School Day
National Custodian Day
National Fried Scallops Day
National Kale Day
National Name Your Car Day
National Pumpkin Seed Day
Rosh Hashanah
World Farm Animals Day

October 3

"Mean Girls" Day
National Boyfriend Day

October 4

Improve Your Office Day
Kids Music Day
National Cinnamon Roll Day
National Golf Lovers Day
National Taco Day
World Animal Day
World Habitat Day
World Smile Day

October 5

Frugal Fun Day
National Be Nice Day
World Card Making Day
World Meningitis Day
World Teachers' Day

October 6

Change A Light Day
National Badger Day
National Coaches Day
National Noodle Day
World Cerebral Palsy Day

October 7

National Child Health Day
World Architecture Day

October 8

International Dyslexia Day
National Face Your Fears Day
National Fluffernutter Day
National Heroes' Day
National Salmon Day
World Octopus Day

October 9

International Beer and Pizza Day
Leif Erikson Day
National Bring Your Teddy Bear to School Day
National Stop Bullying Day

October 10

National Angel Food Cake Day
National Cake Decorating Day
National Handbag Day
World Homeless Day
World Mental Health Day
World Sight Day

October 11

National Sausage Pizza Day
National Spread Joy Day
World Egg Day
Yom Kippur

October 12

I Love Yarn Day
National Chess Day
National Farmers Day
National Gumbo Day
National Pulled Pork Day
National Savings Day
World Arthritis Day
World Hospice and Palliative Care Day

October 13

Breast Cancer Awareness Day
National M&M Day

October 14

Columbus Day
Indigenous Peoples' Day
National Dessert Day
National I Love You Day

October 15

Global Handwashing Day
National Cheese Curd Day
National Lemon Bar Day
National Mushroom Day
National Pharmacy Technician Day
Sweetest Day
World Students' Day

October 16

Dictionary Day
Global Cat Day
National Boss's Day
National Fossil Day
National Sports Day
World Allergy Awareness Day
World Food Day
World Spine Day

October 17

National Pasta Day
Wear Something Gaudy Day

October 18

National Chocolate Cupcake Day

October 19

International Sloth Day
National New Friends Day
Sweetest Day

October 20

International Chef Day
National Day on Writing
World Osteoporosis Day

October 21

Back to the Future Day
National Apple Day
National Pets for Veterans Day
National Reptile Awareness Day

October 22

International Caps Lock Day
National Color Day

October 23

National Boston Cream Pie Day
National iPod Day
National Medical Assistants Day
National Paralegal Day

October 24

National Food Day
United Nations Day
World Polio Day

October 25

International Artist Day
National Breadstick Day
National Fine Art Appreciation Day
National Frankenstein Friday
National I Care About You Day
World Opera Day
World Pasta Day

October 26

National Chicken Fried Steak Day
National Day of the Deployed
National Make a Difference Day
National Pumpkin Day

October 27

National American Beer Day
National Black Cat Day
Navy Day

October 28

National Chocolate Day
National First Responders Day
National Immigrants Day

October 29

National Cat Day
National Hermit Day
National Internet Day
World Stroke Day

October 30

National Checklist Day
National Treat Your Pet Day
Mischievous Night

October 31

Girl Scout Founder's Day
Halloween
National Caramel Apple Day
National Knock Knock Joke Day

Make it a spooktacular month!

COMMUNITY SUPPORT
High Desert Marines

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

URGENT REMINDER!:

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!

COMMUNITY SUPPORT
VETERAN RESOURCE CENTER

10TH ANNUAL VETERAN RESOURCE CENTER VETERANS DAY EVENT



In partnership with High Desert Veterans Center

Sponsored by



10AM-2PM

Friday, November 7, 2025
Victor Valley College

Educational Event Center | Lower Campus
12395 Mojave Fish Hatchery Rd, Victorville, CA 92395

We look forward to celebrating with you.
Whether you are a veteran, active duty,
family member or supporter.

This event is a heartfelt THANK YOU
to those who have served.

Veterans Resource Center: (760) 245-4271 ext. 2245

COMMUNITY PROJECT

Parade of Pianos



“Praise Him with stringed instruments and flutes.”

~ Psalm 150:4 ~



We accept donations of instruments.

Parade of Pianos is a scholarship program and it was started in 2004 by Paul Starks. Paul loves jazz music and lived in Brooklyn NY for a short period as well as Los Angeles CA. He had a huge collection of jazz at one time. His favorite jazz artist was Miles Davis. But when he moved into Sterling Inn two years ago, he had to sell/dispose of it all.

Paul had a passion for classical music and to keep it alive in the High Desert. He loved seeing kids excel in music and gave them that opportunity through **Parade of Pianos** by performing at the two fundraising concerts each year. Any POP student who performed with Parade of Pianos has the opportunity to obtain music lesson subsidies, temporary employment, and college scholarships. POP also accepts working music instruments as donations and finds deserving students who are in need. Currently, we have four students who are receiving subsidies for their lessons, and we have moved approximately six pianos to students in need in 2025. We are always looking for music students who want to join POP! One of my goals is take POP into schools to educate kids of who we are and let them know of the opportunities that music provides.

We have a few businesses who donate towards POP but most of our donations comes from our fundraiser concerts twice a year, one in the spring and one in the fall. Our next concert is Sunday, November 9th at Church of the Valley at 1500 hours pm. We will have opportunity drawing items with tickets at \$10 each and homemade cookies to enjoy!

Kaye Walraven, Director, Parade of Pianos 🎵 kayemichele63@yahoo.com



Scholarships are available!



One of four students receiving subsidies for their lessons.



We are always looking for more students

COMMUNITY PROJECTS:
FLIGHT TEST MUSEUM/EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE

"Gathering of Eagles 2025 Gala"



~ Celebrating the X-29 ~



1 November 2025 ~ 1700 Hours TAKE OFF – 2200 Hours LANDING
John P. Eliopoulos Hellenic Center ~ 43404 30th Street West, Lancaster CA 93536

Step into an evening of thrilling first-hand tales with this individual ticket that is your passport to an unforgettable experience. Valued at \$100, this ticket opens the door to a world of excitement and joy. Join us for a night to remember. The evening program includes dinner, silent auction, an aerospace art exhibit, the Fullerton and Knight Scholarships, Eagle and Falcon Award Recognition, and a panel discussion with the **X-29** Technology Demonstrator program test pilots, flight test engineers and program managers. Business attire, please.

SILENT AUCTION OF ARTIFACTS AND COLLECTIBLES ~ AEROSPACE ARTWORK FOR PURCHASE

Proceeds go to support the Flight Test Historical Foundation's mission to support the Flight Test Museum. The FTHP is a 501c3 non-profit organization and is tax deductible, less the \$35 cost for the dinner. Vegan meal options are available. Please indicate your meal request on your ticket purchase.

PURCHASE TICKETS AT: [2025 GATHERING OF EAGLES: Celebrating the X-29 Technology Demonstrator](#)

Funded by DARPA, the United States Air Force, and NASA, the **X-29** was developed by Grumman, and the two built were flown by NASA and the United States Air Force. The aerodynamic instability of the X-29's airframe required the use of computerized fly-by-wire control. Composite materials were used to control the aeroelastic divergent twisting experienced by forward-swept wings, and to reduce weight. The aircraft first flew in 1984 and became the first forward-swept wing aircraft to break the sound barrier in level flight.

Meet key flight test pilots and engineers who took the aircraft through its paces and get an intimate behind-the-scenes look at the events that shattered the analog world and ushered in the digital age of aviation. Reception begins at 1700 hours with the dinner and awards program starting at 1845 hours.

The Flight Test Museum is the custodian of a unique collection of aerospace systems, including record-setting jets, such as the SR-71 Blackbird, and space exploration systems, such as the Lunar Landing Research Vehicle, that have contributed to the advancement of technology pioneered at Edwards Air Force Base, California. Due to restricted base access, virtually all exhibits and aircraft have been unavailable to the general public.

Currently, supporters are helping fund an effort to expand the museum to provide free access to all. The publicly accessible new wing of the museum will house prototypes and experimental aircraft that have a special connection with Edwards AFB, the U. S.A.F. Test Pilot School, NASA, and the Aerospace Valley. It will also offer K-12 students a one-of-a-kind opportunity to learn about the fundamentals of flight test through a robust STEM education program.



Flight Test Museum

Flight Test Historical Foundation ~ P.O. Box 57~| Edwards, CA 93523~EMAIL: info@flighttestmuseumfoundation.org

**COMMUNITY SUPPORT
FLIGHT TEST MUSEUM/EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE**

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)

T	R	I	S	H		M	C	C	O	N	N	E	L	L
	J	O	E		M	C	C	O	N	N	E	L	L	
1	S	T		J	E	T	-	J	E	T		A	C	E

DETAILS FOR THE INSCRIBED BRICK

Become a viable part of the Edwards Air Force Base history with an inscribed brick on the Flight Test Heritage Walk, located at Century Circle, West Gate. It's a great way to honor or memorialize that special someone and to also help the Flight Test Museum Foundation raise the necessary funds to support expansion of the Air Force Flight Test Museum. Yes, you can help us with our stated 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 (3) lines of copy for installation on the Flight Test Museum Heritage Walk surrounding Century Circle. This is a prime location for our many visitors (typically 1,000 per month) 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 501c3 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 annually.

PURCHASER'S NAME:

MAILING ADDRESS:

CITY:

STATE:

ZIP:

CELL PHONE: ()

HOME 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.

To pay by check, please make payable to Flight Test Museum Foundation and mail with this form to:
Flight Test Museum Foundation
Postal Box 57, Edwards CA 93523

To purchase online, please go to: www.afftcmuseum.org

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

**COMMUNITY PROJECT
FLIGHT TEST MUSEUM/EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE**



*U.S. Air Force Major Ross Elder**

***Edwards Air Force Base
Test Pilot Selected for
Yearlong NASA Mars
Mission Simulation***

Story by Brian Day, *Victorville Daily Press*

© 2025 by Brian Day/Daily Press

NASA SNEAK PREVIEW OF MARS MISSION HABITAT

A test pilot and instructor from Edwards Air Force Base has been selected as one of four volunteers to take part in a yearlong Mars mission simulation program led by NASA to study long-term human survivability on the Red Planet.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Ross Elder, who serves as director of operations for the F-35 Integrated Test Force and Air Force Test Pilot School instructor at Edwards Air Force Base, will take part in the Crew Health and Performance Exploration Analog program, base officials announced Monday.

Elder and his three fellow volunteers, Ellen Ellis, Matthew Montgomery, and James Spicer, will spend 378 days living inside a 1,700-square-foot mock-up of a proposed Mars habitat design at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, according to the space agency.

U.S. Air Force Maj. Ross Elder, who serves as director of operations for the F-35 Integrated Test Force and Air Force Test Pilot School instructor at Edwards Air Force Base, has been selected to take part in a yearlong NASA Mars mission simulation Provided by the U.S. Air Force

The mission is slated to begin on October 19, 2025 and continue through October 31, 2026.

"We are proud to congratulate Major Ross Elder on his selection as Commander for the forthcoming NASA - National Aeronautics and Space Administration CHAPEA Crew," according to a USAF statement. "Major Elder becomes the inaugural [Test Pilot School] staff member to be selected for this unique type of space mission."

While living in the simulated Mars base, the crew members will carry out tasks including science experiments, going on simulated Mars walks, operating robots and growing a vegetable garden. They will also test out newly developed technologies for space travel, such as medical diagnostic equipment.

The insights gained from the project will be applied to future missions, CHAPEA, Principal Investigator Grace Douglas explained. "The simulation will allow us to collect cognitive and physical performance data to give us more insight into the potential impacts of the resource restrictions and long-duration missions to Mars on crew health and performance," she said. "Ultimately, this information will design and plan for a successful human mission to Mars."

The upcoming CHAPEA mission will be NASA's second, officials said. The first mission ended in July of 2024.

*Major Elder with the first-ever prototype of the F-22 Raptor fighter jet, displayed at the U.S. Air Force Flight Test Museum at Edwards Air Force Base on Friday, August 23, 2024.

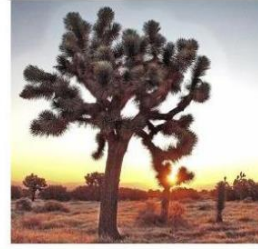


NASA Mars Simulation

Supporting the Flight Museum is a worthy cause!

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

