

# THE HIGH DESERT BUGLE

Mojave Desert Chapter  
Military Officers Association  
of America



VOLUME 39, ISSUE 3

MARCH 2026

## MARCH MEETING TO FEATURE TALK ABOUT WOMEN IN WAR

*LTC Michael W. Moticha*

The March Meeting of the Mojave Desert Chapter will be held at the Bear Valley Country Club (Spring Valley Lake) on Wednesday, March 25. Once again, 1LT Jack Barry will be entertaining the membership. His presentation will focus on

"Women in War." The facts and information that Jack provides for each of his offerings are exceptional and demonstrate the time and research that he puts into preparing each program. I want to highly recommend your attendance at the luncheon not only

to listen to Jack's presentation but to profit from our chapter meetings. These gatherings of ours provide a social outlet, a fine meal and the opportunity to dress-up, get out of the house and meet with other military individuals. I hope to see you there. The social hour on 25 March will begin at 1100 hours; lunch will be served at noon. The meal will include a delicious entrée, vegetables, dessert, and a variety of non-alcoholic beverages. A vegan meal is also available upon request. The cost is \$28 per person. **PLEASE RSVP** before Monday, 23 March to the chapter president, either by email at [michaelwmoticha@verizon.net](mailto:michaelwmoticha@verizon.net) or by phone by calling 760-792-5004. 📞





# Mojave Valley Chapter



**PRESIDENT**

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**Maj David A. Meyer, USAF (Ret.)**

**NEWSLETTER**

**CPT Byron Ward, USA**

**BOARD MEMBER**

**LTC Donald Amador, USA (Ret.)**

## Mission Statement

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

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

MOAA and its affiliated chapters are non-partisan.





# President's Narrative

**LTC Michael W. Moticha**

Taxes are soon due. Yes, it is that time of the year again, when we, as individuals, are required to set aside an amount of our income for State and Federal Taxes. In California, for 2025, a new state law has exempted a portion of your military retirement pension and or survivor benefits from the state income tax. Signed into law by Governor Newsom last year, and included in the state budget, the law will allow you to exempt \$20,000 from gross income. California has finally caught up with the other 49 states in providing some sort of exemption for their military residence.

The bill, which was modified by the California Legislature from its original format introduced by Assemblyman James Ramos, would have fully exempted retirement and survivor benefits. We are only gaining from a portion of Assemblyman Ramos' multi-year efforts to provide an exemption. Other states exempt this income anywhere from 10 to 100 percent. For California's military residence, this exemption, placed into law, is a tremendous achievement. We will have to wait and see how long it provides us with an increased net income. There were discussions relating to its ending in 2030. In preparing your state taxes, ensure that you are including this new exemption.

## MEMBERSHIP

MOAA provides its chapters every few months, with a listing of officers, active and retired, who are located in the chapter's area of concern. It is called a Near Real Time Report and based on Zip-Codes. Due to MOAA reprogramming their files during the last two years, the report has been difficult to get and has not been very bene-

ficial. Most of our new members in the last year have been found by beating the bushes in the High Desert. However, our latest 2025 report gave us the name of Lt Col Michael "Mike" Neitzel, USAF (Ret), living in Apple Valley. Mike and his wife Mickie (see photo below) have joined our chapter and were introduced to the Chapter Members attending the February luncheon. I want to personally welcome both Mike and Mickie to our chapter. I ask that each chapter member help to make the Neitzel's joining our chapter as comfortable and enjoyable as possible.



## COMMUNITY PROJECT DONATIONS

Each year in January, donation requests are sent out to MOAA and to High Desert organizations that have supported our chapter. These have included MOAA Community Sponsored Grants, MOAA Vacations and Insurance Plans where we gain funds for advertising, the High Desert Marines, the Elks Lodge 1877, the Association of the United States Army (AUSA), and the Victor Valley 4 Wheelers. At the present time, I am trying to increase this list of donors, with new organizations. I currently have had no luck doing this.

On 6 February, I attended the High Desert Marines monthly breakfast, as I normally do. Everyone should plan on attending at least once.



# President's Narrative

Continued



You cannot find a better breakfast for \$15.00 in the High Desert and the comradery will blow you away. This event will make your day. Anyway, I was called forward during the mornings event by Commander Mark Hotchkiss and presented with a check for \$800 to our chapter, to be used for our Youth Awards Community Project. (see photo above) The High Desert Marines have actively contributed to our support of the JROTC, California Cadet Corps and the Young Marines units. Both their vocal expressions and monetary donations are appreciated. I look forward to our close relationship and both of our organizations' continued service to the residence of the High Desert.

## MEMORIAL DAY SERVICE WREATHS

Every year I can remember since 2003, I have represented our chapter by participating in the Memorial Day Services held at multiple Memorial Parks in the High Desert. At least three of our

chapter members would dawn their uniforms and present wreaths along with many other military oriented organizations. If we were short personnel, someone would have to race across the city to fill in at another service. We did not want to be left out of any service. You would be surprised that some family members, belonging to members of our Chapter, are memorialized throughout the High Desert. Since Dignity Memorial purchased the major Memorial Parks in the High Desert three years ago, they have reduced the number of Memorial Services to just one location each year, Desert View Memorial Park on Amargosa Road in Victorville.

Each year I have felt uncomfortable and even a little inferior to the other participating organizations, because our chapter's wreaths were older and smaller than all of the others presented. No one ever considered or suggested improving our wreaths. Well, I have taken steps to do away with the bad feelings. To improve my pride in our chapter, I asked Jim and Phyllis Skirvin, who once owned a florist shop in Victorville, to create two larger and professionally looking wreaths for our use. (see photo) I am proud of what they have prepared and look forward to our chapter's "wreath challenge" with other presenting organizations at this year's Memorial Day Service. 📸





# Treasurer's Report

## Maj Ronald Matsuda

We began the month of February 2026 with \$9110.90 in our chapter's accounts. We had revenues of \$1798.00 and expenses of \$1173.00, resulting in a balance of \$9735.90.

In our Community Projects the Youth Awards Fund currently has \$6834.81. On 30 April, \$2500 in scholarships will be presented to five distinguished graduating JROTC Cadets at the Youth Awards Ceremony. The California Cadet Corps and the Young Marine units will receive \$500.00 each in maintenance funds at the same ceremony. The Apple Valley & Victor Valley Legacy Museums Project has \$133.00 as does the Barstow Veterans Home. Funds of \$158.00 were distributed to the Parade of Pianos at their Spring Concert and the Flight Test Museum is at 0 funds be-

cause the \$133.00 received were placed back into the General Fund to compensate for the \$1000.00 previously expended for that project.

Remember that your dues go exclusively for administrative costs. Note that our administrative costs are comparatively low as our dues are \$35.00 per year for retired or former officers and \$10.00 for Surviving Spouses and active duty personnel.

If you have a question as to whether or not you have already paid for 2026 please email me at [rtmatsuda@outlook.com](mailto:rtmatsuda@outlook.com) and I will advise you whether you or you have paid for 2026.

When sending dues payments please send your check to TMDC-MOAA, P.O. Box 785, Victorville, CA 92393-0785.

Make checks payable to TMDC-MOAA. If you don't use the renewal membership form, please use the memo line on your check to designate "Dues", "Youth Awards" or any of the other charities that we support. 📣



Maj Matsuda was one of the big winners of the raffle at February's chapter meeting (at left). On the right is another raffle winner, Jerome Johnson



# Newsletter Notes

**CPT Byron Ward**

You may have noticed that the chapter newsletter looks a little different this month. As the new newsletter editor, I felt that the format could use a change. I'm new here, and I will make mistakes. Please help me out by sending corrections and suggestions to my email

**blanor@aol.com**

The first page of this and subsequent issues will have a standard header and a headline story, which in most cases will be promoting the chapter's monthly meeting. The second page will list the chapter's officers and will contain the Mission Statement.

The bulk of each issue will be filled with columns from contributors, starting with one or two pages from Chapter President Michael Moticha. I also plan to always include two pages about our five Community Projects, with a paragraph or two about each project, and one "Photo Gallery" page containing pictures that I receive from members.

I am going to continue with my pet project, writing a page each month about America's most highly decorated servicemembers. For the remainder of the year, articles in the newsletter will count down the top ten, starting this month with #10, "Chesty" Puller, and ending in December with #1, the most highly decorated person in U. S. history. Among the ten are some nationally famous and widely revered figures, and some relatively unknown soldiers who deserve to be better known.

Then there are the other one-page columns, such as the "Newsletter Notes" you are reading now, and others you are familiar with, such as "Legislative Affairs," "Veterans' Benefits,"

and "Chaplain's Corner." These will be included as received from the contributors.

If any member would like to write a column for the Bugle, whether a one-page article or a continuing series, or a single photo of an anniversary couple or a birthday celebration, send me whatever you have and I will put it in these pages under your byline. Again, my email is

**blanor@aol.com**

Ideally, articles of 400-600 words, plus 2-4 pictures, fill up a page completely, but send me whatever you have; I'll arrange and add things as needed to complete the pages, such as the photos on the Treasurer's Report page.

Concerning content, I have strong political views, and I've written extensively about them for years, but that's not going to happen here. The Bugle, as required by the MOAA and common sense in keeping harmony within the chapter, will be strictly nonpartisan.

Finally, in most of my past newsletters, I have utilized "end marks" to signify the end of an article, just like the big, fancy magazines. I first noticed end marks being used at the end of articles in Playboy in 1968 (not that my primary interest was the articles). In that case, the end mark was the famous Playboy bunny; in our case, it's the unique Bugle bugle. 🐰



HAPPY ANNIVERSARY to Michael and Diana Seixas, celebrating 43 years together.





# February Meeting

## 1LT Jack Barry

"It's not what we can do for God, but what God can do through us in showing His love to our world," Daniel Tate said as he began his talk at the February chapter meeting, wearing his amazing "LOVE" jacket. For those of you absent, you really missed out on a delight-filled, heart-centered, thought provoking, and inspiring message. The chapter membership was introduced to Dan on October 22, 2025 when he accompanied our guest speaker, Todd Anton, founder of the Greatest Generation Education Project.

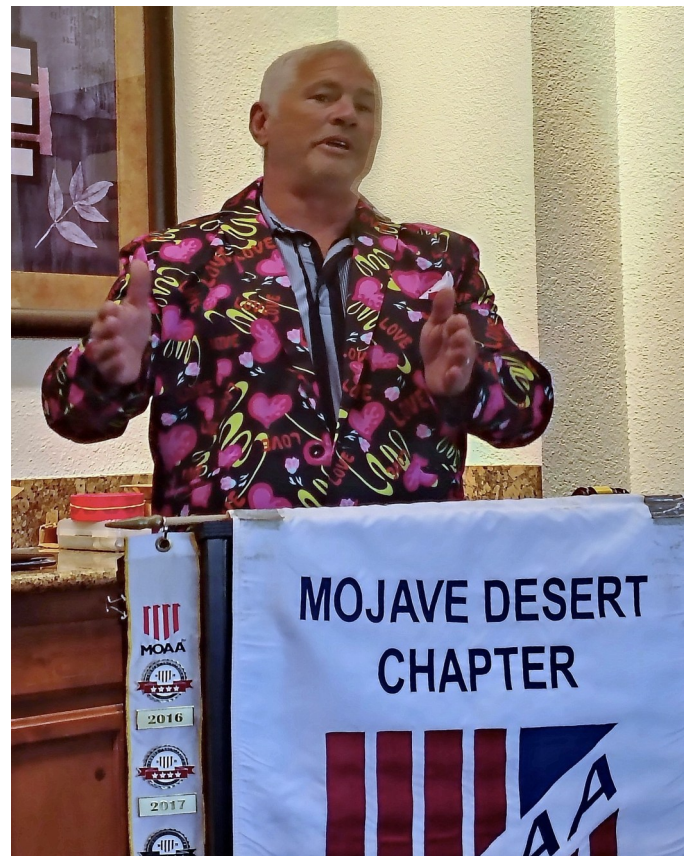
Dan is the Founder of the Don Ferrarese Philanthropic Foundation, which he established in 2005. Donald Hugh Ferrarese (June 19, 1929 – November 4, 2024) was an American professional baseball pitcher, who played in Major League Baseball (MLB) for the Baltimore Orioles, Cleveland Indians, Chicago White Sox, Philadelphia Phillies and St. Louis Cardinals from 1955 to 1962. Prior to his relocating to Durango, Colorado, Don had made our High Desert his home plate. His parents, Hugo and Bruna, owned and operated Hugo's Delicatessen and Restaurant, which was in Apple Valley at the corner of Happy Trails Highway and Navajo Road. Dan begged the question: "Why do we tend to wait until someone we love and admire dies to pay tribute to them? Why not do so from the heart while they are still alive and can appreciate it."

Dan was a baseball coach at the local high school and sought out and hired professional players to help coach his team. When he approached Don to hire him, Don refused to accept payment. "I do this free as a way to give back to our community and to help build boys into men.," Don responded. Out of that interac-

tion developed a close friendship, and Dan launched the Foundation, raising \$100,000 through 10 donations of \$10,000 each, "putting their money where their mouth is."

In his own right, Dan Tate is a very successful real estate broker in our area. He thrives today on God's calling to work with youths, mentoring young boys in becoming godly, responsible men, husbands, and fathers. So far, the foundation has provided \$672,000 in scholarships to high school students. Additionally, during the Christmas holiday, the Foundation provides Christmas gifts for needy children, gifts specifically asked for by the families. Why be so explicit? Because it's important for children to know they matter and are loved. So far, some 750 children have been blessed. Much to our surprise, Dan shared that the most popular "wish gift" was for shoes!

In closing, Dan challenged everyone to have God work through them in making time and resources to invest in our youths, the future of our Country. 🇺🇸





# Most Highly Decorated

**CPT Byron Ward**

## L. B. “CHESTY” PULLER

In tenth position on the list of the most highly decorated servicemembers in history is the most well known Marine, Lewis Burwell Puller, universally known by his nickname, “Chesty.”



Born in 1898 in Virginia, Puller was first exposed to the military in 1917 at the “West Point of the South,” the Virginia Military Institute, but after a year he enlisted in the Marine Corps to attempt to see action in World War I. The war ended while he was still in training, however,

but he elected to stay in the service, beginning a distinguished 37-year career.

While most U.S. servicemembers spent the years between World Wars I and II in relative peace, that was certainly not the case for Puller, who fought in dozens of engagements against guerillas in Haiti and Nicaragua as part of the “Banana Wars,” a series of United States interventions in Central America and the Caribbean. When the fighting ended in 1932, Puller was a well-regarded officer sporting two Navy Crosses for his service.

At the start of World War II, Puller was a major, but was quickly promoted to lieutenant colonel and by September 1942 he was thick in the desperate fighting on Guadalcanal. In an action that earned him a Bronze Star for

valor, Puller’s initiative saved hundreds of Marines from being overrun. Later on Guadalcanal, he was awarded his third Navy Cross after defending vital Henderson Field against several bloody assaults. During this action, Puller suffered severe wounds that took him out of the fighting, but only temporarily.

After the Allied victory in the Solomon Islands, Puller was back in action on the island of New Britain, where he earned a fourth Navy Cross during the Battle of Cape Gloucester. Following this, he led the 1st Marine Regiment into one of the bloodiest battles in Marine Corps history on Peleliu Island, during which he came under criticism by his superiors for ordering casualty-heavy frontal assaults. Puller ended World War II as a full colonel, training Marines at Fort Lejeune, South Carolina.

Five years later, Colonel Puller was once again in charge of the 1st Marine Regiment, and once again in a war, this time in Korea. Participating in the decisive landing at Inchon and the frigid withdrawal from northern Korea after the Chinese intervention, Puller’s courage and stalwart leadership were constantly evident. During the war, he earned a fifth Navy Cross, a Silver Star, and, for his support of the Army, a Distinguished Service Cross. No other Marine (and only one other person, a Navy submarine commander) has ever been awarded so many Navy Crosses.

“Chesty” was promoted to brigadier general in 1951, major general in 1953, and received a final promotion to three-star rank upon his retirement in 1955. He died in 1971 at the age of 73, and is buried in Christchurch, Virginia.



While General Puller is the most highly decorated Marine Corps officer in history, there is one Marine who is more highly decorated, a sergeant major who will be featured in this column in the August issue of the Bugle. 🎧





# Community Projects

## Project Leaders

### **YOUTH FUND FOR JROTC, YOUNG MARINES, CALIFORNIA CADET CORPS**

As mentioned by Chapter President Michael Moticha on page 4, Commander Mark Hotchkiss from the High Desert Marines recently presented the chapter with a very generous check for \$800 to be used for our Youth Awards Community Project.

### **APPLE VALLEY & VICTOR VALLEY LEGACY MUSEUMS**

*Marcy Taylor*

Hello, I am Marcy Taylor, founder of the Victor Valley Legacy Museum, opened in Old Town Victorville in 2014, and the Apple Valley Museum, opened in 2015 in the historic Apple Valley Inn. Both are one-room mini-museums/visitor centers, projects of the High Desert Community Foundation. Our mission is to research, preserve, and share local High Desert history with travelers and locals alike. While the Apple Valley site focuses mainly on Apple Valley history, the Victorville site includes the whole Victor Valley. After all, the town played an important role long before Apple Valley was even thought of, as the cross-roads of several pioneer trails, a river town with a number of Native American encampments, and later a railroad town, a mining town, and a Route 66 town. Many movies, starting with the silent films, were filmed in both the Victorville and Apple Valley areas.

Both museums are run by volunteers, who meet monthly to plan scheduling and events. We offer books, posters, and other collectibles for sale.

We host events such as movie nights, porch sales, silent auctions, hoe-downs, and shindigs, with live music, skits, line dancing, and hayrides, as well as snacks or dinners. We also participate in many community events all over the Victor Valley area and beyond, including craft fairs, flea markets, and parades, and have a presence at the Courtyard Concerts and the Sunset Concert Series.

Our next celebration is the Apple Valley Legacy Museum's 11th Anniversary, the weekend of March 27, 28, and 29, with the main event Saturday March 28 from 4:00-7:00 P.M. We hope to see you there!

Thank you, MOAA members, for choosing us as one of your projects, and a big thank you to all of your members who have visited the museums, donated items, or attended past events. Some of you I have known for decades; some I met within the past two or three years at your monthly meetings. I feel honored to have been your presenter. I hope to see all of you again soon.

### **PARADE OF PIANOS**

The Parade of Pianos recently held its Spring Concert at the Church of the Valley in Apple Valley. Featured were a variety of instrumental presentations

performed by students from grade school through college. They all have the desire to fulfill a musical passion, but had no money to purchase instruments or pay for lessons.

That's when the Parade of Pianos organization stepped into the student's life and did their magic. Monetary donations from individuals are always appreciated. Checks should be made payable to the High Desert Community Foundation, specifying the Parade of Pianos in the memo section of the check.



# Community Projects

Continued



## BARSTOW VETERANS HOME

Opened in May 1996, the Veterans Home of California–Barstow is the second-oldest Veterans Home in California. The Home is a licensed 220-bed care facility and a proud staple in the stunning Mojave Desert region of Southern California.

## EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE FLIGHT MUSEUM

*Flight Test Museum Release*

In honor of Women's History month, the Flight Test Museum is offering a chance to win a signed copy of a remarkable aviation book. Author Eileen Bjorkman, one of the museum's board members and a 2018 Eagle honoree, will sign ten copies of her book "Fly Girls Revolt."

The top 10 donors to the Flight Test Historical Foundation during the month of March (\$100 minimum) will receive a signed copy of Eileen's book, "Fly Girls Revolt." Whether you're building your aviation library or looking for an inspiring read, this is a great opportunity to add an aviation treasure to your collection while supporting the expansion of the Flight Test Museum.

Please click on the link at right to see the many ways to donate and browse the Flight Test Museum website.

## DONATIONS WANTED

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

<b>YOUTH FUND</b>	\$ _____
<b>LEGACY MUSEUMS</b>	\$ _____
<b>PARADE OF PIANOS</b>	\$ _____
<b>VETERANS HOME</b>	\$ _____
<b>FLIGHT MUSEUM</b>	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL</b>	\$ _____

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



## MOAA: STAY INFORMED!

Keep up to date by reviewing MOAA's "Take Action" and Legislative Action Centers and Update sections of MOAA's website at

<http://www.moaa.org>

If you haven't already, sign up for MOAA's weekly email newsletter to keep abreast of the national organization's activities.

Additionally, stay up to date on matters affecting our state and local legislative affairs by reviewing the CALMOAA website and its section on "California Legislative Matters"

<http://www.californiamoaa.com/legislation-2/>





# Photo Gallery

## Member Contributions



This month, all of the photos here were taken by 1LT Jack Berry at the February meeting. Above is an overview shot taken while Dan Tate was speaking, then (clockwise) there's Dan Tate with Vicki Godden-Allen, then Dan Tate with LTC Michael Moticha. The trio at bottom right consists of MAJ Meera Maheswaran, Mary Matsuda, and Suzanne Bughman. Immediately below are Thomas and Felisa Stevens.





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

**FORM FOR NEW AND RENEWING MOJAVE DESERT CHAPTER MEMBERS**

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

**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_  
(RENEWING MEMBERS- INDICATE ANY CHANGES BELOW, OTHERWISE LEAVE BLANK)

**RANK** \_\_\_\_\_ **BRANCH OF SERVICE** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ **RETIRED**    \_\_\_ **FORMER**    \_\_\_ **SURVIVING SPOUSE**    \_\_\_ **ACTIVE OR NG**

**SPOUSE'S NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**MAILING ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP** \_\_\_\_\_

**TELEPHONE** \_\_\_\_\_ **EMAIL** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE OF BIRTH** \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

**PO Box 785, Victorville, CA 92393-0785**

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

