

THE HIGH DESERT BUGLE

**Mojave Desert Chapter
Military Officers Association
of America**



VOLUME 39, ISSUE 3

SEPTEMBER 2026

SEPTEMBER PRESENTATION WILL FOCUS ON THE U.S. CONSTITUTION



Continuing the year-long commemoration of America's 250th anniversary, on September 17th, the country will celebrate National Constitution Day (officially Constitution Day and Citizenship Day), an American federal observance that honors the adoption of the United States Constitution and the nation's citizens.

On September 23, at the monthly MOAA Chapter meeting, Jack Barry will be speaking about the significance of our United States Constitu-

tion, and why it's worth fighting for. Please join us and "get in the spirit" of the unique and informative event.

The meeting will be held at the Bear Valley Country Club on Wednesday, September 23. The social hour will begin at 1100 hours; lunch will be served at noon, and Jack Barry will begin his presentation at 1300. The event will conclude with an exciting and revamped opportunity drawing, which will be offering attendees the chance to win a variety of interesting prizes. The cost is \$28 per person. PLEASE RSVP before Monday, 21 September to the chapter president, either by email at michaelwmoticha@verizon.net or by phone by calling 760-792-5004 📞





Mojave Desert Chapter



PRESIDENT

LTC Michael W. Moticha, USAR (Ret.)

VICE-PRESIDENT

MAJ Meera Maheswaran, USAR (Ret.)

SECRETARY

VACANT– Volunteer Today!

TREASURER

Maj Ronald Matsuda, USAF (Ret.)

MEMBERSHIP

LtCol Thomas J. Brown, USAF (Ret.)

VETERAN BENEFITS

VACANT– Volunteer Today!

HISTORIAN

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

NEW MOAA CHAPTER PRESIDENT NEEDED

Being the President of the Mojave Desert Chapter for the last six years, has been an enjoyable, educational, challenging and exciting experience. In fact, the last 23 years as a Chapter Member, holding other various positions, has been personally rewarding. It has allowed me to continue to serve in my capacity as a retired Army officer. I have had fun, given the opportunity, to travel the United States and meet with other officers serving in the same duty positions. Being single, without a spouse, I have had the time to devote to all of the positions I have either volunteered for or was appointed by vote. Basically, in this environment, volunteering and being voted in are both in the same category. However, my membership and the volunteering have been very demanding on my person. It has been very difficult to say no when asked to perform with the Chapter. Saying yes has kept me going all of these years.

To make a long story short, I shall not seek, nor will I accept the nomination for Chapter President for 2027. It is time for me to step down and to relieve myself of the many responsibilities and time involved, with the position of Chapter President. The torch, so to speak, needs to be passed to someone else before I drop it. Folks, I'm tired.

I am proud of the Chapter's current status, what we have done, and want to leave the Presidency while the chapter is in good condition. Though pleased, I am not happy, and con-

stantly frustrated that I cannot get other Chapter members to volunteer and take responsibility. Lest we forget the motto, "Never Stop Serving", there are many positions that can be filled by members. My belief, which is not very valid at the present time, is that there should be a line of members, at my desk, asking what they can do to help. Do not get me wrong. We have some outstanding Chapter members who have stepped up and devoted their time and energy for many years to promote the betterment of the Chapter. I consider myself one and all of the members of the current and past Board of Directors are of the same character. In my efforts to lead, though, I have this fault of wanting and expecting more from each individual. The results create a negative atmosphere in the chapter and needs to end. By my moving on, the chapter will get new ideas and more breathing room to activate them.

Why announce this departure now? I want to ensure that the Board of Directors has plenty of time to make decisions and accomplish all that has to be done by 31 December. No, I am not leaving now. I will continue in my present position and do all of the things necessary for the chapter's operation until the end of the year. Next year I would like to remain a member of the Board of Directors and take on a less demanding and time-consuming duty. Someone else can have the podium I'm always holding onto and the President's position.

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

VACANT CHAPTER BOARD POSITIONS

While I'm on the subject, we have received bad news from Jim & Phyllis Skirvin. Due to Jim's operation and two weeks stay in the hospital, and Phyllis' need to care for him now, they have declined to continue in their Board positions. We are now without a Personal Affairs/Veterans' Benefits Chairman, a Secretary, and a Chaplain for the chapter. Added to our previous shortages, the Chapter Board of Directors is now without many of the thirteen Chairmanship positions. The requirements will be met, and everything will get done, it will just be accomplished by the few still on the Board. We do have some volunteers completing the duties now. It would be nice to have a position filled permanently. If you are interested in serving, you can have your choice of a position you might desire. The positions that need to be filled are as follows:

Surviving Spouse Liaison

Programs Chairman

Legislative Chairman

Projects Chairman

Secretary

Chaplain

Personal Affairs/Veterans Benefits Chairman

If it is necessary, some of these positions can be combined to help take up the slack. If you can, and desire to help out, let someone on the Board of Directors know.

SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES

There are a number of activities and events planned by various organizations for September. The High Desert Marines, with Mark, Lee, and Pat from our monthly luncheons, have the following during September:

- **Wednesday September 16th:** The Barstow Veterans' Home Sing-along at 10:00 AM
- **Friday September 25th:** The Barstow Veterans' Home Birthday Party at 1:00 PM
- **Sunday September 27th:** The Marine's Family Picnic at the VFW, Hesperia at 12:00-5:00 PM

Other upcoming events and opportunities to celebrate in September include:

- **Friday September 11th:** Barstow Community College, 25th Commemoration Ceremony at the College at 10:00 AM-12:00 PM
- **Sunday September 12th:** Apple Valley "Happy Trails Parade", Hwy 18 (Central to Pawnee) at 10:00 AM, Street Fair/Car Show to follow
- **Saturday & Sunday September 12-13th:** MCLB Barstow Rodeo, at Base Stables, 572 Agate Rd, Daggett at 6:00 - 10:00 PM, Adults \$12; Children \$5
- **Sunday September 13th:** Grandparents Day
- **Friday September 18th:** The birthday of the United States Air Force
- **Friday the 25th to Monday the 28th:** The Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall, at Big Bear Lake, 8:00 AM Fri to 1:00 PM Mon, remains open
- **Sunday September 27th:** Gold Star Family Day
- **Tuesday September 29th:** VFW Day 🐶



Above, Jerome Johnson and Rocky Pacini at the August chapter meeting



Treasurer's Report

Maj Ronald Matsuda

TREASURY IN GOOD SHAPE

We began the month of August 2026 with \$8,518.77 in our chapter's accounts. We had revenues of \$878.31 and expenses of \$844.00 resulting in a current balance of \$8,753.08.

We now have \$4,152.81 in the Youth Awards fund, \$100.00 in both the Barstow Veterans Home fund and Flight Museum fund and none in the Apple Valley and Victor Valley Museums fund and the Parade of Pianos fund. We also received \$90.00 for the Toys for Tots.

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

When sending dues payments please send your check, made out to TMDC/MOAA, to MOAA, PO Box 785, Victorville, CA92393-0785.

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



Above, Laura Moraco from the Barstow Veterans Home gave a great presentation at the August meeting. Below, Miriam Munoz from the office of State Senator Suzette Valladares also spoke briefly.





Community Projects

Project Leaders

YOUTH FUND FOR JROTC, YOUNG MARINES, CALIFORNIA CADET CORPS

Planning for the 2027 Annual Awards Ceremony to be held next spring is in the early stages. Everyone is anticipating another great event.

APPLE VALLEY & VICTOR VALLEY LEGACY MUSEUMS

Marcy Taylor

Thanks for everyone's continued support of my two small museums. This past month there's been a lot of action at both locations. Besides the usual visitors at Apple Valley Legacy Museum, we hosted another successful movie night Friday August 21. The talented Mike and Marina kicked things off with some live musical entertainment. Following the raffle, sponsored by Apple Valley Friends of the Library, the feature film was *Monolith Monsters* (1957), a *Tarantula* type thriller. Upon further research, the reason for the similarity became clear. Both were written by the same man, Robert Fresco, and both used the same filming locations: the lonely highway between Apple Valley and Lucerne Valley, the Alabama Hills in Lone Pine, and Universal Studio sets for the town scenes.

However, most of the summer action seemed to be taking place in Victorville. We hosted two meetings, one concerning the future of Old Town, bringing together key Victorville city employees and citizens with an interest or stake in the area. Seventh Street is being spruced up in preparation for the Route 66 Centennial coming



up on September 12. I have been working hard repainting signs and the Eight States map (below). Muralist Vanessa Gomez and I developed a walking tour of murals, art installations, and two Historic Points of Interest, all on Seventh Street. She will be painting live September 12. Other new Route 66 themed visuals are being created for not only the Centennial, but also the Santa Fe Trading Company's 25th Anniversary the following Saturday, September 19. Both events will find the museum open, displays outside in our usual spot, as well as a Rockin' 50s-era party in the Courtyard.

Come on over and show off your best "Happy Days" era duds, either on Saturday, September 12 from 10:00-2:00 on Seventh Street from D to Forrest, or on Saturday, September 19 from 9:00-2:30 on Seventh Street from A to Forrest. On both days the museum will be open until 3:30



Community Projects

Continued

PARADE OF PIANOS

The next big event, the Fall Concert, is less than two months away. It will be at Church of the Valley on Sunday, November 1 at 3:00 P.M.

BARSTOW VETERANS HOME

MAJ Jim and Dr. Phyllis Skirvin recently dropped off a plethora of living essentials for the home's residents purchased by an allocation by the Mojave Valley Chapter. That's Jim in the photo below with Laura Moraco, and below that is a picture of the donated items.



EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE FLIGHT MUSEUM

Everyone is urged to check out this informative museum at Edwards AFB. Hours are Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM.

SUPPORT THE CHAPTER'S COMMUNITY PROJECTS

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

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

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



Above, the Fahnestocks, Frank, Debbie, and Lindsay, look like they're having a good time at the August meeting



Special Project

1LT Jack Barry

CHAPTER IS SUPPORTING TOYS FOR TOTS PROJECT

On 26 August at our luncheon meeting, we officially launched the 2026 Marine's Toys for Tots Project with a delight-filled response from our members. 24 gifts and \$90 in cash were secured towards making deserving children of our veterans indeed happy. We also teamed up with the Barstow Veterans Home and CalMOAA in making this worthy effort the true success it deserves.

No, you haven't missed the boat! Hop on board today in one of two ways:

- Bring in your new, unwrapped gifts to our 23 September luncheon meeting;
- Mail your check (payable to TMDC-MOAA with "Toys for Tots" on the "Memo" line} to P. O. Box 785, Victorville CA 92393-0785. Our dedicated team will go out and buy gifts on your behalf.

As members of our Mojave Desert Chapter of MOAA, we have an obligation to fulfill. "Obligation"—It isn't your favorite word, is it? That's because we typically interpret it in a negative light. Don't think of it as something you **have** to do but as something you **get** to do! Our greatest obligation—keeping our



Chapter alive and well and to "Never Stop Serving!"—doubles as our greatest opportunity. So, in the true spirit of the upcoming Christmas season, **"Seize the opportunity!"**

At our 23 September luncheon meeting, we will be doing a public relations photo shoot for a Press Release to the media. It will depict LTC Michael Moticha with a pile of the gifts. The more gifts we have, the more impressive the photo. And gifts brought in at a monthly meeting receive free "opportunity drawing" tickets as well. Therefore, when you act now and donate to this worthy cause, we all become winners! And, who doesn't like being a **WINNER!!!** 📣





Newsletter Extra

CPT Byron Ward

OPPORTUNITY DRAWINGS



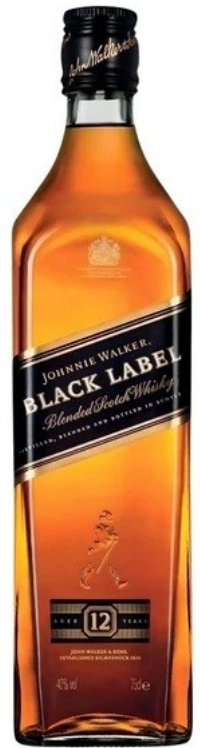
The new era of end-of-meeting raffle drawings has arrived, and so far it's going great! While still retaining a reserve for future drawing prizes, I was able to transfer \$200 from the raffle fund to the chapter treasury at the last board meeting (photo above).

Tickets are still \$1 for one, \$5 for six, and \$10 for thirteen, but there's a new level: \$20 for twenty-six. And you can now bring in prizes in exchange for tickets (three for an item worth roughly \$5 or more), PLUS you get a ticket for every Toys For Tots gift you donate at the meeting (see previous page).

The August drawing went well, with just over \$100 coming in and five prizes going out. Thanks to Jack Barry, all five winners were photographed and appear on this page. Peter Kim walked away with the main prize, a Black & Decker

to upgrade the selection, the other four prizes offered combo packs of two or three items. They were won by Lindsay Fahnestock, Mark Hotchkiss, Felisa Stevens, and Jerome Johnson.

At the upcoming September meeting, at least five prizes will be available, including that frequently-talked-about bottle of Johnnie Walker Black, and, perhaps even better, an increase in the traditional paper prize to three reams. Three! That's one more than has previously been offered! And you should see the price of paper these days! This startling announcement is great enough to get **3** exclamation marks!!! 📣





Legislative Affairs

MAJ Meera Maheswaran

THE VA UPDATES ITS DISABILITIES SCHEDULE

The following details the history of the Department of Veterans Affairs' first comprehensive update to the VA's Schedule for Rating Disabilities (VASRD) since 1945. This effort will continue into next year.

2009: Review started of all 15 body systems in VASRD.

2011: VA held a VASRD Improvement Forum to collect public feedback and medical evidence for updates to disability criteria affecting respiratory (sleep apnea), cardiovascular, hearing, and ENT (tinnitus) conditions.

2017: VA begins implementation of VASRD changes – 1. Dental & Oral / 2. Endocrine body systems changed 2018 3. Eyes / 4. Gynecological & Breast / 5. Skin / 6. Hematologic & Lymphatic body systems changed

2019: VA intention to revise disability criteria for ENT, Audiology, and Respiratory systems placed on the Unified Agenda 7. Infectious/Immune/Nutritional body system changed

2021: 8. Musculoskeletal / 9. Cardiovascular / 10. Genitourinary body systems changed 2022 Proposed changes to ENT (tinnitus), Audiology, and Respiratory (sleep apnea) systems published in Federal Register; 2,693 comments rec'd; savings projected at \$57.1B over 10 years

2023: Proposed change to ENT, Audiology, and Respiratory systems discussed in nomination hearing of Joshua D. Jacobs 2024 Supple-

mental proposal to Respiratory system, savings projection changed to \$28.3B over 10 years 11. Digestive body system changed

2025: Administration freeze on regulatory changes

2026: At January hearing, the VA testified that they intend to finalize the changes to ENT/ Audiology and Respiratory systems in 2026; A spring review of the Unified Agenda keeps the changes on the agenda; The CBO identified savings at \$38 billion over 10 years. A final action date (04/2027) was added at a meeting this past July. 📞



Above, at the August meeting, after several former officers from the chapter tried for over half an hour and failed, Banquet Captain Angel from the Bear Valley Country Club stepped in and finally succeeded in figuring out and subsequently repairing Butch Fahnestock's name plate. Huzzah!



More Current Legislation

LTC Thomas Brown

FIVE IMPORTANT ITEMS AT THE STATE LEVEL

The following was recently received from Bill Nelson, the Legislative VP, MOAA California Council of Chapters:

Five things are moving in Sacramento right now that directly affect California veterans. I ask you to personally engage and pass to other chapter members and veteran advocates to do the same. We need as many people sending letters as we can get!

- SB 1407 — Military retirement pay exclusion
Would exclude military retirement pay from state income tax up to a cap. Currently in the Assembly, in committee process. California lost 24,237 military retirees between 2010 and 2022, and most states already exempt this income.
- AB 2022 (Gonzalez) — Disabled veteran property tax exemption. Currently in the Senate committee process.
- SB 296 (Archuleta) — Disabled veteran property tax exemption. Nearly identical to AB 2022 and sitting in the opposite house. Currently in the Assembly committee process.
- SB 888 — Service-connected disability payments and the household income test
Would exclude service-connected disability payments from the household-income definition used for the disabled veteran property tax exemption. Currently in the Assembly, in

committee process.

- On the November ballot is Proposition 1 (SB 417) — Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond Act of 2026. A \$11.25 billion general obligation bond: \$1.25 billion for CalVet home loans and \$10 billion for other affordable housing initiative. Funding for the CALVET home loan program was bundled into this proposition. Please read the initiative carefully and vote appropriately.

HOW TO ACT

Send a letter through Bear Flag Veterans at <https://bearflagveterans.com>. This will require you to sign up for an account, but the account is free if you volunteer to be part of the rapid response team. There is also a 7-day promo code: MYVH.

Prefer to write your own note instead of using the system? Contact your legislator directly at <https://calegislation.lc.ca.gov/Advocates>.

Background material on the bill can be found on Bear Flag Veterans. Browse the bills before you sign in. 🗳️



Above, Chapter President Michael Moticha thanks Laura Moraco for her great presentation at the August meeting



History Chronicles

Maj David E. Meyer

THE DURABLE AND LONG-LIVED T-38



The Northrop T-38 Talon is a two-seat, twin-engine, supersonic advanced jet training aircraft used by the U.S. Air Force and several other air forces. The advanced aircraft first flew in 1959 and was the first-ever supersonic trainer aircraft. The Talon has been used in the advanced phases of pilot training by the US Air Force since 1961.

The T-38 has served as an advanced jet trainer with the US Air Force for 54 years and is expected to serve for five or ten more years until it will be replaced by the new T-7A Redhawk advanced jet trainer built by Boeing. Thus the T-38 is finally nearing retirement from active USAF trainer service.

I flew the T-38A like the one pictured above in pilot training at Williams AFB, Arizona. That's the T-38A aircraft on display at the Lewis Center for Educational Research Luz Observatory on Thunderbird Road in Apple Valley. I went on active duty on April 30th,



1968 and graduated from pilot training in May 1969. The T-38 was the last of three types we flew. We called it the "White Rocket" or the "Great White Whale".

The T-38 is also flown by NASA and the US Navy. The T-38C pictured above is an upgraded and modified model that is in current use by the US Air Force. Modifications include more advanced engines, head-up display, GPS, glass cockpit with an inertial navigation system and a traffic collision avoidance system. 📡



Above are Mike and Diana Seixas with Miriam Munoz at the August meeting; below are Margaret McConnell, Rosanne Smith, and Mary Matsuda





Most Highly Decorated

CPT Byron Ward

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JAMES HOLLINGSWORTH

The fourth most highly decorated U.S. servicemember in history, Lieutenant General James Hollingsworth built a reputation for aggressive battlefield leadership during World War II and the Vietnam War. His military career spanned more than three decades, starting shortly after graduating from Texas A&M University in 1940. Hollingsworth served as an armor officer in General George S. Patton's Third Army, in command of tank units in combat across Europe, where he became known



for his boldness and willingness to lead from the front. He was wounded multiple times during the war and earned the Distinguished Service Cross and four Silver Stars, among other decorations. General Patton reportedly regarded him as one of the finest and bravest of his battalion commanders in the European campaign.

During the Vietnam War, Hollingsworth became famous for personally visiting front-line combat areas and directing operations under fire. His aggressive style earned admiration from many soldiers, but also attracted criticism from senior leaders who believed a gen-



eral officer should focus more on command responsibilities than direct combat action. During this period, Hollingsworth received two additional Distinguished Service Crosses, becoming one of the few soldiers ever awarded the decoration three times.

Following service as the senior general officer in Korea, Hollingsworth retired after thirty-six years of service. At the age of 91, he died on March 2, 2010, in San Antonio, Texas, and was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Today, James F. Hollingsworth is remembered as a fearless battlefield commander whose leadership left a lasting mark on the U.S. Army. A statue of Hollingsworth is located in College Station, Texas, on the campus of Texas A & M University.



Next month, a national hero, the highest-scoring American air ace of World War I, was the United States' Ace of Aces for more than 25 years and is the country's third most highly decorated serviceman. 🎖️



**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

