

THE HIGH DESERT BUGLE

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



VOLUME 39, ISSUE 6

JUNE 2026

CELEBRATE AMERICA AT 250 AT THE JUNE MOAA MEETING



The country is gearing up to celebrate America's 250th anniversary. Events across the country are scheduled to observe America's legacy in the coming weeks. From block parties to battle reenactments, the roster of events spotlights the nation's industries, history and communities.

Our guest speaker at the June chapter meeting will be 1st Lt Jack Barry, who will be inspiring us to celebrate America's upcoming 250th Anniversary in July, along with a brief history of our Declaration of Independence and the American Flag. Please join us and "get in the spirit" of the unique event.

The meeting will be held at the Bear Valley Country Club on Wednesday, June 24. The social hour will begin at 1100 hours; lunch will be served at noon. The cost is \$28 per person. PLEASE RSVP before Monday, 22 June to the chapter president, either by email at michaelwmoticha@verizon.net or by phone by calling 760-792-5004 📞





Mojave Valley Chapter



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LTC Michael W. Moticha, USAR (Ret.)

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CPT Byron Ward, USA

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Mission Statement

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

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

MOAA and its affiliated chapters are non-partisan.





President's Narrative

LTC Michael W. Moticha

CHAPTER AGAIN ACHIEVES HIGHEST ACCOLADES

At this time, I would say to all the Chapter Members who have joined since 2025, "Our chapter has won the Level of Excellence and the Colonel Marvin J. Harris Communication Awards from MOAA National for 2025 at the 5 Star level." To the Chapter Members in long standing, I would just say, "We have done it again." Yes, your Mojave Desert Chapter has continued its string of 5-Star Awards for another year. The chapter is currently on a 5-Star Award streak.

Since 2018 we have earned 5-Star Awards each year, for the Level of Excellence Competition. All LOE Awards have been largely based on the membership's participation in our local Community Projects, the recruiting of new members, and the efforts and time spent by the Chapter's Board of Directors. A few well written paragraphs by yours truly helped to tie up loose ends. As President, I want to once again, thank each member for their continued support.

Since beginning the submission of the Communications Award in 2021, all succeeding years



for our newsletter have been 5-Star Awards. During 2025, 1st Lt Jack Barry was the editor of the Bugle. His knowledge and dedication as editor were instrumental in the Chapter receiving the 5-Star Communication Award. We have received the actual Award Certificates, (pictured), and are waiting on the delivery of the pins for our Chapter Banners.

A STAMP VACATION/HOLIDAY



As many of you know, I am an avid stamp collector, known as a philatelist. I began as a 6-year-old, with my neighbor playmate's father taking us to a one-day stamp show and I was hooked. I love this hobby.

This year, I left town on 21 May with a retired high school mathematics teacher and stamp club member, to attend the Boston 2026 World Exposition held at Boston's Convention and Exhibition Center. Every 10 years, the United



President's Narrative

Continued



States is responsible for hosting this World event. I attended my first World Exposition in 1996 in San Francisco, then 2006 in Washington, DC. I missed 2016 in New York, but I am "back in the game" with 2026 in Boston. I eventually want to attend a World Exposition in London, Rome or Tokyo.

The event lasted 8 days, 23-30 May and I returned home on 1 June. I had a wonderful time. If you can imagine compacting your most enjoyable hobby, 30 thousand attendees from around the world who are as passionate about the hobby as you, beautiful weather for a trip to



the Quincy Market in Boston for lobster rolls and clam chowder, and just relaxing, then you will understand my thrill of being gone.

During the show I spent more money than I had planned, but I came home with some nice items. In collecting Presidential Stamps I also look for and purchase ephemera items for my collection. I found a beautiful 10 X 7 inch "Tin Plate" photograph of Abraham Lincoln taken in 1864. I asked the price and I was blown away by the \$15,000 price tag. I went back to my inexpensive stamps.

I spoke with and purchased stamps from International Postal Administrations from the Faroe Islands, Fiji, Germany, Greenland, Guernsey, London, Romania, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, and the United Nations. I also discussed philately with collectors from China, England, India, Japan, and of course, the United States.

During the show the US Postal Service issue six new stamps, (above photo), and held a special rededication ceremony for the previously issued Figures of the American Revolution. The Mr.

President's Narrative

Continued

Rogers stamp, originally issued in 2018, won a Postal Service challenge for the general public to choose a favorite stamp, so a new stamp, with a different date, plus an additional souvenir sheet were issued.

Eight foreign countries issued 11 new stamps in celebration of the 250th Anniversary of the United States. I attended all new issue ceremonies, U. S. and foreign, and purchased the new stamps. I spent time sitting for ceremonies, standing in line to get signatures from the individuals participating in the ceremony, and then standing in two additional lines to purchase stamps and get cancels. With a few hundred collectors wanting the same thing, it was very time consuming

I have been informed that all went well within the Chapter in my absence, including the luncheon with Meera, the Memorial Day service with Dolores, and the MOAA National Western Regional Meeting with Meera and Ron. Thank you all for filling in while I was enjoying my trip. I will be staying at home for a while to make up for the good time I had and the money I spent. 🎧

**CONTINUING THE EFFORT TO
PROMOTE OUR CHAPTER
PROVIDING 53 YEARS OF SERVICE
IN THE HIGH DESERT**



Treasurer's Report

Maj Ronald Matsuda



We began the month of May 2026 with \$6,527.75 in the chapter's accounts. We had revenues of \$1,044.30 and expenses of \$638.00, resulting in a balance of \$6,934.05.

A total of \$428.00 was donated to the Youth Awards fund. As a result, we now have \$3,802.81 in our Youth Awards fund, \$133.00 in the Barstow Veterans Home fund, and none in the other three funds.

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

When sending dues payments, please send your check, made out to TMD-CMOAA, to The Mojave Desert Chapter -MOAA, PO Box 785, Victorville, CA 92393-0785.

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 renewal form, please use the memo line on your check to designate Dues, Youth Awards, or any of the other charities that we support. 🎧



Memorial Day

MAJ Meera Maheswaran

HOLIDAY CEREMONIES

Memorial Day was celebrated throughout the High Desert on May 25, 2026. The photos on this page highlight the events.

One ceremony was held at the new Captain Joseph McConnell Jr. USAF Park off of Pahute Rd in Apple Valley. All the speakers spoke on behalf of and in remembrance of the brave military service members who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of the United States of America.

The Keynote Speakers were Scott Nassif, AV Mayor; Corrine Mora, rep for Congressman Jay Obernolte; Jonathan Dvareckas of the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 92; Chris Harvey, VFW Post 2924; and Therese Moore, Commander of American Legion Post 256 which she has lobbied to be renamed the Captain Joseph McConnell Post. 🎤





Veterans' Benefits

MAJ Jim Skirvin

AIR TRAVEL FOR VETERANS

Space available air travel is available if the following requirements are met:

A discharge other than dishonorable plus minimum continuous duty requirements (usually 24 months).

The VA assigns Veterans to one of 8 priority groups. Your placement dictates your enrollment priority and potential copays.

Group 1

Service connected disability rated 50% or more.

Group 2

50% Service-connected disability rated 30% to 40%.

Group 3

Former POWs, heart recipients, discharged for a service-connected disability, or rated 10% or 20%.

Group 4

Non-service connected Veterans and those rated 0% service connected who meet low income thresholds or qualify for Medicaid.

Group 5

For Veterans who have no service-connected disabilities but have limited income and those who may be receiving Medicaid.

Group 6

Combat Veterans (within 10 years of discharge) and Veterans exposed to toxins or hazardous (e.g. Agent Orange).

Groups 7 and 8

Non-Service percenters with higher incomes who agree to pay specific copays. 📢



Above & below: In May, Majors Ron Matsuda and Meera Maheswaran attended the MOAA National Western Regional Meeting in San Diego, where they attended several seminars and formally received the Level of Excellence and the Colonel Marvin J. Harris Communication Awards earned by the High Desert Chapter.





Newsletter Notes

CPT Byron Ward

AI: BE SKEPTICAL

There are aspects of the Brave New World of Artificial Intelligence (AI) that are good, and there are aspects that are bad. This is a story about bad AI.



**The Day a Japanese Zero Landed
on an American Carrier** :

Recently, I was watching YouTube and I came across the above, a 21-minute video that went into great detail about the day a damaged Japanese Zero made an emergency landing on the USS *Bogue*, an American aircraft carrier. This took place on April 18, 1945 in the Pacific Ocean east of Okinawa. After landing, the pilot, Ensign Tadayoshi Koga, was captured, and his plane provided valuable intelligence to the Allies. The entire video is obviously AI-generated, with an AI narrator and accompanying photos that only sometimes match the narration, but I was generally accepting of the details presented about this remarkable incident (that I had never heard of) and I took to the Internet in search of more information.

Yes, a Japanese Mitsubishi A6M Zero successfully landed on an American aircraft carrier during World War II, an extremely rare and historically significant event.

On Google, I searched “Japanese Zero lands on American aircraft carrier,” and an AI-generated Copilot summary of the incident verified that, yes, the landing occurred, and backed up the statement with six references. The problem was that all six of the references were the YouTube video that I had just watched, and I could not find anything else online about this remarkable “historically significant event,” including in the extensive records of the USS *Bogue*.

I finally solved the mystery by doing a search for the Japanese pilot’s name, and discovered that Tadayoshi Koga was indeed a Zero pilot, but his plane crashed on an island in Alaska in 1942, and Koga died upon landing. About a month later, the crashed but largely intact plane was found by an American patrol, and the wreck did provide good intelligence about the Zero’s capabilities to the Allied forces..

So the video is FAKE. No carrier landing; no captured pilot. Somebody asked the AI Matrix something like, “Make me a video where a Japanese plane lands on an American aircraft carrier during WWII,” and got what he asked for, a fictional story cobbled together from marginally related facts found on the Internet.

The main problem with this scenario is not that someone posted a FAKE AI-generated tall tale (although I think that fictional videos should be clearly identified as such). The main problem is that we now seem to have search engines with AI that will, at least on occasion, assert that falsehoods are truth based on AI-generated fiction. That’s a bunch of AI lies generating more AI lies, and I believe that the problem is going to snowball, as AI keeps drawing on an ever-increasing amount of fake AI-generated material.

It is more important than ever to question anything suspicious, and to not automatically accept *anything* that AI asserts as the truth. 🔍



Chaplain's Corner

Phyllis Skirvin, PhD

SEMIQUINCENTENNIAL OF THE UNITED STATES

Our Nation is approaching its 250th celebration for the signing of the Declaration of Independence. As we honor our values and reflect on our nation's sacrifices, we must give honor to each and every soldier that has served our country. Reflecting on the journey all Americans have taken and share it with our neighbors and children. The chaos in this world can and will get us sidetracked from the accomplishments of our shoulders in the field. The country's pledge of allegiance clearly states "One Nation under God" which means we must be of one mind following God's good instructions about God's sovereignty.



One nation under God was not added until Congress officially adopted the phrase in 1942 at the start of World War II. In 1954, under the direction of President Eisenhower, the words "Under God" was then added to the Pledge of Allegiance due to the growing fear of communism in the

United States during the Cold War. President Eisenhower wanted to proclaim trust in God against destructive, and godless forces. We must continue to pray for our nation and God's Sovereignty over our United States and the world! Our prayers make a difference, in our lives, and the lives of others! 📣



Above & below: Photos from the May meeting, in which CPT Byron Ward made a hybrid presentation, covering both museum warships found throughout the United States, and the hobby of Big Gun Radio Controlled Model Warship Combat,





Most Highly Decorated

CPT Byron Ward

VADM JOHN D. BULKELEY



John D. Bulkeley, the second most famous PT boat skipper in history (after John F. Kennedy), and 7th most highly decorated U.S. servicemember, was born in New York City in 1911 and graduated from the U. S. Naval Academy in 1933.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked, Lieutenant Bulkeley was the commander of six PT boats based in the Philippines. Almost immediately, the small vessels were in the thick of the action. In four months, from December 7, 1941, to April 1942, Bulkeley compiled an unparalleled record while supporting the beleaguered U.S. troops on Bataan and Corregidor.

In January 1942, Bulkeley's PT boats made successful attacks on several Japanese ships despite coming under heavy fire, earning him an Army Distinguished Service Cross. Then,

in a separate incident, he was awarded a Navy Cross for sinking a 5,000-ton merchantman. In April, he earned an unprecedented (for a Navy man) second DSC for destroying an enemy cruiser.

Bulkeley's most famous action took place in March 1942 after President Franklin Roosevelt ordered General Douglas MacArthur to evacuate to Australia to assume command of the Southwest Pacific Theater. Dodging Japanese patrol boats and aircraft for 600 miles, Bulkeley's boats brought MacArthur through, making possible the General's statement, "I shall return," and earning all of the PT boats' crewmembers the Silver Star.

For his success in attacks against the Japanese, Bulkeley was awarded the Medal of Honor and became a national hero, being featured in motivational posters and newspaper articles. Slightly fictionalized, his exploits were featured in *They Were Expendable*, a John Ford-directed feature film that was released in the last year of the war.

After his Pacific service, Bulkeley was assigned to the European Theater, where he earned a Legion of Merit (with combat 'V') for outstanding support of the Normandy landings in June 1944. Just a few months later, while supporting the invasion of southern France, he won the Battle of La Ciotat by charging two German gunboats, sinking them both and adding a second Silver Star to his ribbon rack.

Following World War II, Bulkeley served another 43 years in the Navy, reaching the rank of vice admiral, and was awarded the Navy Distinguished Service Medal for each of three positions of great responsibility. He died at his home in Maryland at the age of 84 and is buried at Arlington National Cemetery.



Next month's article will feature #6, the most highly decorated Navy man in U.S. history, who is also the only servicemember in the top 20 who was killed in combat. 🎖️



Community Projects

Project Leaders

YOUTH FUND FOR JROTC, YOUNG MARINES, CALIFORNIA CADET CORPS

The medals for the winners of the Chapter's Annual Youth Awards have been received and are being distributed to the recipients. Again, congratulations to the students and thanks go to all those who continue to make this Community Project a success.

APPLE VALLEY & VICTOR VALLEY LEGACY MUSEUMS

Marcy Taylor, ever active in the community, was recently seen at the Victorville First Assembly of God, where the Greater High Desert Chamber of Commerce was holding its premier speaking event, Ignite High Desert. She is shown below with Chapter President Michael Motiicha.



PARADE OF PIANOS

Apple Valley based Parade of Pianos (POP) is in need of financial assistance. Due to lack of funds, the organization is putting on hold its acceptance of piano donations because of the expenses involved in transporting and piano tuning.

Director Kaye Walraven has announced that a review of funds will take place after the fall concert, scheduled to be held in November. Donations may be sent to P.O. Box 2028, Apple Valley, CA 92307.



BARSTOW VETERANS HOME

LTC Michael Moticha

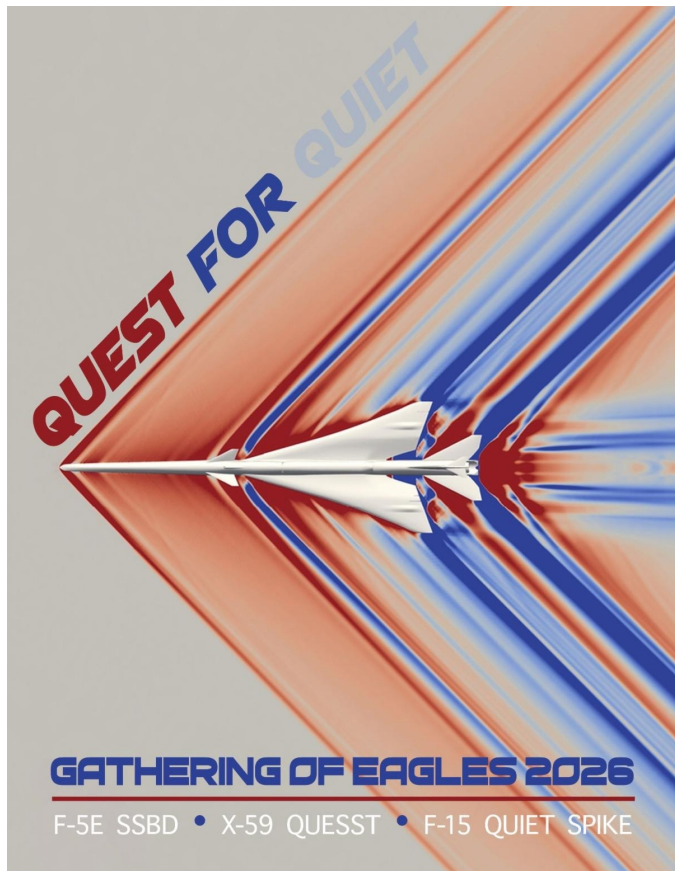
On 18 May, as previously announce in the May Bugle, the Veterans Home held a Portrait Unveiling, honoring the service and sacrifice of 15 of the resident Vietnam Veterans. Additional portraits of resident Vietnam Veterans will be completed in the future. This event was followed by a 30th Birthday Celebration for the Veterans Home of California, Barstow.

Each resident Vietnam Veteran had a large portrait, with a biography, completed by an established photographer from the San Diego area. The portraits will hang in the lobby area of the home. Representatives of the local Congressional and Legislative Offices were on hand during the ceremony, to present each Vietnam Veteran with Certificates for their service. After the presentations, I was able to walk around and talk with some of the Veterans about their tours of duty in Vietnam. I was disappointed that no one else from the Chapter attended the event. In previous years, portraits were completed and hung in the lobby for WWII and Korean resident Veterans.

Community Projects

Continued

EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE FLIGHT MUSEUM



In October of 1947, Chuck Yeager, flying a Bell X-1, announced the age of supersonic flight with an actual boom - the so-called "sonic boom." As the US military continued to develop supersonic aircraft, Sonic Booms were no longer heard only over the special test ranges. Air Force bases and civilians around the country started to deal with occasional broken windows and frayed nerves. Complaints and lawsuits ensued and eventually the FAA just said "No" banning all supersonic over-land flights in 1973.

This led to the "Quest for Quiet." The 2026 Gathering of Eagles. The evening program includes dinner, silent auction, an aerospace art exhibit, presentation of the Fullerton & Knight

scholarships, and a panel discussion with the test pilots, flight test engineers and program managers who spearheaded groundbreaking research in the quest to reduce the impact of sonic booms.

event will explore three NASA programs focused on reducing the impact of the sonic boom. Key pilots and engineers will discuss the challenges and successes with behind the scenes stories and insights.

This event will be held on Saturday, November 7. At the Hellenic Center, 434044 30th Street W., in Lancaster. Reception begins at 5 pm with the dinner and awards program starting at 6:45 pm. The event's master of ceremonies will be "Evil" Bill Gray. Awardees will include test pilots Nils Larsom, Roy Martib, and Jim Smolka. Tickets to the event are \$125 each.

Tickets

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. 🙏



**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

