

David Ciesielski

President's Message



This year I logged 66,344 miles behind the wheel. That is a lot of Arizona highway, a lot of pre-dawn starts, and a lot of time thinking about the people we serve. Those miles are a reminder that service does not end when the uniform comes off. The same is true for MOAA.

MOAA National's flagship 2026 priority remains passage of the Major Richard Star Act (H.R. 2102 / S. 1032). Combat-injured veterans who were medically retired before 20 years of service still lose a dollar of earned military retired pay for every dollar of VA disability compensation. That "wounded veteran tax" is wrong. The bill already has overwhelming bipartisan support — nearly three-quarters of Congress has signed on — but it still must become law before this Congress adjourns.

Two companion priorities deserve our voice as well: the Shutdown Fairness Act that protects pay for currently serving members, including drill-status Guard and Reserve, during a funding lapse, and the GUARD VA Benefits Act that restores penalties on unaccredited "claim sharks" who prey on veterans. Please take two minutes this month and send a message through MOAA's Legislative Action Center at moaa.org. Constituent mail still moves votes.

Closer to home, the Luke Chapter Community Fund puts dollars directly into college scholarships for military-connected students and emergency grants that keep West Valley veterans housed and families fed. Recurring monthly gifts — even modest ones — give us the predictability to say "yes" when a veteran is days from eviction or a student needs tuition help. Every gift is tax-deductible through our 501(c)(3). Visit luke-fund.org to set up a monthly donation. Select "Assistance to Veterans" or "College Scholarships," or leave it unrestricted. Steady streams of donations serve as the engine for our veteran services, education/scholarship program, and our surviving spouses. Give what you can, I just did!

Board Meetings are held the first Thursday of each month, September through May, and **all members are welcome.**

Next Board Meeting moved to October 2 at 1 p.m. via ZOOM.

Non-board members, contact Mike Kramer for a ZOOM invite.

2026-27 Calendar

17 OCT 26

Luncheon at Grandview Terrace
 Program: Winnie Fritz

21 NOV 26

Luncheon at PebbleCreek
 Program: William "Bill" Simon

? DEC 26

To be determined

16 JAN 27

Luncheon at PebbleCreek

? FEB 27

To be determined

20 MAR 27

Luncheon at PebbleCreek

10 APR 27

Dinner at PebbleCreek

? MAY 27

To be determined



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Officers

President	BG David Ciesielski, ANG (Ret.)	703-447-0307
1st Vice President	Vacant	
2nd VP/Surviving Spouses Program	Linda Wolverton (SS)	623-505-7244
Secretary/Compliance Director	Col Mike Kramer, USAFR (Ret.)	720-563-9953
Treasurer	Jack Coate	916-960-6820

Directors/Committee Chairs

Chaplain	Rev Maj Fannalou Guggisberg, USAF (Ret.)	623-975-2362
Compliance/Veteran Support	Col Mike Kramer, USAFR (Ret.)	720-563-9953
Immediate Past President	Maj Gene Wikle, USAF (Ret.)	480-352-4575
JROTC Liaison	CAPT Buz Isban, USN (Ret.)	623-512-0765
Leadership Succession/Transition	Col Stephen Pohl, USAFR (Ret.)	425-290-2471
Legislative Liaison	Lt Gen John Regni, USAF (Ret.)	623-935-6433
Luke AFB Liaison	COL Beth Johnson, USA (Ret.)	703-405-0347
Membership	1LT Ben Hayes, USA (Fmr.)	323-791-2755
NewsGram Editor	Susan McDonell	414-550-9377
President, AZ Council of Chapters	CAPT Charles Vaughn, USN (Ret.)	505-553-4364
President, Community Fund Board	MG Shanna Woyak, ANG (Ret.)	623-640-1705
Programs & Communications	RDML Craig Quigley, USN (Ret.)	757-419-1164
Reservations, Meals	Jack Coate	916-960-6820
Reservations, Venues	RDML Craig Quigley, USN (Ret.)	757-419-1164
Scholarship Director	BG David Ciesielski, ANG (Ret.)	703-447-0307
Webmaster	LtCol Bob Nelson, USMC (Ret.)	719-322-4130
Directors at Large:	Maj Robert Kosmal, USAR (Ret.)	623-850-1219
	Lt Col Scott Phillips, USAF (Ret.)	623-340-9158
	COL Jerry Wojtas, USA (Ret.)	623-544-4477
	Mrs. Pam Wojtas	623-544-4477

COMMUNITY FUND OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President	MG Shanna Woyak, ANG (Ret.)	623-640-1705
Secretary (Acting)	Col Mike Kramer, USAFR (Ret.)	720-563-9953
Treasurer/Director	Jack Coate	916-960-6820
Compliance/Director	Col Mike Kramer, USAFR (Ret.)	720-563-9953
Scholarship/Director	BG David Ciesielski, ANG (Ret.)	703-447-0307
Chaplain	Rev Maj Fannalou Guggisberg, USAF (Ret.)	623-975-2362
Directors:	Maj Mike Byers, USAF (Ret.)	623-606-5288
	Lt Col Wyck Furcron, USAF (Ret.)	703-615-0973
	COL Beth Johnson, USA (Ret.)	703-405-0347
	Maj Robert Kosmal, USAR (Ret)	623-850-1219
	Mrs. Val Kuhn	623-556-1295
	CWO2 Ron Walk, USA (Fmr.)	856-418-8325
	Mrs. Pam Wojtas	623-544-4477

Mike Kramer Board Briefs

Chapter members are invited to join the Boards of Directors for Luke Chapter and Luke Chapter Community Fund. Please contact Steve Pohl at 425.290.2471 or Mike Kramer at 720.563.9953.

Luke Chapter Board Meeting September 3, 2026

Mike Kramer presided as chair. Mike warmly welcomed our new **NewsGram editor** Susan McDonell. She succeeds Scott Phillips, who stays on the Board as a director-at-large. Susan has extensive editorial experience. Welcome aboard, Susan. Scott, thank you for your long service!

Treasurer Jack Coate reported the current **asset balance** of Luke Chapter on August 31, 2026, is \$50,224. We have about \$25,000 in unrestricted equity.

Lt Gen John Regni submitted extensive reports to the Board on potential **Congressional and Arizona legislation** via email in July and August. Recently, Congress approved national appropriations through a continuing resolution until early December, bridging over mid-term elections in November.

The Board approved the draft **tax return**, IRS Form 990, for FY 2025-26. Mike Kramer will sign and file the return electronically.

Fifteen **college scholarships** totaling \$35,000 were awarded by Luke Chapter Community Fund at the annual awards ceremony in May. Grants ranged from \$2,000 to \$5,000. The first \$5,000 Captain Richard Miller Scholarship of was given to student Chloe Shannon.

The National MOAA Community Foundation **awarded the Luke Chapter a \$5,000 grant** to support our program of emergency financial assistance to veterans for housing, utilities, food, etc., and for the Turkeys-for-Troops food drive at Luke AFB.

RDML Craig Quigley, Director of Communications, Programs and Venues, discussed this year's plans for **luncheon and dinner meetings**. The first luncheon event will be in the Grand Room at Grandview Terrace, on October 17, 2026. Our speaker is Air Force Nurse, BG Winnie Fritz (Ret.).

Ben Hayes reported that Luke Chapter currently has **138 members**, including 105 regular members, 28 surviving spouses, and five "honorary" members; an increase of four members since spring. Ben leads our recruitment efforts will target 1,200 national MOAA members in the West Valley by emailing them copies of the *NewsGram* to spark interest in joining the Luke Chapter.

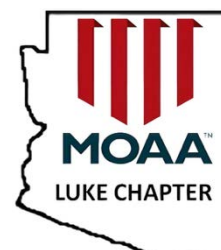
Linda Wolverton, SS Liaison, reported the activities of the **Surviving Spouses** in a written 'self-audit' and report to the Board. Linda is planning fun meetings and one field trip to an area of interest this year with the surviving spouse members.

Webmaster Bob Nelson asked the Board to update their areas of responsibility on the **Luke Chapter website** with photos and text.

Rev. Fannalou Guggisberg announced plans for the annual **canned food drive** to benefit active-duty members in need at Luke AFB in the Turkeys-for-Troops program.

Beth Johnson, Director of Retiree Activities Office at Luke AFB, reported on the details of the upcoming **Retiree Appreciation Day** on Saturday, September 26, 2026, at Luke AFB.

**Chapter dues for
FY 2026-27 are due.**
Membership Info: Pages 14-15



The next Luke Chapter Board meeting will be held on Friday, October 2, 2026, at 1 p.m. via Zoom. Contact Mike Kramer at 720.563.9953 if you wish to attend. All members are welcome!

VISIT:
www.moaa.org/takeaction

Make your voice heard by engaging with your lawmakers on our top legislative priorities.

Luke Chapter 2026 Scholarship Fund

We are proud to announce the 15 scholarship recipients awarded a total of \$35,000 by the Luke Chapter. These outstanding young men and women embody the spirit of “Never Stop Serving.” Selected for their academic excellence, leadership, community involvement, and connection to military values, these students represent a wide range of career paths yet share a common commitment to making a positive difference.

From future teachers and nurses to accountants, journalists, engineers, and military officers, each recipient has already demonstrated the same dedication that defines our military community. Many come from military families; others have chosen service through volunteering, mission work, or future commissioning. Their stories remind us that the impact of military service extends far beyond active duty, and it inspires the next generation to lead, serve, and lift others.



15 Bright Stars Continuing the Tradition of Service



Chloe Shannon

1st Award, \$5,000

Inaugural Captain Miller Scholarship

Morehead State University

A sophomore in MSU's Accelerated Program, Chloe is also a NCAA Division I rifle athlete and second-year Army ROTC cadet. Chloe plans to commission as an Army officer and earn her doctorate in physical therapy so she can serve service members directly. A runner, training for her first marathon, and outdoors enthusiast, she credits her Catholic faith, sports, and ROTC for teaching her perseverance, discipline, and the desire to help others find joy in physical activity.



Andrew Alveison

1st Award, \$2,000

Brigham Young University

After a two-year LDS mission in Detroit, Andrew returned with a deepened commitment to service and hard work. He is pursuing an accounting degree to help individuals and small businesses manage finances wisely and avoid unnecessary debt. An Eagle Scout with extensive volunteer work (homeless shelters, food pantries, foster care projects), Andrew plans to open his own firm and combine professional skills with the values of service he learned on his mission.



Thomas Coutchie

4th Award, \$2,000

University of Iowa

With a 3.79 GPA and perpetual dean's list honors, Thomas balances rigorous academics with leadership in the Newman Catholic Center (bible-study and discipleship groups) and Tippie Students for Service. A summer study abroad in Italy and sports camp counselor experience sharpened his leadership skills. Thomas is targeting sports organization internships while preparing for a career that merges business analytics & information systems with his love of athletics, sports & recreation management.



Nathan Cowan

1st Award, \$2,000

Clark Community College

After earning a pre-trades certificate, Nathan is building a strong academic foundation while exploring hands-on careers. Four seasons marching with a world-class drum corps taught him discipline, teamwork, perseverance, and the ability to accept feedback and to support others under intense pressure. Nathan is motivated to develop specialized skills that allow him to contribute meaningful work to his community.



Niles Cowan

1st Award, \$2,000

Washington State University

Niles discovered his passion for storytelling as chief anchor and director of his high school news program, CRTV. He has competed at state and national levels in Mock Trial, Ethics Bowl, and SkillsUSA, and earned his Eagle Scout rank by leading a dog park improvement project. Niles is eager to study broadcasting to bring clarity, accuracy, and integrity to live news coverage that serves communities.

Scholarship Awards Continued



Brooklyn Gregson
2nd Award, \$2,000

Brigham Young University

Brooklyn transferred from Glendale Community College to BYU in Utah and changed her major to sociology to take a more hands-on approach to helping others. She is passionate about working with non-profits that support people facing hardships they cannot overcome alone. Through years of service projects, Brooklyn has learned that “the world could use a little more kindness.”



JaeAnn Hines
3rd Award, \$2,000

Trinity University

An avid mystery lover who enjoys “tracing the clues,” JaeAnn is majoring in accounting and minoring in creative writing. She has already studied abroad in Ireland and is currently in London. Her ultimate goal is to become a public accountant who helps low-income families escape debt traps through financial literacy and healthy money management habits.



Brady Hix
2nd Award, \$2,000

Linn-Benton Community College

A two-time varsity basketball captain and golf captain, Brady is also a youth basketball camps coach and takes part in community cemetery cleanups. After a season-ending injury in his first collegiate season, Brady strengthened his mental resilience and time management skills while maintaining a 3.69 GPA. Brady plans to combine his business degree with his athletic experience in a sports industry career.



Kaia Hix
1st Award, \$3,000

University of Utah

A varsity athlete in three sports—soccer, lacrosse, and basketball—and Spirit Commissioner, Kaia shadowed a nurse in the emergency department and knew instantly that nursing was her calling. She values quick thinking under pressure, empathy, and patient-centered care. Her grandfather’s service as an Army Cobra gunship pilot in Vietnam continues to inspire her commitment to service and leadership.



Kailey Morgan
2nd Award, \$2,000

Grand Canyon University

On track to graduate in three years, Kailey is passionate about being the best elementary teacher she can be. She served on her high school leadership team, at a foster care camp, on mission trips, and in her church welcoming ministry. A multi-sport athlete, varsity volleyball and track, and former nanny, Kailey is driven to make every student feel valued and loved.



Kaitlyn Shannon
1st Award, \$2,000

Northeastern State University

Kaitlyn has dreamed of teaching since age 10. Her military family—dad, a retired USMC officer and JROTC instructor; aunt, teacher for 20 years; and grandmother, a daycare provider—instilled in her the desire to be an “anchor” for young students. She will begin full-time studies this fall, determined to help children see themselves as capable and develop a lifelong love of learning.



Megan Swenson
2nd Award, \$3,000

Grand Canyon University

Megan’s love for children developed through her church ministry with children, recreational gymnastics coaching, and nannying, which led her to nursing. She is completing prerequisites and will enter the nursing program in fall 2027. Like her brother Troy, she is deeply grateful for her military family’s service and is determined to become a compassionate caregiver for the most vulnerable.



Troy Swenson
4th Award, \$2,000

Grand Canyon University

A powerlifting competitor who increased his total strength by almost 50% and earned recognition on the dean’s list, Troy is applying for wealth management internships on the path to becoming a certified financial planner. Troy credits his military family, Navy father and uncle and Vietnam era grandfathers, for his appreciation of service and responsibility.

Scholarship Awards Continued



Emma Swoboda
2nd Award, \$2,000

University of Nebraska Omaha

A student athlete on the winter guard team and former high school color guard coach, she brings teamwork, discipline, and positivity to every setting. Emma is excited to study biology with a pre-health pathway to radiologic technology, specializing in X-ray and eventually sonography, forming meaningful connections with patients during diagnostic procedures.



Xitlali Vazquez
4th Award, \$2,000

United States Air Force Academy

A third-year cadet, Xitlali declared English as her major to sharpen the communication skills she knows are essential for leadership. She is also pursuing a Spanish minor and was selected for a cultural leadership summer program in Chile. Her ultimate goal is still unchanged to become a fighter pilot in the USAF and serve as an effective officer who can brief missions, lead teams, and build trust.

These young leaders are not only pursuing their dream; they are already serving. Whether comforting young children, helping families escape debt, broadcasting accurate news, or preparing to care for wounded warriors, our recipients carry forward the values of integrity, resilience, and compassion that our chapter holds dear.

Congratulations to every 2026 scholarship winner!

Your futures are bright, and the Luke Chapter is honored to walk alongside you.

We thank our generous donors and members. Your investment is changing lives and strengthening communities. Together, we prove that the spirit of service never stops.

Retiree Appreciation Day



Surviving Spouses will be represented by SS Liaison Linda Wolverton with help from Kathy Upchurch at the Gold Star table. Information about the Luke Chapter MOAA and its Surviving Spouses group will be available to all who stop by. **See You There!**

Fry's Community Awards



Your participation provides modest donations that accumulate into our IRS 501(c)(3), Luke Chapter MOAA Community Fund, Inc. (EIN: 47-4053737).

The quarterly payment made to us by Fry's is free money from their profit at no cost or charge to you in any way.

The donations support our Community Fund: scholarships, veterans' relief, and JROTC programs. Please shop and gas up at Fry's/ Meyer/Kroger stores.

TO ENROLL:

1. Go to www.frysfood.com/account/
2. Enter your user ID and password to open your account; OR follow the instructions to setup an account if you don't have one, then continue;
3. On the "My Account" page, scroll to the box called "Community Rewards" and enter "Luke Chapter MOAA Scholarship Fund" OR our Organization Number TK860;
4. Press "Enroll." Congratulations, you're done!



LEGISLATION UPDATE

GRACE (Granting Rollover Access and Contribution Extensions) for Military Survivors Act, (H.R. 9489)

When we lose our military spouse, we are dealing with family, household obligations, burial preparations, and grief. The current timeline for post-death monetary contributions to Roth IRAs and Educational Savings Account is one year for a final decision. It is simply too short. The GRACE bipartisan bill introduced June 25, 2026, would extend the time period from one year to three years for surviving spouses to contribute money received through military death gratuities and SGLI payments to Roth IRAs and Coverdell Education Savings Accounts without penalty.

**Introduced into congress
June 25, 2026**

The Love Lives On Act of 2025 (H.R. 1004 | S. 410)

This bill extends entitlement for various benefit programs and services for surviving spouses of deceased members of the Armed Forces or veterans. The bill provides that the remarriage of a surviving spouse must not bar the furnishing of dependency and indemnity compensation or special pension benefits to such spouse. Additionally, the Department of Defense may not terminate the payment of an annuity for a surviving spouse under the Survivor Benefit Plan solely because the surviving spouse remarries. The bill also expands the definition of a

dependent under TRICARE to include a remarried widow or widower whose subsequent marriage has ended due to death, divorce, or annulment.

**Forwarded by subcommittee to full Veterans Affairs Committee
March 26, 2026**

The Veteran Caregiver Reeducation, Reemployment, and Retirement Act (S. 879)

Focuses on caregivers who leave the workforce to support wounded, ill, or injured servicemembers, helping to protect their long-term financial and retirement security. The bill was referred February 20, 2026, to a subcommittee on Veterans Affairs who subsequently folded two bills speaking to the issue it into one, H.R.2148. The more inclusive bill now would expand support for family caregivers of veterans by providing several key benefits/protections. The legislation extends medical care coverage for designated primary caregivers for 180 days after their designation is removed unless they are dismissed from the program for misconduct. The bill offers comprehensive employment assistance, including reimbursement of up to \$1,000 for certification or relicensure fees, free access to professional training modules, and connections to various employment support programs through the Departments of Defense, Labor, and Veterans Affairs. Additionally, the bill mandates expanded services for caregivers, such as retirement planning support, workforce transition assistance, and bereavement counseling.

The legislation also requires two important studies: one exploring the feasibility of a "returnship" program to help caregivers re-enter the workforce, and a second investigating potential employment opportunities for former caregivers within the Department of Veterans Affairs. Furthermore, the bill directs the Comptroller General to assess the VA's efforts.

**H.R 2148 – 119th Congress is in full Veterans Affairs Committee
July 30, 2026**

NOTICE OF POLICY CHANGE Luke Commissary and Exchange

Stella Reyes, LCDR Navy RAO

Commissary and Exchange have changed their intentions for the proposed shopping bag charge. There will be NO CHARGE for single-use bags.

YOU AND I

Surviving Spouses Luncheon Meeting

(second Tuesday of the month)

New fiscal year 2026-2027

The first meeting is on

October 13, 2026, at 11 a.m.

Haymaker Restaurant

8706 W. Thunderbird Rd, Peoria
(One block west of the 101 on the northside of Thunderbird.)

We are open to meeting home-bound surviving spouses on their home turf. If you would like company, please contact Linda Wolverton at 623-505-7244. We enjoy getting to know everyone.

SS Leaders: we are here to listen, discuss, and provide answers and/or direction should you need it.

Linda Wolverton 623-505-7244 ltcolphillip@gmail.com

Pat Staflin 623-826-2669 patstaflin@gmail.com

Rosemary Eaton 303-521-7956 eatonrosemary@gmail.com

Marilu Trainor 303-907-6627 marilu01@msn.com

WASHINGTON DC

COLA Watch

The July 2026 Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) was released August 12, at 327 which is 3.1% above the COLA baseline. Inflation fell back a bit so the predicted COLA for 2027 may be a tad lower than earlier thought. AARP predicts 3.5%; MOAA predicts 3.6%. We have two more months of data to add to the July number before we will know for sure. The August data will be released September 11.



Take Care of America's Veterans Act (TCAVA)

A once-in-a-generation bill that has upwards of 60 items for veterans and families is stalled in Congress. Despite working towards passage before the recess, the bill got wrapped up in other gridlock items. Some members of The Military Coalition—rather than accept some compromise to attain the larger good—balked at tinnitus and sleep apnea being removed from VA disability rating computations, as well as the "pay-go" costs of components like the Richard Star Act. Expect a debate in both chambers once they reconvene (House meets August 31 then breaks again for Labor Day; Senate meets September 14). Even if it passes, the President maintains he will not sign any bill into law until the Save America Act is on his desk.

Defense Bills

Since both chambers will not be in full session until September 14, that leaves a mere 13 working days before the end of the fiscal year. We will need passage of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and the Defense Appropriations Act by then, or yet another Continuing Resolution (CR), hopefully, through January when the new Congress is sworn in. On the NDAA, the House did its work before recess; the Senate failed. If the Senate passes its version, then a conference committee will form to build the final bill—not much time left. On the Defense Appropriations Act, the House Committee did its work, but no floor vote has been held; the Senate version has not cleared the committee.

Government Shutdown

If no Appropriations by midnight September 30, and if no CR, then another shutdown. The House passed a bill for continuing funding through December 4, the Senate December 11. They will have to conference to decide which works. Ideally, we will have Bills passed in September—though more likely not. However, a preferred Continuing Resolution would be through January and past the holidays so the air traffic controllers and TSA agents, and others are fully compensated for work over the Holidays.



Government Debt

We crossed a new milestone with the federal debt now over \$40 trillion. The interest payment on carrying that degree of debt is \$1.2 trillion a year, or \$3.2 billion every day. That equates to 15% of the entire federal budget serving the interest on the debt, with no output or services for those monies. When we look at the 'discretionary' portion of the federal budget—Defense, Education, Homeland Security, Transportation, and other federal agencies—interest now amounts to 52% of all discretionary spending.

LOCAL TO ARIZONA

Property Tax Exclusions

No new updates on the 2027 property tax exemption for 100% disabled veterans and those less than 100%. The Maricopa County Assessor's Office has not yet released the 2027 application form. The updated form will likely remain unavailable until the application window opens on Monday, January 4, 2027. Please note that the filing deadline is March 1, and late submissions are not accepted.

You do not want to be late!

If you have a VA service-connected disability rating, you might want to:

- Add a calendar suspense item to apply on January 4.
- Start collecting the required documents, such as your DD Form 214, the VA benefits letter showing your disability percentage, proof of county residence, and Form 82514V (released on or about January 4).
- Stay tuned for further updates.

Legislative Affairs Continued

November 2026 Election

Eight Propositions on the Arizona Ballot

Prop 141: Amends the Arizona Constitution to preemptively bar state and local governments from imposing taxes or fees on vehicles based on number of miles driven, or from monitoring or limiting mileage.

Prop 142: Amends the Arizona Constitution to expand a 2010 affirmative action ban by prohibiting diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policies at the state and local level, including by giving preferential treatment based on race or ethnicity in hiring or academic admissions.

Prop 144: Amends the Arizona Constitution to require all voters, including those who vote by mail, to show valid government ID "before casting a ballot in each election." Axios' comment: "It's unclear how people who vote by mail would do that."

Prop 316: Caps municipalities' sales taxes on food at 2% and requires voters to approve any increases. Preexisting taxes above 2% can remain in place but are frozen.

Prop 317: Declare drug cartels as terrorist organizations under state law and direct the Arizona Department of Homeland Security "to do everything in its authority to address threats posed" by them.

Prop 318: Bar transgender athletes from using restrooms, locker rooms and showers used by teams from public and private schools and athletic associations if they do not correspond with the athletes' biological sex recorded on their birth certificates. Also strengthens preexisting bans on transgender athletes playing on single-sex sports teams that do not correspond with their biological sex.

Prop 319: Ban use of photo radar traffic enforcement by state and local governments. Anyone who already has a contract for photo radar cameras before the end of 2026 could only continue using them with voter approval.

Prop 320: Require school districts in Arizona's most populous counties, or districts with at least 7,500 students, to spend a minimum of 60% of their operating budgets on direct instructional expenses.

Note from the Editor



I hope you enjoy my first issue of the *NewsGram*! I want to extend a huge thank you to Scott for his years of dedicated service as the chapter editor, and for his knowledge and support as I take on this new role. Please submit any content or ideas you would like included in the newsletter to

me at sdmcdonell@mac.com. I always welcome your feedback, comments, and suggestions. — Susan

The *NewsGram* is published monthly October through May (eight issues per year). We email a PDF copy to all members and send a printed copy via U.S. mail upon request. Please indicate your preference when you complete your membership form. The newsletter is also available on the chapter website.



May Raffle Winners

Red Wine	Craig & Jacalyn Quigley
Gift Basket	Shanna Woyak
Jose Cuervo Margarita Mix	Patricia Williams
Carolans Irish Cream	Ellie Daly
Jose Cuervo	Richard & Pamela Kohnen



Mike Kramer

Helping Needy Vets

Luke Chapter Returns to Support Needy Veterans

In fiscal year 2017-18, Luke Chapter began a program to provide cash grants to veterans facing a financial emergency related to housing, utilities, transportation, food and other necessary living expenses. The program included our annual food collection drive under Rev. Fannalou Guggisberg's leadership supporting active-duty enlisted members in the "Turkeys-for-Troops" program at Luke AFB. That year we applied for one of only four grants being offered by the MOAA Community Foundation in its inaugural 'Community Outreach' grant program. We were selected among numerous other MOAA chapter applications for a maximum grant of \$6,250 for our initial veterans' program year.

It gets better – Luke Chapter has won a Community Outreach grant from MOAA's Community Foundation charity for each of the past ten years. To our knowledge, no other chapter has received an annual grant every year since inception. In addition, we have consistently secured the maximum funding amount awarded to any chapter. In May 2026, the Luke Chapter was once again awarded the maximum \$5,000 grant for our Veterans' Relief Grant Program for expenditure this program year. A special thank you goes to the Luke Chapter Community Fund members, who wrote our winning proposal last spring.

While the MOAA and local business grants are very important, our chapter members provide about 75% of the total funding we distribute each year. The success of the Luke Chapter Veterans' program truly depends on the generosity of our chapter members. In the past decade, our program has granted more than \$220,000 to about 140 individual veterans and their families for emergency housing and food assistance. This program year, we expect to have a total budget of roughly \$25,000 available to grant, most of which will come directly from our own generous members!

Finally, our chapter is already engaged in the annual canned and packaged food drive for the Turkeys-for-Troops program. We partner with the First Sergeant's Association at Luke AFB and the PebbleCreek Men's Nine-Hole Golf Club. We typically provide more than 1,000 food items annually to needy, enlisted members at Luke AFB. Last November, we also handed out about 125 \$50 commissary gift cards to individuals passing through the line.

Please bring unexpired food items to our first chapter luncheon on October 17, 2026, at Grandview Terrace. Social begins at 11:30 a.m.

Luke Chapter MOAA never stops helping our fellow active-duty service members, veterans, and their families to have a home, utilities, and sufficient food.

Cash donations to the Luke Chapter Community Fund are much appreciated.

Pay by check, or on the chapter website via PayPal/credit card, or via Zelle to treasurer@lukemoaa.org.



National MOAA and Luke Chapter MOAA provide non-partisan support for active-duty military, veterans, and their families.



Rev. Fannalou Guggisberg Chaplain's Corner

In one of her Bibles, my mother noted that “33,000 Promises of God” reside therein. Among the promises are many blessings, including the “Beatitudes.” You will find blessings abounding throughout Scripture.

The best example is: “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers” (Psalm 1).

“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance” (Psalm 33:12). Psalm 144:15b reads similar.

One of my favorites:

“Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him” (Psalms 34:8).

“Blessed are those who have regard for the weak; the Lord delivers them in times of trouble” (Psalm 41:1 NIV).

“Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you” (Psalm 84:12).

“Blessed are they who maintain justice, who constantly do what is right” (Psalm 106:3).

“Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways” (Psalm 128:1).

“Blessed is the man who finds wisdom, ... who gains understanding” (Proverbs 3:13).

“It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35 NIV).

With even more blessings than these, we should not be surprised. God by His nature loves, gives, and blesses abundantly. As recipients of His love and blessing, we offer our love to Him and exclaim gratefully, “Bless the LORD, my soul, And all that is within me, bless His holy name.” (Psalm 103:1 NASB).

Keep looking up. Blessings!

Bring-a-Can, Food Drive

Our chapter will again support the Luke Air Force Base “Turkeys for Troops” program this Thanksgiving. Please bring your donations of non-expired canned goods to our October 17 and/or November 21 luncheon meeting OR drop your items at the home of Chaplain Guggisberg or Mike Kramer. Please call first to arrange a time.



Suggested items include canned corn, yams, green beans, peas, carrots, broth, stuffing, instant potatoes, cream of mushroom/cream of chicken or any other soups, cranberry sauce, and like staples for a healthy pantry. Be sure items are not expired.

The Luke First Sergeants and Chaplains will use our donations to help struggling Airmen families. Last year we collected 1,000+ items. We hope we CAN collect as many this year.

**You can't spell American
without “I can.”**

Thank you for your donations!



Chaplain Fannalou Guggisberg
receiving the MOAA Leadership Award
presented by Chapter President David Ciesielski



**Our brave military community has always been
there for us. Now it's our turn to give back.**

— Courage to Call

17 OCTOBER 2026

Winnie Fritz

RN EdD MSN BSN NEA-BC



Winnie has held positions as a CEO, Chief Clinical Officer and/or Chief Nursing Officer in seven U.S. hospitals. She has worked as a clinician, leader, educator, and consultant in international healthcare organizations in 24 countries in Europe, the Middle East, Africa,

South America, and Asia. Her career as a healthcare professional began with her tenure as a nurse in the US Army. Winnie served in leadership positions in the U.S., Thailand, and Vietnam (where her commendations include the Bronze Star). In the military, she also earned her pilot's wings; she was selected to be the healthcare professional caring for Bob Hope on his annual Christmas Tour to troops in Vietnam and Thailand; and Winnie was manager of the presidential/VIP suites at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in D.C. caring for our President, congress, 3-,4- and 5-star generals, and foreign heads of state. It was in this unit she met and cared for the late King Hussein of Jordan.

Winnie was recruited by His Majesty King Hussein to move to Jordan; to assess the health status of the population, to lead curriculum development and serve as Dean of a School of Nursing, and later to serve as Quality & Operations Officer in a 28-hospital network. She worked in Jordan 17 years and still is there annually and keeps a home in the countryside with an olive grove. For her success, His Majesty awarded her his Medal of Honor.

She has served as an assistant professor at four U.S. universities teaching healthcare graduate students how to assess and enhance/"fix" our complex healthcare system. The U of MO has awarded Winnie their highest award – the Golden Quill Excellence Award – "as a global health leader who reflects responsibility, discovery, and excellence." The U of MD School of Nursing has awarded Winnie their highest award – The Visionary Pioneer Award – "transforming healthcare on a global scale." Recently, the national Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) awarded Winnie the inaugural Dr. Anita N. McGee Legacy Award, which notes: "The Army Nurse Corps was founded by Dr. McGee 125 years ago. Dr. Fritz represents the legacy that Dr. McGee envisioned for an Army Nurse's role and positive impact during military service and in a continuing service-oriented career here and abroad."

She serves on four U.S. healthcare-related boards. Her recent research is focused on Veterans' health needs and care systems; and, with hundreds of veterans, has developed and is working to enhance the model of care at the VA. Winnie has also spent hundreds of hours developing copyrighted tools and assessing continuing care retirement communities – working to enhance senior adults' quality of life and healthcare.

Currently, Winnie is the COO/Sr. V.P. of Operations and Clinical Services at Health Care Corporation of America (HCCA) Management Co. She works in healthcare organizations in the U.S., Middle East, and Africa: 1) to assess and improve health professionals' competencies; 2) to do site and space planning while building or renovating healthcare facilities; 3) to develop leaders' skills; and 4) to help health systems innovate, eliminate waste and provide better care at lower costs with improved clinical, satisfaction and financial outcomes.



Luke AFB Color Guard Presenting at May Dinner

Chloe Shannon, Inaugural Captain Miller Scholarship Winner



David Berkland, Commander 56th Fighter Wing, at May Dinner

Programs Continued

21 NOVEMBER 2026

William “Bill” Simon
LTC U.S. Army (Ret.)



William “Bill” Simon was born and raised in Phoenix and served 27 years in the U. S. Army Reserve and Air National Guard. He enlisted in 1970 after graduating from ASU with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Management and later earned his commission through the Arizona Officer Candidate School program in 1977. In his career, Bill served in Infantry, Transportation, Quartermaster, Ordnance and Medical Service units before retiring as a lieutenant colonel in 1997. He also completed the U. S. Army Command and General Staff College in 1990.

Outside of the military, Bill spent 40 years in banking, serving as vice president and branch manager for banks in Phoenix and Goodyear.

His record of community service spans numerous organizations, including Civitan in Globe, Kiwanis in Litchfield Park, Rotary in Buckeye, and the Litchfield Park Historical Society.

His veteran advocacy includes roles with the Luke Chapter MOAA, American Legion Post 61 in Avondale, and the Arizona America250 Commission.

Bill is widely known for his work preserving military history. He and his wife operate the 1st Lt. Frank Luke Jr. Memorial Museum and Research Center in Goodyear, dedicated to the Arizona World War I flying ace known as the “Arizona Balloon Buster.” Since opening in 2014, the museum and Bill’s “Desert Warriors” display team have provided educational outreach to hundreds of students and adults across the Valley.

In 2025, Bill was selected for induction into The Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame, established in 2001 by Unified Arizona Veterans to honor those who continue to make significant contributions after their military service.

Bill’s philosophy: “Good solid leadership is imperative, and solid logistics is essential to success. Your ability to properly “read” folks you work with will greatly aid your success.”

Gene Wikle

Imprints of Honor – Share Your Story

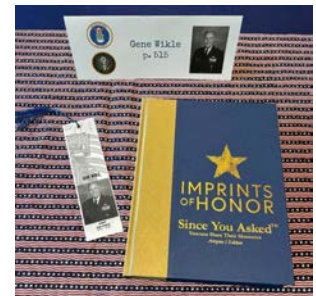


Please accept my invitation to share your story with Imprints of Honor, a nationally recognized veterans program based in Phoenix. Sharing my military service story with students at Carl Hayden High School was a life-changing experience. I am so grateful that the students interviewed me and published my military service story in the 2025 edition of "Since You Asked." Visit their website at [Imprintsofhonor.org](https://www.imprintsofhonor.org) to learn more.

I serve as a chapter advocate for the Carl Hayden High School Club, which is in a low-income area of Phoenix (35th Ave. and Roosevelt), and I have met so many wonderful students. These students need us and we need them! Ms. Tori Anderson, an English teacher, is the club advisor. She is a dedicated teacher committed to helping veterans share their stories and helping these students experience everything Imprints of Honor offers. This year, there are 30 students in the club who need veterans to interview and publish their stories. Veterans of all ranks and military branches are eligible to be interviewed. You do not need to be a retired service member. The interview at the high school lasts about two hours. Ms. Anderson will coordinate the date and time for the interview. If interested in participating, please reach out to me.

Winnie Fritz, Buz Isban, Beth Johnson, Bruce Kosaveach, Craig Quigley, Ron Perkins, and Tom Waddell have been interviewed by students at various high schools. They too can attest to this wonderful program.

View the Imprints of Honor video celebrating the nation's 250th anniversary; interviews with two veterans, the students conducting the interviews, and a high school club advisor: <https://fb.watch/lrrjQL-d5S/?fs=e>



**An award-winning Character and Civics Education Program
recognized by the Arizona Department of Education**

Ben Hayes Membership

Fall is the time of year when I remind members to ensure their Luke Chapter dues have not lapsed. If you are uncertain, you can check one of the following two ways:

1. **Prefer to send a check:** contact Ben via email at ben.f.hayes@gmail.com or call him at 323-791-2755 to verify your membership status. If sending a check, please complete the Membership Application form included in this edition of *NewsGram* and send via USPS as instructed on the membership form. The form is a fillable PDF that you can complete and print or print a blank copy and handwrite to mail in with your check.
2. **Like simplicity and saving postage:** visit the website at www.lukemoaa.org. Log in: select My Account at the top of the page, select Renew Membership. This page will show your year of expiration. If expiring, you can select Renew Your Membership Online and continue.



While membership numbers remain steady, currently 138, we want to invite new friends to join by highlighting the great work our Luke Chapter does. Please also reach out to past friends who might be considering membership. You will find an updated Membership Application form in this issue of the *NewsGram*. Feel free to make copies to share or contact me if you need an application mailed. The best way to inspire prospective members to join is by sharing our award-winning website.

Welcome back to what promises to be another great year for the chapter and a wonderful opportunity to reconnect with old friends and welcome our newest members. I look forward to seeing you at our upcoming monthly meetings and thank you for your continued membership and support.

Taps

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of our friends and members:

Mary Helen Melton, Surviving Spouse
Widow of Albert Melton, Brig Gen USAF (Ret.)

Barry Pines, CAPT USN (Ret.)
Survived by his wife Nancy



Please notify our president or chaplain when you learn of a death or illness of any member or their spouse. Thank you!

Our Mission—Who Can Join

The mission of the Luke Chapter is to benefit the members of the uniformed services, their families and survivors and to advocate for a strong national defense, while providing needed support to the community and its members. We strive to bring together military members with common interests.

Membership is open to anyone who holds or has ever held a commission or warrant in any component of the eight uniformed services as well as the surviving spouses of those eligible for membership.

If we desire to avoid insult, we must be able to repel it;
if we desire to secure peace, one of the most powerful
instruments of our rising prosperity, it must be known,
that we are at all times ready for war. George Washington

Never Stop Serving as a Chapter Recruiter



Membership Application

Providing non-partisan support for active-duty military, veterans, and their families.

Annual Dues is \$25.00 for Members and \$15 for Surviving Spouses
October 1 through September 30

New members paying after Jul 1 but prior to Oct 1, are grandfathered through the following Sep 30.

☐ RENEWAL ☐ NEW MOAA National Member: ☐ Yes ☐ No
MOAA# _____

If NO, your chapter membership automatically includes a free, basic MOAA membership.

Please Print Clearly				
Last Name:		First Name:		
Spouse:		Appl. DOB:		
Address:				
City:		State:	Zip:	
Email:		Phone:		
Rank:		Service:		

☐ Active ☐ Reserves ☐ National Guard ☐ Surviving Spouse
☐ Active ☐ Former ☐ Retired Served from (mm/yyyy) _____ to _____

NewsGram, Newsletter (preferred method to receive it): ☐ USPS Mail ☐ Email

PAYMENT

Make Checks Payable to: Luke Chapter MOAA

Mail to: P.O. Box 5072, Sun City West AZ 85376-5072

Amount Member: ☐ \$25-1 Yr. ☐ \$50-2 Yrs. ☐ \$75-3 Yrs.

Surviving Spouse: ☐ \$15-1 Yr. ☐ \$30-2 Yrs. ☐ \$45-3 Yrs.

Optional: \$_____ for NewsGram \$_____ for Closed Captioning

Payment: ☐ Check # _____ ☐ Cash ☐ On-Line Date Paid: _____
Quick & Easy

Questions or more information, email the membership chair: membership@lukemoaa.org

Website: <https://www.lukemoaa.org>

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**GRANDVIEW
TERRACE
Grand Room
17 OCT 2026**

\$20 LUNCHEON MENU

Plated
Southwest Salad
with Chicken Breast
for all attendees

Lunch includes:
Cookie, coffee, hot or
iced tea, and water.

Social 11:30 a.m.
Buffet 12:00 Noon
Program 12:30 p.m.

**We must provide an
accurate count!**

**PEBBLECREEK
Chianti Room
21 NOV 2026**

\$34 LUNCHEON MENU

Choice of:

- Roasted Chicken breast
with vegetable couscous
OR
- Petite Beef Steak grilled
with potato gratin
OR
- Cauliflower steak with
roasted tomatoes (veg.)

All lunches include:
Mixed green salad, Dutch
apple pie with vanilla
whipped cream, coffee, hot
or iced tea, and water.

Social 11:30 a.m.
Buffet 12:00 Noon
Program 12:30 p.m.



**Reservation at Grandview Terrace
Saturday, 17 OCT 2026 at 11:30 AM**

Register online OR make check(s) payable to "Luke Chapter MOAA"
Mail to: Luke Chapter MOAA, P.O. Box 5072, Sun City West, AZ 85376

Checks mailed/registration DUE no later than 7 OCT 26

☐ Individual ☐ Reserve Table (3 to 8 incl. me); total at table: _____

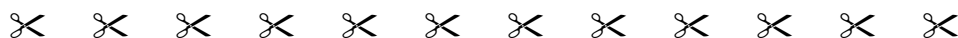
Host: _____

Total: _____ Southwest Chicken Salad with Chicken Breast

_____ Total Reservations (x) \$20 = Check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

Member Name (print): _____

Member Signature: _____



**Reservation at PebbleCreek
Saturday, 21 NOV 2026 at 11:30 AM**

Register online OR make check(s) payable to "Luke Chapter MOAA"
Mail to: Luke Chapter MOAA, P.O. Box 5072, Sun City West, AZ 85376

Checks mailed/registration DUE no later than 28 OCT 26

☐ Individual ☐ Reserve Table (3 to 8 incl. me); total at table: _____

Host: _____

Total Each Choice: _____ Chicken _____ Beef _____ Vegetarian

_____ Total Reservations (x) \$34 = Check for \$ _____ is enclosed.

Member Name (print): _____

Member Signature: _____

If you cannot mail in time, call or text Jack Coate at 916-960-6820 to say, "I'll pay at the door."

Luke Chapter
P. O. Box 5072
Sun City West, AZ 95376



Never Stop Serving

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a nonprofit veteran's association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and preserving the earned entitlements of members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors. Membership is open to active duty, former, retired, and National Guard and Reserve commissioned and warrant officers of the Army, Navy, Marine Corp, Air Force, Space Force, Coast Guard, NOAA, Public Health Service, and their surviving spouses. MOAA and its affiliated chapters and councils are nonpartisan.



Show your colors by proudly displaying the Arizona "Veteran" plate on your vehicle.

SUPPORT VETERANS

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THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

Oct. 4, 1582 - The Gregorian Calendar took effect in Catholic countries as Pope Gregory XIII issued a decree stating the day following Thursday, October 4 would be Friday, October 15, 1582, correcting a 10-day error accumulated by the Julian Calendar. Britain and the American colonies adopted the Gregorian Calendar in 1752.

Oct. 21, 1879 - Thomas Edison successfully tested an electric incandescent lamp with a carbonized filament at his laboratory in Menlo Park, New Jersey keeping it lit for over 13 hours.

Oct. 26, 1881 - The shoot-out at the O.K. Corral in Tombstone, Arizona occurred between the feuding Clanton and Earp families.

Oct. 13, 1884 - Greenwich was established as the universal time from which standard time throughout the world are calculated.

Oct. 1, 1908 - Henry Ford's Model T, a "universal car" designed for the masses, went on sale for the first time.

Oct. 3, 1929 - President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation designating the last Thursday in November as Thanksgiving Day.

Oct. 31, 1941 - Mount Rushmore National Memorial was completed after 14 years of work.

Oct. 14, 1945 - The United Nations was founded.



BIRTHDAY

February 23, 1929

U.S. Army

June 14, 1775

U.S. Navy

October 13, 1775

U.S. Marine Corps

November 10, 1775

U.S. Coast Guard

August 4, 1790

U.S. Public
Health Service

January 4, 1889

U.S. Air Force

September 18, 1947

National Oceanic
and Atmospheric
Administration

October 3, 1970

U.S. Space Force

December 20, 2019