

Chapter meetings are held January – April and October – December at Saddlebrooke Ranch, normally on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of the month.



# Catalina Mountains Sentinel

March 2024 issue

## March 2024 Issue

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## Chapter luncheon 16 March

The luncheon speaker for the chapter's March luncheon was Gail Joyce, a surviving spouse and a member of MOAA's Board of Directors. She is also a member of MOAA's Scholarship Fund Board of Directors, the Council and Chapter Affairs Committee, and MOAA's Membership Committee. Gail is the co-chair of MOAA's Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter. She was married to Larry Joyce, a U. S. Army officer, who served two tours in Vietnam. She is a Gold Star mother, having lost a son, Sgt. James Casey Joyce, an Army Ranger, who died in Mogadishu, Somalia, in the Mission told in *Black Hawk Down*. Gail's message to those in attendance at the luncheon was this: you need a battle plan for your life. When her husband died, they thought they had everything planned for his passing but they didn't. You and your spouse, or significant other, need to have a heart-to-heart talk about your passing and how everything will be settled or taken care of. She emphasized – do it now, don't wait until it is too late.



## Upcoming luncheons

**Join us for the April 20<sup>th</sup> luncheon.** Our speaker is Kurt McMillen, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President, who will talk about his trip last summer to Uzbekistan.

**Join us for the July 20<sup>th</sup> luncheon.** This is purely a social get together mid-way through the summer. I'll speak briefly about our community support actions, but mainly it's a chance to get together for lunch.

**National MOAA and the Catalina Mountains Chapter are nonpartisan.**

## President's message

Hello chapter members.



First, I want to thank all of you for renewing your membership with the chapter. That fact that almost everyone renewed their membership indicates to me that the leadership team must be doing a good job. We've got a great chapter and I'm always open to suggestions on how to make it even better, so please give me your suggestions.

We lost one of our members last month—Gerald Cruce, and Air Force veteran, passed away mid-February. He and his wife Nan attended some of our luncheons; he will be missed.

We have, since the beginning of the year, added five new members to the chapter. These five are Kenn Riordan, Jr., an Army veteran; Charles Meiselman, an Air Force veteran; Edward Brogan, a retire Air Force chaplain; Ron Anderson, an Army veteran, and Joan Bedette, a surviving spouse. Welcome

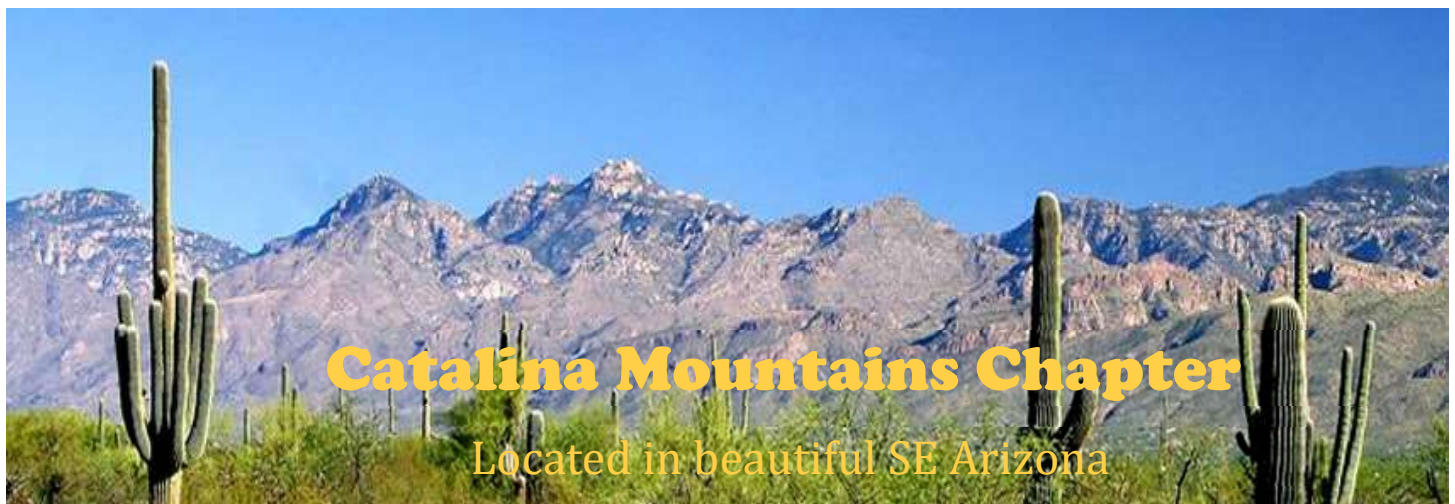
new members! If you see any of them at our next luncheon, be sure to welcome them to the chapter.

I want to thank everyone who checked their chapter registration with MOAA's Legislative Action Center (LAC). If you had to change the chapter you were assigned to in the LAC, great! Your correction of the assigned chapter will help us with our Level of Excellence award submission.

We have two special events for later this year that I want to mention. As I noted at our March luncheon, we have an April luncheon and then our next luncheon will be October 16<sup>th</sup>. Between April and October, we'll gather for lunch on July 20<sup>th</sup>, the third Saturday of the month, at our usual location, the Ranch Grill at Saddlebrooke Ranch. I'll speak briefly to update members on community support activities and other items of interest, but there will not be a featured speaker.

The other special event is a holiday party planned for Saturday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, in place of our normal monthly luncheon. We're in the preliminary planning stages—plan to join us for an afternoon holiday party on the 21<sup>st</sup>. Mark your calendar and SAVE THE DATE.

I hope to see you at both of these events!



2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Charles F. Vaughan, CAPT, USN, retired**

*Chairman*

**Bill Nagy, COL, USAR, retired**

*Member*

**Rett Benedict, COL, USAF, retired**

*Member*

2024 CHAPTER OFFICERS

**Charles F. Vaughan, CAPT, USN, retired**

*President*

**Kurt McMillen, COL, USA, retired**

*First Vice President*

**Bruce Huffman, COL, USA, retired**

*Second Vice President*

**Bill Myers, LT, CEC, USN, former**

*Secretary*

**George Bone, LTC, USA, retired**

*Treasurer*

ADDITIONAL CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

**Bill Nagy, COL, USAR, retired**

*Programs Chari*

**Carol Smith**

*Surviving Spouse Liaison*

**Char Godec, COL, USA, retired**

*Legislative Liaison & Chair*

**Don Timian, LTC, USA, retired**

*Membership Chair*

**Jeff Peckron, Capt, USMC, retired**

*Audio/Visual Support*

**Ritt Schiano, CAPT, USN, retired**

*Chaplain*

**MOAA's Legislative Action Center**

National MOAA's Legislative Action Center makes it very easy for you to contact your national legislators on legislation that MOAA is advocating for passage. As noted by national MOAA, "your efforts are critical to our success protecting and expanding the earned pay and benefits for the uniformed services and veteran communities".

The purpose of the Legislative Action Center is to get legislation, beneficial to members of the uniformed services, veterans and their dependents, passed into law. MOAA members use the Legislative Action Center to write to their legislators to encourage passage of specific legislation. The Legislative Action Center makes writing to your legislators simple—in fact, very simple—as the letters are written for you, they are addressed to your legislators (based on your mailing address), so all you have to do is select the recipients, edit the letter if you want to, and click submit. Easy-peasy! If you haven't tried it yet, please do.

MOAA's Legislative Action Center is located at <https://moaa.quorum.us/>

The Chapter received a 5 star Level of Excellence award for 2022, shown below. MOAA chapters were graded as 3, 4, or 5 stars based on the performance of each chapter with 5 stars being the highest level of excellence. Thanks to all chapter members for making this happen!



## Legislative update by Char Godec, Legislative liaison & chair

**Congress is running up on yet another critical government funding deadline on March 22, the fifth time since September!** Once more we are asking that you act immediately using the MOAA Legislative Action Center at this link: <https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/50794/>, "Ask Your Lawmakers to Avoid a Government Shutdown and Finish the Appropriations Process". Press them to support quick action on a compromise budget and put the people first! Remind them that as members of MOAA, we are not just constituents, but we are voters as well! If they are unwilling to put the good of the nation first, then we will remember their inaction at the polls.

While you are in the Legislative Action Center, please send a message in support of the Richard Star Act, a MOAA priority for the last few years. We are getting closer to having the Richard Star Act pass this session, but we still need to have our voices heard on the hill. Please use this link:

<https://moaa.quorum.us/campaign/43784/>

Stay tuned for further information on this year's Advocacy in Action (AiA) campaign. The priorities for this year are passing the Richard Star Act, restoring full BHA and protecting TRICARE for Life. We will be asking you to send letters of support prior to MOAA members meeting with members on the hill in April during AiA 2024. To contact our Congressional members on these or any other issues of importance to you personally or to MOAA, you can use the MOAA Action Center to send emails or you can visit the members' websites to send a message. You can also contact their offices directly at:

Senator Kyrsten Sinema -- [www.sinema.senate.gov](http://www.sinema.senate.gov) – (202) 224-4521

Senator Mark Kelly -- [www.kelly.senate.gov](http://www.kelly.senate.gov) – (202) 224-2235

Representative Juan Ciscomani - [www.ciscomani.house.gov](http://www.ciscomani.house.gov) - (202) 225-2542

### **Arizona Legislative Update/Information**

SB1413: Income Tax; Subtraction; Uniformed Services (providing active duty pay parity to all uniformed service members) has passed the Senate and is now in the House Rules Committee. The passing of SB1413 is the number one legislative priority for MOAA-AZ. Now is the time to contact our House Representatives and ask them to support this important legislation! Here are your legislators by district:

**LD-17:** Sen. Justine Wadsack, 602-926-3106, [JWadsack@azleg.gov](mailto:JWadsack@azleg.gov); Rep. Rachel Jones, 602-926-3558, [rachel.jones@azleg.gov](mailto:rachel.jones@azleg.gov); Rep. Cory McGarr, (602) 926-3630, [CMcGarr@azleg.gov](mailto:CMcGarr@azleg.gov).

**LD-18:** Sen. Priya Sundareshan, (602) 926-3437, [PSundareshan@azleg.gov](mailto:PSundareshan@azleg.gov); Rep. Nancy Gutierrez, (602) 926-4134, [NGutierrez@azleg.gov](mailto:NGutierrez@azleg.gov); Rep. Christopher Mathis, (602) 926-3138, [CMathis@azleg.gov](mailto:CMathis@azleg.gov).

**LD-20:** Sen. Sally Ann Gonzalez, (602) 926-3278, [SGonzalez@azleg.gov](mailto:SGonzalez@azleg.gov); Rep. André Cano, (602) 926-3027, [ACano@azleg.gov](mailto:ACano@azleg.gov); Rep. Alma Hernandez, (602) 926-3136, [AHernandez@azleg.gov](mailto:AHernandez@azleg.gov).

**LD-21:** Sen. Rosanna Gabaldón, (602) 926-3424, [RGabaldon@azleg.gov](mailto:RGabaldon@azleg.gov); Rep. Consuelo Hernandez, (602) 926-3523, [CHernandez@azleg.gov](mailto:CHernandez@azleg.gov); Rep. Stephanie Stahl Hamilton, (602) 926-3279, [SStahlhamilton@azleg.gov](mailto:SStahlhamilton@azleg.gov).

Thank you for your support on these very important issues, and Happy St. Urho's Day!

Respectfully,

Charlene Godec, COL USA (Ret)

CMC Legislative Liaison

## Join the Catalina Mountains Chapter of MOAA

If you are not a member already, consider joining the Catalina Mountains Chapter. Why should you join our chapter? You should join so you can help us make a difference in the life of some veterans and uniformed personnel. How can you make a difference? Through your gifts of time and money. Chapter members donated their time this year to do some exterior painting at Esperanza En Escalante and two chapter members placed wreaths at the Wreaths Across America event in December. If you can make a financial donation, chapter members sponsored a one-week camp for children of Esperanza En Escalante residents and contributed funds to purchase four laptop computers for Esperanza En Escalante residents.

To join the chapter, you must be eligible to join national MOAA. If you have any questions about joining the chapter contact our membership chair, Don Timian, at [dontimian@hotmail.com](mailto:dontimian@hotmail.com) or by phone at 571-216-3679.

Chapter dues at \$30 per calendar year.

You can find a membership application at [https://www.catalinamountainsmoaa.org/CM\\_join.html](https://www.catalinamountainsmoaa.org/CM_join.html)

## Catalina Mountains mission statement

The Chapter's mission is clearly spelled out in the by-laws of the Catalina Mountains Chapter, in Section 1.2 as follows:

"The Chapter is organized, and shall be administered and operated, exclusively for the following purposes, with the meaning of Section 501(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code: to promote the purposes and objectives of the national Military Officers Association of America (MOAA); foster fraternal relations among active duty, former, and retired officers of the uniformed services and their reserve or national guard components; protect the rights and interests of active duty, former, retired, and reserve and national guard component personnel of the uniformed services and their dependents and survivors; provide useful services for members and their dependents and survivors; and serve the community and the nation."



**SAVE THE DATE** – our first holiday party is being planned for Saturday, 21 December 2024 in place of our regular monthly luncheon. More details to follow – but plan to join us on Saturday afternoon, December 21, 2024!

## February luncheon notes – by Bill Myers, LT, CEC, USN, former

The Catalina Mountain Chapter (CMC) of the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) held its February luncheon meeting on Saturday, February 17th, at SaddleBrooke Ranch. The meeting began with a business session presided over by retired Capt. Chuck Vaughan, U.S. Navy, President, during which members were updated on the chapter's current and upcoming activities.

Our speaker was Ms. Marsha Moon who is both a First Nation Navajo and the Gold Star Mother of Sergeant Chris Moon. In July, 2020, Sgt. Moon was killed in action in Afghanistan, while a sniper for the 82nd Airborne Division.

Chris was drafted by the Atlanta Braves out of high school, but he chose instead to attend the University of Arizona on a baseball scholarship. After only one semester, however, Chris enlisted in the Army, leaving for boot camp in February, 2008. Some think of Chris as “the Pat Tillman of Tucson” because he gave up a scholarship to play baseball at the University of Arizona to serve his country. Although he wanted to go to Ranger School after graduation, he would have had to wait six months to do this. Chris then joined the 82d Airborne (Recon Unit) trying to get a billet at Ranger School. Instead, he was assigned to Sniper School and was deployed to Afghanistan in September 2009. He was the youngest sniper in his Recon Unit. Chris's career with the 82nd Airborne, as well as his last mission on July 13th, 2010, is included in the article The Last Patrol.



Chapter president Chuck Vaughan presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Gold Star mother Marsha Moon for coming to address our February luncheon meeting. Marsha's talk was really good – if you missed it you missed a good presentation.

## Fly the flag dates

### March

Friday, 29 March – Vietnam War Veterans Day

Sunday, 31 March – Easter Sunday

### April

Saturday, 6 April – Army Day

Tuesday, 9 April – Former Prisoner of War Rec Day

Monday, 15 April – Patriot's Day

### May

Saturday, 4 May – Firefighter's Day

Sunday, 5 May – Fallen Firefighter's Memorial Day

Wednesday, 8 May – VE Day

Sunday, 12 May – Mother's Day

Wednesday, 15 May – Peace Officer Memorial Day

Saturday, 18 May – Armed Forces Day

Monday, 27 May – Memorial Day

## Member in the spotlight - by Kurt McMillen

When our Catalina Mountains Chapter (CMC) publishes the Sentinel newsletter, we enjoy highlighting the accomplishments of one of our CMC members. As you know, many of our members are very involved in the local community and we would like to feature their contributions both within CMC and beyond our chapter!

This “spotlight” shines on our own Joe O’Connor.

Joe’s service to our country started a few weeks after the August 1964 incident in Vietnam’s Gulf of Tonkin where two U.S. destroyers radioed that they had been fired upon by North Vietnamese forces. As part of the U.S. response, Joe received a personal letter from then President Lyndon B. Johnson (in other words, a Draft Notice) instructing Joe to report to the Recruiting Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

For an 18-year-old farm kid, the induction process was an eye-opening experience with a tall Sergeant lining up Joe and others, and then counting off one by one in numerous iterations: “Army”; “Army”; “Army”; “Marine Corps”; “Navy”! Hours later, more than 100 Minnesota enlistees (including Joe) were off to Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri for Basic Training. An opportunity occurred weeks later when Joe was asked to compete for a seat in the Officer Candidate School at Ft. Benning, Georgia. He stepped up, and in early 1967 Joe was commissioned a 2d Lieutenant in the Army Infantry Branch.

Joe was then assigned as a Platoon Leader in the 1st Air Cavalry Division; duty station: Vi-

etnam. During the early months there he participated in operations focused on Search and Destroy missions against the Viet Cong and combat operations against North Vietnamese units. Joe’s leadership skills had to develop rapidly. Unfortunately, during the period December 1967 to January 1968 three company commanders were killed in action. As the senior Lieutenant in the company, Joe was designated as the Acting Commander. He worked closely with his NCOs to accomplish missions and rebuild a combat weary unit.



On January 31, 1968, 85,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong launched the Tet Offensive. Joe and his unit were deployed further north toward the DMZ in order to defeat and drive the enemy out of South Vietnam. His unit

experienced heavy casualties during this period.

Following Vietnam, Joe’s assignments included the following:

- Commander of a Mechanized Infantry Company;
- Completion of Aviation Flight School;
- Air Cavalry Troop command near the Korean DMZ.

Being a high school graduate presented a challenge. As the Army began the Post Vietnam drawdown, fortunately the Army sent Joe to college where he received his bachelor’s degree. Upon graduation he became a Signal Corps officer and was assigned to Germany as a staff officer and eventually company commander. After promotion to major, Joe completed his military career with the following opportunities:

- Attendance at the Air Force Command and Staff Course;
- While attending the Air Force Telecommunications Management Course, Joe was selected to pursue a Master's degree;
- Battalion Command in Germany;
- Attendance at the Army War College;
- Promotion to the rank of Colonel;
- Assigned to the Military Personnel Center and the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the Pentagon.

Joe's final military assignment? Brigade Commander in Germany supporting Operation Desert Storm.

After a distinguished 26-year military career, Joe retired in 1991 and he and his wife Lydia shifted their focus to family and community. They moved to a small city in Minnesota near their family and aging parents. Joe experienced many opportunities to serve, including: City Council member, church council, Chamber of Commerce, and President of the local Arts Board.

Following the death of their parents, Joe and Lydia moved to SaddleBrooke. Fortunately for us, Joe's selfless service did not end. Subsequent service included being a library volunteer, helping on Senior Village teams, assisting military veterans with accessing benefits, and being elected as an HOA-1 Board of Directors member.

In summary, the Army offered Joe endless opportunities for personal growth, service to our nation, and service to his communities. Joe is also very proud that both of Joe and Lydia's children, along with two grandchildren, have or are serving in the Army and Marine Corps.

By the way, Joe was inducted into the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame in 1992!



Joe – Congratulations on your distinguished career, and rewarding family life, from all of us at CMC.

Joe O'Connor today.

## Consider volunteering

National MOAA's motto is Never Stop Serving®. Consider serving with the Catalina Mountains Chapter. The Chapter is currently looking for volunteers to serve as the Legislative Liaison, the Fund-Raising Chair, the Public Relations Chair, and a special events coordinator. Contact president Chuck Vaughan at [chuck.vaughan@comcast.net](mailto:chuck.vaughan@comcast.net) or by calling or texting 505-553-4364 if interested in volunteering in any capacity.

## Editorial policy

**Editorial Policy.** This MOAA newsletter, published periodically throughout the year, is solely for the benefit of members of the Catalina Mountains Chapter of MOAA. The opinions expressed herein are those of the authors or editor and do not necessarily reflect those of the national MOAA organization nor any official government policies or agencies.

Charles F. Vaughan, Editor, Catalina Mountains Chapter of MOAA



## April luncheon notes – by Bill Myers, LT, CEC, USN, former

The April Catalina Mountains Chapter (CMC) luncheon meeting will be held at the SaddleBrooke Ranch Grill on Saturday, April 20th beginning at 11:30 AM.

Our speaker will be Kurt McMillen, the First Vice President of the CMC. Kurt and his wife Cheryl had the rare opportunity to travel to Uzbekistan for two weeks in May 2023. Although Kurt has significant engineering, program management and business development background, his previous knowledge of Central Asia (also known as "The -Stans") was essentially non-existent. During his presentation, Kurt will enlighten you with a wealth of information and insight that he learned about Uzbekistan that touches on the following areas: History, economic development, political shifts, and especially the culture.

Not only is Kurt the 1st VP of CMC, he is also on the Board of Directors for Senior Village in Saddlebrooke and the President of the SaddleBrooke CycleMasters bicycle club. Besides logging significant bicycling miles, Kurt enjoys travelling with his wife and hiking/backpacking (especially into the Grand Canyon).

**Come join us for lunch on Saturday, April 20<sup>th</sup>!**

## How to contact us

To contact the President, email Chuck Vaughan at [chuck.vaughan@comcast.net](mailto:chuck.vaughan@comcast.net) or call him at 505-553-4364.

For membership questions, email Don Timian at [dontimian@hotmail.com](mailto:dontimian@hotmail.com) or call him at 571-216-3679.

For luncheon speaker suggestions, email Bill Nagy at [wjnagy@yahoo.com](mailto:wjnagy@yahoo.com) or call him at 520-355-5064.

For Surviving Spouse information contact Carol Smith at [carol.chisari.smith@gmail.com](mailto:carol.chisari.smith@gmail.com) or call her at 915-549-6917.

**Happy Birthday!**

The following chapter members have a birthday in March:

John Coleman	Lois Kelly	Clara Murray	Kenn Riordan, Jr.
Steve Didio	Marty Lenzini	Jeff Peckron	Ritt Schiano
George Kalman	Peter Mehlhorn	Bart Rice	

The following chapter members have a birthday in April:

Doug Garner	Ray Malaski	Steve Rizzo	Carol Smith
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The following chapter members have a birthday in May:

Thomas Grant	Dwight Mears	Bill Myers	Michael Striplin
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