

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

June 2026 issue

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## Our April luncheon



Our April 2026 CMC luncheon speaker was John Adams, Deputy Director and chief Operations Officer for Biosphere 2 in Oracle, AZ. He has dedicated nearly three decades to advancing Biosphere 2. John discussed the evolution of the “Biosphere 2 Project” from concept development to the current enterprise. B2 is the largest earth science living laboratory. The goal of Biosphere 2 is to study the earth’s entire and complex geology, environment and

ecology. His presentation gave an overview of some of the many projects affiliated with the University of Arizona and how they impact our understanding of our biosphere – Earth. The B2 SAM project (“Space Analog for the Moon and Mars”) is a sealed habitat at Biosphere 2 designed to simulate conditions for human life on other planets. B2 focuses on testing life-support systems, food cultivation, and sustainability for future space missions. This presentation was interesting, enlightening and impactful.

Read about our February and March luncheons on pages 10 & 11.

## Our next luncheon

Our October 2026 CMC luncheon speaker will be Colonel Carey J. Jones, USAF Retired. She is a seasoned Air Force leader with nearly 30 years of experience in strategy, operations, and education, and known affectionately as “Mamba.” She is the former Commander of UofA AFROTC Detachment 20, where she trained over 110 officer candidates and taught aerospace studies and national security. (Continued on page 11.)

## President's message

Hello CMC members! I hope you are enjoying our summer luncheon meeting hiatus. Our membership meetings will resume on Saturday, October 17th at SaddleBrooke Ranch. At the October meeting, Col Carey "Mamba" Jones, USAF (Ret) will talk about "Women Pilots in the Early Days". Her

expertise in this area generates from the fact that she was an F-15 Strike Eagle Pilot with three decades of associated military experience. Carey is now a professor at the University of Arizona. Yes, this October 2026 presentation is one that you will not want to miss!

- **2026 National MOAA Foundation Community Outreach Grant to support EEE:** As a follow-on to our 2025 award from National MOAA, we submitted another grant application for the CY2026 cycle in February. I am pleased to report that we were awarded a CY2026 grant in April. Our overall plan to use this grant award is the same as last year: Supporting Esperanza En Escalante (EEE) by contributing computer equipment (laptops, desks, chairs, printers and peripherals) to current EEE residents who were previously homeless, who are now rehabilitating, and who will soon transition from their EEE residence to independent living beyond the walls of EEE. The photo below shows several chapter members presenting four laptops,



desks, chairs, printers and peripherals and printers to four EEE residents at a January luncheon. Our grant will not cover the full cost for providing this support, but I want to say thanks in advance to all CMC members who have already donated (and who will continue to donate) money beyond their annual dues so that we can cover the full CY2026 EEE support cost. Please stay tuned for further information on the progress of this grant detailed planning and implementation.

Additionally, we will also again coordinate with the President of the MOAA Public Affairs and Communication Virtual Chapter (MPACOMVC), Mr. Lincoln Smith, as part of this effort. He remains very excited about our collaboration with EEE and the services that EEE provides to homeless veterans.

- **"Thank you" Breakfast for Bill Myers:** In April 2026, leadership team members met with Bill Myers at the HOA-1 Roadrunner Grille to acknowledge Bill's outstanding contribution to CMC. Bill served as CMSC/CMS Secretary for six years (January 2020 thru December 2025), he was of the key leaders who led chartering of CMC with MOAA in 2022 (to become a chapter from our initial satellite status under the Tucson Chapter), and he helped establish CMC as a non-profit corporation in Arizona and to obtain tax exempt status with the IRS under 501 (c)(19). Thanks again, Bill, for your untiring support!
- **CMC Leadership Position Openings:** I will continue to keep you informed of the CMC need for



additional volunteers to fill existing (and anticipated) leadership vacancies. As a minimum, we still have position vacancies for Secretary (although a candidate has been identified) and Chaplain. I am happy to report that Ed Pullen volunteered to fill our Legislative Liaison position starting in April. Thanks, Ed!

- **National MOAA LOE / Comms Awards Submissions for CY2025:** As you may remember, our Level of Excellence (LOE) and Communications (Newsletter and Website) submissions were all sent to National MOAA before the end of January 2026. As reported at our April 2026 CMC luncheon meeting, we received 5-Star awards for all three areas (which is the highest award possible). Thanks to all our CMC members who contribute their time and expertise to help make this outstanding award possible.
- **Past Events Since February 2026:** Since our last newsletter, many of our chapter members participated in the following events. Thanks to all CMC members who participated, and we hope to see more members participate in the future. If you have any questions, please discuss with any chapter leadership member:
  - **Missing In America Program (MIAP):** This event took place in April 2026 at the AZ Vets Memorial Cemetery in Marana. The ceremony focus is interring unclaimed cremated veteran remains.
  - **Junior ROTC MOAA Award Presentations:** We all need to thank our own Michael “Cash” Striplin for coordinating and providing awards to our three sponsored high schools: Casa Grande HS (Casa Grande, AZ), Vista Grande HS (Casa Grande, AZ), and Poston Butte HS (San Tan Valley, AZ), April 30th @ 3pm (USAF). All ceremonies took place in April 2026.
- **Future Chapter Events and Participation Opportunities:**
  - **Remaining 2026 Monthly Saturday Chapter Luncheons:** October 17<sup>th</sup> and November 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at the Ranch Grille. Meeting notices will be sent at

the beginning of each month to request RSVPs.

- **“Folds of Honor” Veterans Day Dinner:** This annual event should again take place at the SaddleBrooke HOA1 clubhouse on November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Each year our chapters members enjoy socializing with other participants as we remember those who have served this great country, continue to serve, and have possibly given their life during their service.
- **CMC Annual Holiday Luncheon (December 2026):** Please join us on Wednesday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at The Ranch Grille ballroom to fellowship, hear a recap on 2026 CMC accomplishments, and enjoy a great lunch. Attendance keeps increasing each year. RSVP requests will be emailed well prior to the event. See you there!
- **Wreaths Across America (December 2026):** I project that the 2026 event will take place on either December 12<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> at the AZ Vets Memorial Cemetery in Marana. At the event, CMC members participate in a ceremony to lay wreaths at niches and gravesites. Further details will be sent as we receive them.
- **SaddleBrooke HOA-2 Recreation & Activities Fair (February 2027):** Our chapter will again participate in the February 2027 HOA-2 R&A Fair. Of course, we will be communicating more information on this event as we get closer to the date.

As a recurring reminder, you can read about what is happening at both the Arizona state MOAA level and National MOAA level through the following links:

- Arizona Council of Chapters (A CofC) website: <https://www.azcouncilofchapters.org/>
- National MOAA website: <https://www.MOAA.org>

As far as the most convenient way to submit future CMC dues and donations, please remember that we continue to use the online "Cheddar Up" system at: <https://cmc-moaa-2026-dues.cheddarup.com>. Note, though, that when we move into CY2027 this URL will change slightly!

#### 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

*Chairman*

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

*Member*

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

*Member*

#### 2026 CHAPTER OFFICERS

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

*President*

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

*First Vice President*

**C. J. Hindman, Brig Gen, USAF, retired**

*Second Vice President*

***vacant***

*Secretary*

**David Bull, LTj.g., USN, former**

*Treasurer*

#### ADDITIONAL CHAPTER LEADERSHIP

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

*Programs Chair*

**Carol Smith**

*Surviving Spouse Liaison*

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

*Membership Chair*

**Ed Pullen, LTC, USA, retired**

*Legislative Liaison*

**Cash Striplin, COL, USA, retired**

*JROTC coordinator*

## Join 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 lives of some veterans and uniformed personnel. How can you make a difference? Through your gifts of time and money. Chapter members previously donated their time to do some exterior painting at Esperanza En Escalante and five chapter members placed wreaths at the Wreaths Across America event last December. If you can make a financial donation, chapter members contributed funds to purchase four laptop computers, printers, desks and desk chairs 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 are \$30 per calendar year. You can pay your dues online with national MOAA or pay by cash or check. To pay online, login to MOAA, select Chapters, and select Chapter Dues Payment System. Select the Catalina Mountains Chapter. You can also make a chapter donation at this site.

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

The Chapter received a 5 star Level of Excellence award for 2025 (our fourth consecutive 5-star award), 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!



## MOAA Advocacy and the Legislative Action Center by Ed Pullen

### Uncle Sam Needs YOU!

Your voice is needed at both the state and national levels. The MOAA National Legislative Action Center makes it easy for you to be heard. Log onto your MOAA National account; click on "Advocacy" and follow the instructions to correspond to a national legislator. The Catalina MOAA Chapter has a goal of 100%-member participation. Let your voice be heard. Please do it NOW!

Over 160 MOAA representatives from across the nation attended the MOAA National Capital Visit, calling on both the House and the Senate. The effort served to confirm that grassroots advocacy works in two important ways:

- Each Congressional office verified that constituent outreach is one of the most effective ways to 'promote legislation and ensure that congressional delegations understand what matters most to the people they serve.'
- Advocacy does not stop with our representatives. When priority legislation is being reviewed, it is imperative for members to contact committee leadership and urge their support.

### ARIZONA LEGISLATION UPDATE

HB2120 proposes property tax exemption to all 100% disabled veterans (some income limitations). It is currently being processed through the state legislature.

The 2027 Arizona legislative sessions commence January, 2027.

**Remember to support your state and national advocacy programs. Calls, letters and e-mails work. Your voice is important.**

## 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, within 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."

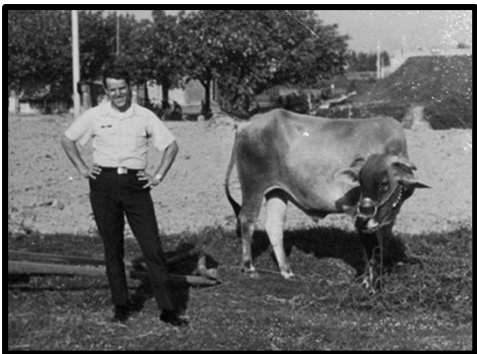


## Member in the Spotlight - by Kurt McMillen

When our Catalina Mountains Chapter (CMC) publishes the Sentinel newsletter, we enjoy highlighting the accomplishments of our CMC members. All our members have diverse backgrounds. We think you will appreciate our members' contributions in their previous careers, and within CMC and outside of our chapter. Our member who is "in the spotlight" for this Sentinel newsletter is James "Doug" Ripley.

Doug grew up in San Francisco in the 1950s and developed a keen interest in the natural sciences (specifically biology and botany). Starting in high school and continuing into his undergraduate education at San Francisco State University, Doug pursued that interest and graduated with a bachelor's degree in biology in 1967. His original plan was to obtain a teaching certificate and become a high school or junior college biology teacher. Those plans changed significantly when late in Doug's senior year his student draft deferment classification was changed to "1-A" which meant that he would most likely be drafted immediately upon graduation.

As a result, Doug investigated other military options that he might be able to pursue following graduation. Doug learned that San Francisco State University had established a new two-year advanced Air Force ROTC program that (after being accepted) allowed him to pursue a biology master's degree in two years. Upon completion and receiving a commission as a second lieutenant in 1969, Doug entered active duty at Eglin AFB, Florida. He was not qualified for pilot training (less than perfect eyesight). Since a biology career field officer position did not exist, Doug was assigned to the Air Force's disaster preparedness career field which involved maintaining programs for both the peacetime and wartime protection of military personnel and installations.



The disaster preparedness program required establishing and training teams in the use of specialized equipment to deal with nuclear, biological, and chemical (NBC) warfare attacks, natural disasters, and major accidents. Although Doug did not think of it as a desirable long-term career field, the Air Force sent him to a series of interesting and rewarding assignments. Those included the Air Force Space and Missile Systems Organization at Los Angeles Air Force Base, CA; Tainan Air Base, Taiwan (Republic of China); the 25th Air Division, McChord AFB, WA; and the 26<sup>th</sup> Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, Zweibrücken Air Base, West Ger-

many (the adjacent 1972 photo is of a rice paddy next to his office near the flightline at Tainan Air Base in Taiwan).

Following his first assignment, Doug married his wife Arlene (he had met her in graduate school and she shared Doug's love of natural history). Arlene accompanied Doug on all assignments. Prior to rotating back to the U.S. from Germany in 1975, Doug decided to find a more unique biology career field position. He identified an assignment to the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado (as such it has a complete biology department with 20 Air Force biology faculty members). Doug was accepted and was thrilled. After two years teaching, he found that the Academy was required to have a minimum number of faculty members hold doctorate degrees to maintain accreditation. The Academy also needed a Ph.D. in biology. As a result, Doug was selected to attend Oregon State University to complete his Ph.D. Afterwards, he returned to the Academy where he continued teaching for another four and one half years (the adjacent 1986 photo is Doug in his biology classroom / lab at the USAF Academy).



The Air Force has a maximum ten-year assignment to the Academy. Fortunately, during his Academy years Doug became involved with some of the Air Force's programs to help manage and protect the natural and cultural resources on its lands (Note: The DoD owns or controls over 30 million acres of land and the Air Force has about 130 active installations spread out on nine million acres of land, and those lands also contain thousands of historic buildings and sites which are protected under federal and state laws). In 1988, Doug was fortunate to obtain a position within the AF Civil Engineering Directorate located at HQ USAF in the Pentagon as an Air Force senior staff biologist under which the AF management and protection role is accomplished long-term. After three years in that position Doug retired as an LTC with 22 years of service.



Shortly after retiring, Doug obtained a similar three-year civil service position with the HQ Department of the Army stationed at Fort Belvoir, VA. Next came a short tour with the DoD Inspector General investigating and researching environmental issues. Finally, Doug's old office at the Air Staff had a civilian opening for the exact same type of job he performed before his military retirement. He worked there for an additional 10 years. Doug is extremely grateful for both the military and civilian travel and career opportunities that contributed to our nation's long term environmental health (the adjacent 2004 photo is Doug assisting with a Forestry Inventory" at the Hardwood Air-to-Ground Weapons Range in Finley, WI).

Doug continued working as a private environmental consultant for an additional six years before he and his wife decided to retire "for good" and move from their 20-year home in Maryland to somewhere in the Southwest. They originally purchased 36 acres of land in a large subdivision on the western slopes of the Dagoon Mountains in Cochise County, built a house and enjoyed it for nearly 17 years. Doug and Arlene eventually moved to Saddlebrook Ranch in March 2025 where they are very comfortable and satisfied!

## Contact your state legislators

| State Legislators |                |                      |                                                                              |                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| District          |                | Name                 | Email/Phone                                                                  | Mailing Address                                                                                                   |
| 7                 | Senator        | Wendy Rogers         | <a href="mailto:WRogers@AZleg.gov">WRogers@AZleg.gov</a><br>602-926-3042     | Senator Wendy Rogers<br>AZ State Senator<br>1700 W Washington Street - Senate<br>Phoenix, AZ 85007                |
| 7                 | Representative | Walt Blackman        | <a href="mailto:WBlackman@AZleg.gov">WBlackman@AZleg.gov</a><br>602-926-3244 | Representative Walt Blackman<br>AZ State Representative<br>1700 W Washington Street - House<br>Phoenix, AZ 85007  |
| 7                 | Representative | David Marshall, Sr   | <a href="mailto:DMarshall@AZleg.gov">DMarshall@AZleg.gov</a><br>602-926-3579 | Representative David Marshall<br>AZ State Representative<br>1700 W Washington Street - House<br>Phoenix, AZ 85007 |
| 17                | Senator        | Venden "Vince" Leach | <a href="mailto:VLeach@AZleg.gov">VLeach@AZleg.gov</a><br>602-926-3694       | Senator Vince Leach<br>AZ State Senator<br>1700 W Washington Street - Senate<br>Phoenix, AZ 85007                 |
| 17                | Representative | Rachel Keshel        | <a href="mailto:RKeshel@AZleg.gov">RKeshel@AZleg.gov</a><br>602-926-3558     | Representative Rachel Keshel<br>AZ State Representative<br>1700 W Washington Street - House<br>Phoenix, AZ 85007  |
| 17                | Representative | Kevin Volk           | <a href="mailto:KVolk@AZleg.gov">KVolk@AZleg.gov</a><br>602-926-3498         | Representative Kevin Volk<br>AZ State Representative<br>1700 W Washington Street - House<br>Phoenix, AZ 85007     |

**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



## Contact your federal legislators

| Federal Legislators |                                                                                                                     |                |              |                                    |
|---------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| District            | Website                                                                                                             | Name           | Phone        | Mailing Address                    |
|                     | Senator                                                                                                             | Mark Kelly     | 520-475-5177 | Senator Mark Kelly                 |
|                     | <a href="https://www.kelly.senate.gov/contact/contact-form">https://www.kelly.senate.gov/contact/contact-form</a>   |                |              | Hart Senate Office Building        |
|                     |                                                                                                                     |                |              | Suite 516                          |
|                     |                                                                                                                     |                |              | Washington, D. C. 20510            |
|                     | Senator                                                                                                             | Ruben Gallego  | 520-777-0400 | Senator Ruben Gallego              |
|                     | <a href="https://www.gallego.senate.gov/share-your-opinion/">https://www.gallego.senate.gov/share-your-opinion/</a> |                |              | SH-302 Hart Senate Office Building |
|                     |                                                                                                                     |                |              | Washington, D. C. 20510            |
| 6                   | Representative                                                                                                      | Juan Ciscomani | 520-881-3588 | Representative Juan Ciscomani      |
|                     | <a href="https://ciscomani.house.gov/address_authentication">https://ciscomani.house.gov/address_authentication</a> |                |              | 461 Cannon House Office Building   |
|                     |                                                                                                                     |                |              | Washington, D. C. 20515            |

## Happy Birthday!

### July birthday

Delores Fantin  
CJ Hindman  
Kurt McMillen  
Marvin Montez  
Helene Perez  
Don Timian

### August birthdays

Bill Blissett  
David Bull  
Ken Ellis  
Andrew Fairchild  
LeNeille Hudgins  
Jeff Munkers  
Phil Osterli  
Dawn Rankin  
Marilyn Smith

### September birthdays

Alan Bergstrom  
Jim Daily  
Lorna Fairchild  
Bill Noland  
Joe O'Connor  
Robert Rudrow  
Mark Schwartz  
Ron Spaniol  
Carl Weller  
Roger Wilson

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## Fly the flag dates

### July

Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> – Independence Day

### August

none

### September

Monday 7<sup>th</sup> – Labor Day

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> – Patriot Day \*\*

Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> – Constitution Day

### October

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> – Columbus Day / Indigenous

Peoples' Day

\*\* fly flag at half-staff sunrise to sunset

## - fly flag at half-staff until noon

## February luncheon speakers



Dr. William Myers, Col (Ret) was our main speaker at our February 2026 CMC luncheon meeting, and his presentation was about enemy and government-sanctioned counterfeiting during WWII. The German enemy operation counterfeited British “white notes” (banknotes made from white rag paper with black printing) and they used concentration camp prisoners for their skills and labor. The United States, along with Great Britain, counterfeited Japanese Invasion Money for the Philippines. Dr Myers was very knowledgeable with all the history and stories behind counterfeiting during WWII. The presentation was excellent!

At our February 2026 CMC luncheon meeting, we were privileged to have Capt Frank Michael, USN (Ret), as a guest speaker. As Senior Director, Affiliated Councils & Chapters, Frank is responsible for direct support of MOAA’s robust nationwide network of more than 400 active and engaged affiliates (virtual chapters, state councils and chapters) as they influence legislation, serve their local communities in impactful ways, grow membership at the local and national levels, and increase MOAA brand awareness nationwide. Frank also provides in-person support to council and chapter activities and events, and plans and organizes quarterly council and chapter leader in-person workshops and other training opportunities.



## March luncheon speaker



Our March 2026 CMC luncheon speaker was Dr. Connie Mariano who is a retired Navy Admiral and a former White House doctor to three past presidents (serving nine years in the position). She was an amazing speaker with quite a sense of humor! “Dr. “Connie started her presentation with her life as a Navy dependent child born in the Philippines, to being the first Filipino American in US history to become a Navy Rear Admiral, to becoming the first woman to become a White House Physician and describing her overall 44 years as a physician.

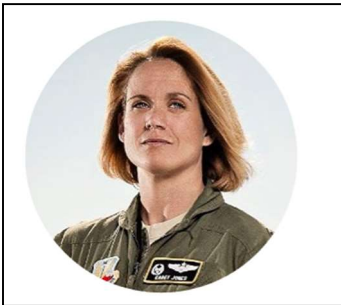
Her life was filled with many achievements: High school valedictorian, graduate with honors at the University of California at San Diego, a medical degree from the Uniformed Services University School of Medicine and a distinguished 24-year career in the U.S. Navy. At the end of her presentation, Dr Connie offered a copy of her book “The White House Doctor” to MOAA as an auction

item. CJ Hindman, our 2<sup>nd</sup> VP, was the proud winner, and Dr Connie contributed his bid to our chapter. Thank you CJ!

## Our next Luncheon - continued

In 2025, Col(R) Jones joined the UofA College of Engineering as an Associate Professor of Practice

where she teaches Engineering Senior Design Capstone, Intro to Engineering, and a new scholarship course for senior scholars joining the Department of Defense as government civilians.



Col(R) Jones presentation topic at our October luncheon will be, “A Family of Service”. Based upon her significant (and unique) military and post-military experience (much of which you didn’t read about above!), it will be a presentation that you will not want to miss!

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## How to contact us

To contact the President, email Kurt McMillen at [kmmcmillen@gmail.com](mailto:kmmcmillen@gmail.com) or call him at 520-420-7475.

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.