

2020-2021 Year End Report for Luke Chapter MOAA

1. Legislative Affairs

A. Legislative Liaison, Colonel Phil Hanson, a former member of the Arizona Senate, kept members informed with a steady stream of emails and on-going status reports of bills in the state legislature.

B. Several Blast emails to you kept the membership informed of **pending legislation** and many of you called Arizona legislature men and women on these issues. Col Pete Kloeber (Council President) and LTC Dennis DeFrain participated in a Zoom meeting with AZ Senate Budget Committee Chair David Gowan in the final stages of negotiations. Captain Denny Bash met with the Luke Chapter assigned Congresswoman, Debbie Lesko, and informed her of National MOAA priorities.

C. Thanks to all your calls and letters, two key bills PASSED the 2021 AZ Legislature:

(1) One bill includes \$746,000 for 12 additional Veteran Benefit Counselors for the Arizona Department of Veterans Services.

(2) A portion of the Arizona State budget was appropriated to **increase the income tax exemption to the full amount of benefits, annuities, and pensions** received by military retirees, retroactive to January 1, 2021 (Tax Year 2021).

(3) For **other bills** which supported veterans, please go to: <https://dvs.az.gov/end-2021-55th-legislature-first-regular-session-arizona-legislative-session-brings-changes-expansion>

2. Community Engagement

A. For the third straight year, you actively supported the **Marine Corps Reserve “Toys for Tots”** program. Although the Chapter could not meet in person, you donated over 50 toys to this effort.

B. You supported other very worthwhile programs supporting military veterans:

(1) \$100 to the Arizona Honor Flight program to support honor flights of veterans to visit national memorials in Washington, D.C.

(2) \$250 to Military Family Support

(3) \$500 to the Arizona Stand-Down

(4) \$250 to the Fighter Country Partnership (Luke AFB liaisons with local businesses)

(5) \$150 to support the Embry-Riddle ROTC Lumberjack Battalion who completed a 26.2-mile Bataan Memorial Death March in March.

D. On November 19, 2020, your hard-working Chaplain Fannalou Guggisberg coordinated and provided a drop off site for the Luke Chapter **Turkeys for Troops program** which provided food and commissary cards to low-ranking airmen and women at Luke AFB. **This year was another record setting year** as you donated well over 900 items for this cause, outdistancing last year’s previous record of 683 items. In addition, \$1,250 in commissary cards were donated to make their Thanksgiving much brighter!



3. Community Support

A. **Scholarships:** Under the dedication and perseverance of the Scholarship Chair, Don Fordney, Fourteen students received \$30,000 in scholarships to various institutions. Scholarships ranged in size from \$1,000 to \$4,000 each.

B. **Veteran Support:** For several years now, COL Mike Kramer has managed the veteran support program in an exemplary manner. Many thanks also go to the interview committees who extensively evaluated each applicant. Funding for veteran support came from National MOAA (\$10,000), Arizona Department of Veterans Services (\$4,999), and **your donations**. This year, 27 veterans in need were supported in one way or another. Most of these honorably discharged veterans were in extreme need and may have been on the street without your help!



C. **Fund Raising** (For a complete listing of donors, please see Appendix 1):

(1) Your Luke Chapter Community Fund led by LTC Ed McAvoy, held the **first ever Chapter online auction** on April 17, 2021, and raised a total of \$3,849.06 from items you donated! Many thanks to Chaplain Guggisberg for offering her home, keeping an inventory of all items, and for coordinating everything to make this a big success! **Monarch Auctions headed by Robert Haynes** conducted the Auction at **no cost** to the Chapter (please thank him and recommend him!)

(2) 111 members made **individual donations of \$44,095!** A record! Many thanks to everyone who donated!

(3) **Eight corporate donors provided \$7,550** to your Chapter.

(4) **Total donations for 2021-2022 fiscal year: \$55,494.06**

(5) Special thanks go out to **Mrs. Pam Wojtas** for over 60 thank-you letters to donors!

4. **Recruiting and Retention**

A. **Members:** Currently, there are 201 active members of your Chapter. This number includes 39 who are Surviving Spouses (SSP's).

B. **Recruiting:** Under the very capable direction of Major Marci Smith, your Luke Chapter gained 15 new members this year, they are:

- (1) Amdor, Steve
- (2) Anderson, Rebecca SSP
- (3) Baker, Dan
- (4) Bigelow, Steve
- (5) Brandom, Steve
- (6) Campbell, Wally SSP
- (7) Chase, David
- (8) Eaton, Phil
- (9) Grayson, Jim
- (10) Johnson, Eddie
- (11) Lassiter, Catherine
- (12) Mandel, Leonard
- (13) Moulton, Phil
- (14) Walk, Ron
- (15) Witt, Phyllis SSP*

Please be sure and welcome them to the Chapter when you see them at the next Chapter meeting! As a side note, four more new members have joined since July 1, 2021!

C. **Retention:** Even though everyone experienced a challenging year, you stepped up and we particularly thank you for continuing your Chapter membership. Our records indicate that we lost just 7 members this year. Two moved out of state, and others either passed away or did not renew.

5. Surviving Spouse Program (SSp)

A. **New Approach:** A new and innovative program was designed and approved this year under the direction of Linda Wolverton and Co-Chair Rosemary Eaton which revitalizes a very important component of your Chapter – Surviving Spouses.

B. **The Mission** of this program is to connect with **ALL 39** Surviving Spouses and (as appropriate) care-giver spouses for support, friendship, encouragement, education, grief sharing, and other mutual benefits.

C. **Implementation** of this energetic program plan includes periodic meetings as needed, regular updates via the Chapter website, NewsGram, and by email regarding benefits, and visits to all SSp's (with priority going to home-bound members).



6. Community Fund Board Fully Implemented!

A. This past year was a banner year for the Community Fund which was brought up to speed and now has a full board of directors.

B. Community Fund Board Officers for the coming year include:

President: LTC Ed McAvoy Vice-President: CW3 Don Fordney Secretary: CDR Charlie Kice
Treasurer: CPT David Chase Directors: RDML Steve Kunkle, COL Bob Coutchie, COL Mike Kramer,
COL Lou Tronzo, CAPT Jim Davis, MAJ Mike Byers, Mrs. Pam Wojtas, CW2 Ron Walk

C. Many thanks to COL Mike Kramer and LTC Ed McAvoy for putting this all together and for everyone who volunteered to be a Board member!

7. Other Important Programs

A. **Chaplain:** Not only does she do a great job managing food donations and commissary cards at Thanksgiving, coordinating Toys-For-Tots donations at Christmas, managing donations for the online and silent auction but she also writes an informative article for each NewsGram and provides a moving blessing for each board and dinner meeting. She does it all! Chapter Chaplain, **MAJ Fannalou Guggisberg!**

B. **Community and Luke AFB Relations: COL Ted Stults** also wears many hats – keeping the Chapter informed of Luke AFB events including the annual Retiree Activities Day, working in the Retiree Activities Office and serves as Chapter representative on the NW Valley Veterans Association. Good work Ted!

C. **Compliance:** Making sure your Chapter operates in compliance with regulatory issues outlined by the Arizona Corporation Commission and the IRS for both your Chapter and Community Fund, COL Mike Kramer, does a herculean job in handling these very challenging and time-consuming tasks.

D. **Financial/Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve (ESGR):** COL Bob Coutchie has been a busy guy for the past two years balancing the books each month for the Chapter and the Community Fund and his records were always perfect! Although the ESGR position doesn't get much press, it is extremely important towards ensuring fair treatment for Guard and Reserve members who are called to active duty and COL Bob Coutchie very efficiently and effectively deals with these issues each year!

E. Historian/Closed Captioning: LTC Fred Williams keeps an outstanding record of your Chapter history, updating it regularly (ask him to show it to you sometime). Fred also spearheaded initiation of closed captions for your Chapter and Board meetings and makes sure closed captioning is always available!

F. JROTC: Captain Ernie Coudert had a tough job this year – very few schools were in session, and it was extremely difficult to get in touch with JROTC unit commanders. He makes it his passion to contact all 13 schools on a regular basis and has some exciting plans for the coming year!

G. Leadership Succession: A challenging job to say the least, COL (Dr.) Steve Pohl, works tirelessly to make sure all positions are filled and for probably the first time in Chapter history, the Chapter will begin 2021-2022 with a full slate, thanks Steve!

H. Reservations: CWO3 Don Fordney took a much-needed vacation from taking reservations for Chapter meetings this year, but he is geared up and ready to go for the October 14th dinner meeting!

I. Transitions: Although most Chapter members are not looking for jobs, Captain Bob Cowan still makes sure that job postings are posted to the Chapter website! Lots of officers look to our website for this information and thus your Chapter rises to the challenge through Bob's efforts. Wearing his other hat, Bob too, took a hiatus from making dinner meeting table arrangements this past year but is ready to go again real soon!

8. Awards and Honors



A. Five-Star Chapter again! Yes, you did it again! It was just announced on August 19, 2021 that your Luke Chapter has achieved a five star Levels of Excellence Award for the fifteenth year in a row. Congratulations to all who worked so hard to make this happen! Awards are reviewed by a board of officers based on Objective (45%) and Subjective (55%) scoring. Objective scoring is based on percentages of key chapter officers who are members of National; number of chapter members who are a member of National; use of the Committee Module for recruiting; designated Legislative and SSp chairs; the chapter is enrolled in Electronic transfer of funds; if the chapter belongs to the state Council and the Chapter President receives the MOAA Newsletter. Subjective scoring includes active legislative affairs program, community engagement, recruiting and retention, leadership succession plan and 10 points of extra credit for innovative programs, events, and other outstanding community outreach.



B. Marvin J. Harris Communications Awards: The Luke Chapter Website and the NewsGram both won five star awards again! Bob Nelson, who now resides in Pensacola, FL manages your Chapter website (www.lukemoaa.org) in an outstanding manner. Scott Phillips also does a super job of providing a great NewsGram eight or nine times a year! Several years of past NewGram's are available on the website and make for extremely interesting reading! Be sure and thank them for their hard work and long hours in bringing you top notch Chapter information.

C. Induction into the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame: This fiscal year, chapter member LTC Ed Logan, was inducted into the Arizona Veterans Hall of Fame. As of June 30, 2021, fifteen Chapter members have been inducted since 2003 (go to: www.lukemoaa.org (Local Interest) for a list of members.

9. **Please keep in touch!** Contact any Board member at any time for commendations, complaints, or you need more information on anything involving the Chapter. Emails are in the NewsGram.