



Alta Gram



Alta California Chapter • Military Officers Association of America

June / July 2025

Never Stop Serving

Volume 59, No. 4

President's Corner

Busy Summer Ahead

As we move into summer, Beale Air Force Base is a hive of activity!

June 7th and 8th will be the Beale Air Show, celebrating 70 Years at 70,000 feet. This year celebrates the 70-year anniversary of the U-2 Dragon Lady, a Cold War icon that is still doing yeoman's work in our reconnaissance efforts around the world. It's been slated for retirement numerous times but, to paraphrase Mark Twain, rumors of its death have been greatly exaggerated. It's supposed to fully retire in only four months but events around the world continue to demand America's attention. So, we'll see where things go. For my money, I'll believe the U-2 is retired when I see the last one fly away.



There will be a military-only Air Show on June 6th for those of you who are retirees and who have retiree or retiree dependent ID cards. That day will not be open to the general public, it is for military ID card holders only. If you want to avoid the crowds and see the show under more manageable conditions, Friday is a good day to go.

The big announcement at Beale this spring was that the Collaborative Combat Aircraft unmanned mission will be coming here. Beale will be the home of the YQF-42A and YQF-44A, combat drones that will take us into the next phase of air warfare. They will be on display at the Air Show if you want to see them in person. These, along with some other emerging missions, are part of the 900-person plus-up that Beale is expecting in the coming years. Although airplanes come and go, the need for actionable

Please turn to page 2, column 2

Upcoming Event

Be Sure to Join Us for Our Annual BBQ June 26

Come and meet the inspiring young people from the cadet programs we support

Please plan to join your fellow chapter members and guests for our popular annual barbecue at Tom and Robin Walther's home on Thursday, June 26, beginning at 3:00 p.m.

Special guests will include cadets and advisors from the Civil Air Patrol, Air Force and Navy Junior ROTC detachments and the Sea Cadets. Our chapter has long been a staunch supporter of these programs and meeting the young beneficiaries confirms the wisdom of our investment.



Food and drink tickets will be sold at the door for a cost per person of \$25. Raffle tickets will be \$5. In order to ensure that adequate food and beverages are available, please RSVP to Tom Walther not later than Monday, June 23.

Once again, the chapter extends sincere thanks to Tom and Robin for their continued generosity and exceptional hospitality in hosting this much-appreciated annual event.

Annual Chapter BBQ

Thursday, June 26

3:00 p.m.

3326 Jori Court, Yuba City, CA 95993

***Please RSVP by email or phone
NLT Monday, June 23 to ensure that adequate food
and drinks are on hand***

Email: t.walther@att.net

Phone: (530) 673-5499

AltaGram – June / July 2025

Website: <http://altamoaa.org> • **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/altacachapter>

Alta California Chapter MOAA, P.O. Box 541, Yuba City, CA 95992

MOAA Alta California Chapter

Chartered 18 Mar 1966

2025 Executive Committee

President: Lt Col Ed Harvey 318-505-3236
1st Vice Pres. LT Maury Castaneda 808-351-4393
2nd Vice Pres. Lt Col Marcus Bole 530-633-0117
Treasurer: CDR Bill Crocker 530-673-8982
Secretary: Col Steve Witmer 916-408-2455
Past President: Capt Tom Walther 530-218-3847

Advisors and Committee Chairs

Membership: Capt Tom Walther 530-218-3847
Programs: RADM Dawn Wyllie 218-556-9292
Chaplain: Lt Col Marcus Bole 530-633-0117
Webmaster: Capt Tom Walther 530-218-3847
Legislative Chair: Col Steve Witmer 916-408-2455
CALMOAA SSL: Kathy Prout 619-980-6623

Personal Affairs / Hospitality

Yuba City Area: Robin Walther 530-218-3847
Grass Valley: RADM Dawn Wyllie 218-556-9292
Lake Wildwood: RADM Dawn Wyllie 218-556-9292
Lincoln Hills: Lt Col Shirley Schultz 916-645-7539

Mission

To serve the needs of active duty, retired and former military members and their surviving spouses.

Membership

Find membership information at these links:

MOAA National: <https://www.moaa.org/join>

Alta Calif. Chapter: <http://altamoaa.org/memberships>

Editorial Policy

National MOAA is a nonpartisan organization. The content of this newsletter is intended to be nonpartisan, in accordance with national policy.

Legislative Updates

Find out about MOAA's legislative initiatives by accessing the MOAA national website at: moaa.org/takeaction.
For state issues visit: www.leginfo.ca.gov/.

Chapter Recognition



2023 5-Star Level of Excellence Award



2023 5-Star Communications Awards:
Website and *AltaGram*

AltaGram Contributions

Contributions to the *AltaGram* are appreciated.
Please send material for consideration to:

Col Steve Witmer, Editor
1582 Summerhill Lane
Lincoln, CA 95648
altacalifmoaa@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report

As of May 28, 2025, the chapter's treasury balances were:

Checking	\$2,718.63
Cash Fund	250.00
Total	\$2,968.63

Membership Report

As of May 28, 2025, the chapter's membership totaled:

Regular Paid	29
Unpaid	10
Surviving Spouse	4
Total	43

2025 Meeting Schedule

Date	Time	Venue
Thurs, 26 Jun	3:00 p.m.	Walther Home
Thurs, 28 Aug	11:15 a.m.	Cool Hand Luke's
Thurs, 23 Oct	11:15 a.m.	Cool Hand Luke's
Thurs, 11 Dec	11:15 a.m.	Cool Hand Luke's

President's Corner, continued from page 1

information for our military and civilian leaders remains. Beale's relevance isn't just continuing, it's growing.

I look forward to seeing everyone at Tom and Robin's for our next meeting--that picnic is my favorite of the year! Until then, keep safe and keep serving.

- Still Serving,
Ed Harvey, Lt Col, USAF (ret)

Beale to Host Drone Wingmen Aircraft Readiness Unit

The U.S. Air Force announced in April it has selected Beale Air Force Base to host the service's first "Aircraft Readiness Unit" dedicated to its future fleet of drone wingmen.

The drones, dubbed Collaborative Combat Aircraft (CCA), have also begun ground testing ahead of a first flight expected this summer, the Air Force said in a press release.

"Starting ground tests is a key milestone for the CCA Increment 1 program," Air Force Chief of Staff Gen.

AltaGram – June / July 2025

Website: <http://altamoaa.org> • Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/altacachapter>

Alta California Chapter MOAA, P.O. Box 541, Yuba City, CA 95992

David Allvin said in the release. "This phase bridges the gap between design and flight, reducing integration risks, boosting confidence, and laying the



groundwork for a successful first flight and eventual fielding to the warfighter."

General Atomics and Anduril, whose drone prototypes are respectively dubbed the YFQ-42A and YFQ-44A, are facing off for the Air Force program after their selection by the service last year. At least one of the prototypes is expected to head into production for the program's first tranche or "increment," although other firms are also able to compete for the opportunity.

– Breaking Defense

New Museum Opened on National Medal of Honor Day

This year's National Medal of Honor Day, which was Tuesday, March 25, was marked by the formal opening of a museum dedicated to the medal in Arlington, Texas.



◀ *The National Medal of Honor Museum in Arlington, Texas, is seen before dawn on March 7, 2025.*

Some of the museum exhibits include "From Rails to Rotors," which focuses on Vietnam-era rescues with the Huey helicopter and features a virtual reality experience that simulates such a rescue; "More Than a Medal," which shows the life stories of medal recipients; and interactive exhibits that let visitors ask recipients questions virtually.

Museum tickets go for \$30 apiece, though they can be upgraded to include the VR experience or the VIP Guided Tour. The National Medal of Honor Museum Foundation operates the museums and is funded through private donations.

While the Medal of Honor was first presented in 1863, a national day for the honor and its recipients was not declared until 1990. About 3,500 of the medals have been awarded, of which over 600 were awarded posthumously, according to the Congressional Medal of Honor Society. Over 1,500 of the medals, nearly 43%, were given for service in the Civil War. There are only 61 living recipients today.

- Stars and Stripes

Share those Memories

We are featuring the military bios of our members in our bimonthly newsletters. I will be contacting you, one at a time, as the months progress, asking that you provide a 300-word history of your military experience. We all have served in different capacities and have stories to tell. It will be interesting to read these histories and learn more about our members.

– Bill Crocker

There I Was...

...a brief look back at the military history of

Norb Budzinski

Norb was attending Western Michigan University in the fall of 1958, hiding from the draft board along with several other 20-year-old students, when they were discovered. Greetings! One enterprising member of the group had learned about the Air Force Aviation Cadet Training Program in which a recruit with two years of college credits and the ability to pass the aptitude test and the flight physical

could be admitted to the Air Force pilot or navigator school. For Norb and a number like him, this Air Force program sounded like an OK option. He volunteered for navigator school.



As classes at Western ended in the spring, Norb and a few friends headed for aviation cadet preflight training at Lackland AFB. After 12 weeks, the survivors transferred to

Harlingen AFB and commenced navigator training. About half of those completing the preflight training at Lackland went on to pilot school in Texas, Arizona, Oklahoma, Alabama, or Florida.

Following navigator training in July 1960, Norb was assigned to a series of follow-on training schools to become combat ready. He was assigned to bomb navigator computer training in the B-52 systems at Mather AFB for 8 months; B-52 ground school at Castle AFB for 3 weeks; B-52 flight training at Walker AFB for 12 weeks; and aircrew survival training at Stead AFB for 3 weeks. He was then assigned to K. I. Sawyer AFB in the fall of 1961 for permanent duty.

Norb was a member of a 6-man crew on a B-52H. He became combat ready, went on ground alert, and flew several airborne alert missions. He spent six

AltaGram – June / July 2025

Website: <http://altamooa.org> • Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/altacachapter>

Alta California Chapter MOAA, P.O. Box 541, Yuba City, CA 95992

years at Sawyer and became enthused with the idea of an Air Force career.

While looking for career-broadening opportunities, Norb applied for the SR-71 aircraft program at Beale AFB, was accepted, and spent four years flying recon missions, much of the time TDY from Beale.



After this, he was selected for an assignment to Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell AFB. After graduation, he was selected for a Southeast Asia tour at U-Tapao Airfield, Thailand, in bomber operations. He was a planner and operations mission director. He was on this assignment in December 1972 when Operation Linebacker II, the bombing of North Vietnam, took place.

Norb returned to the states in July 1973 and was assigned again to Beale AFB, this time as an intelligence officer. Talk about career broadening! Fortunately, he was given a job involving hardware and collection systems. He then volunteered to work in the Wing Aircraft Maintenance Division where he held the positions of squadron maintenance officer, OMS commander, and maintenance control officer.

Norb retired in July 1984 as a lieutenant colonel with 25 years of active duty.

USPS Unveils 250th Anniversary Stamps Honoring Military Branches



◀ *The U.S. Postal Service unveiled 250th anniversary stamps for the Army, Navy and Marine Corps on May 19, 2025. (U.S. Postal Service)*

The U.S. Postal Service is honoring three of the nation's military branches — the Army, Navy and Marine Corps — with commemorative stamps to mark 250 years of service.

Each of the three stamps features the respective name of the military service, the service seal and the inscriptions "250 Years of Service," "Since 1775" and "Forever/USA."

The three military-themed commemorations are in the "Forever" class of postage and can be used to send a one-ounce first-class letter, regardless of the current price of first-class postage, according to the release.

Providing a personal note, Lt. Gen. Paul Rock Jr. director of Marine Corps staff, shared how the USPS has played a role in his military service.

"I still have letters that my wife wrote me when I was a young first lieutenant overseas on my first shipboard deployment, and I cherish the pictures that came through the mail from my children the first time I went to war — precious memories made possible by the U.S. Postal Service," Rock said.



"That connection remains strong to this day, and I thank the USPS for helping us share this great milestone with all Americans. These stamps will travel around the world and across our nation, carrying with them the message of patriotism, service and unwavering dedication."

- *Military Times*

Cheddar Up Offers Simple Way to Make Dues Payments and Donations

Members now have a simple, convenient way to pay their chapter dues and make donations using their credit card. Cheddar Up enables our chapter to collect payments online for free.

To pay your annual dues or contribute to our chapter's charitable giving, just click on this URL: <https://alta-ca-chapter.CheddarUp.com>.



AltaGram – June / July 2025

Website: <http://altamoaa.org> • Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/altacachapter>

Alta California Chapter MOAA, P.O. Box 541, Yuba City, CA 95992



Alta California Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
PO Box 541
Yuba City, CA 95992



Alta California Chapter Annual Dues, Membership Year 2025

January 1, 2025

Dear Valued MOAA Chapter Member or Prospective Member -

Your support for MOAA and the Alta California Chapter is much appreciated. As with all organizations, our strength is in numbers, and we need your voice along with ours to advocate for the many issues facing our active, former and retired military, as well as surviving spouses. In addition, we count on local dues to help fund important projects such as the annual Stand Down for veterans in our area. We also support the Civil Air Patrol (CAP), the Yuba Sutter Sea Cadets, Lindhurst High Air Force JROTC, and the Yuba City High Navy JROTC programs.

We hope you will join our chapter or renew your Alta California Chapter membership and enjoy the camaraderie of the members and the excellent presentations at our luncheon meetings and activities. Specific information about meetings and activities appears in our *AltaGram* newsletter. The Alta California Chapter appreciates your membership and support.

Annual Dues for Alta California Chapter MOAA, Jan 1, 2025 – Dec 31, 2025

\$20.00 Regular Member ** or \$10.00 Surviving Spouse (SS)

Add \$_____ for additional donation to fund such causes as Veterans Stand Down, Civil Air Patrol, Sea Cadets, Naval JROTC and AF JROTC.

Total Enclosed \$_____. Please make check payable to: Alta CA Chapter MOAA

Mail to: Alta California Chapter MOAA, P.O. Box 541, Yuba City, CA 95992
or renew online at: <https://chapterdues.moaa.org/Membership.aspx>.

Name: _____ Service: _____ Officer Rank _____

Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

☐ **Check if Surviving Spouse**

☐ **Check if interested in serving in a leadership position**

Phone: _____ e-mail address _____

**** Help us recruit a new member. Those who do not already belong to national MOAA can receive one or two years' FREE Chapter membership by joining national MOAA. See: www.moaa.org.**

AltaGram – June / July 2025

Website: <http://altamoaa.org> • Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/altacachapter>

Alta California Chapter MOAA, P.O. Box 541, Yuba City, CA 95992



**Alta California Chapter
Military Officers Association of America
P.O. Box 541
Yuba City, CA 95992**

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

AltaGram – June / July 2025

Website: <http://altamoaa.org> • Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/altacachapter>

Alta California Chapter MOAA, P.O. Box 541, Yuba City, CA 95992