



Summer 2010 Newsletter

Notes from Rance

The Chapter has been doing some great things recently that we want to share with you. We are particularly pleased with our support of soldiers and their families, as described below. We have been doing more and more there and have reached the happy position where units are calling us for support as they deploy or return, and we are able to meet their requests. Our increased support to ROTC/JROTC has improved tremendously, under the leadership of Gene Rafanelli, as you can read below. Please share these accomplishments with others you know and encourage them to join too: the more support we have from you the more we can provide!

Recent events

Support to Reserve and National Guard Units

On 16 June we welcomed home the 3666th Maintenance Company, an event which was reported in both the Arizona Republic and on TV. Gene and Judy Rafanelli and Ray Boucher did a great job there and I'm going to let Gene tell the story himself:

"Below are some pictures of the homecoming ceremony for the 3666th Ordnance Company's return from Iraq. It was an extraordinary event. Most of the previous "formal" welcome ceremonies have taken place some days or weeks after the soldiers actually returned and were rather sterile events by comparison. This event took place in an Air National Guard hanger at Sky Harbor Airport. We arrived about two hours before the scheduled beginning of the event to set up the AUSA table. At that time cheerful, enthusiastic families and friends carrying many signs and banners were already pouring into the hanger. Inside the hanger, bleachers were set up on either side of the doors leading out to the tarmac. A little before 1400, with the hanger doors still closed, the airplane carrying the soldiers pulled up outside the hanger. They had a stop-over at Ft. Bliss the night before. They de-planed and formed a company formation outside the hanger. The doors opened and the troops marched in to thunderous applause and the 108th Army Band playing "God Bless America". It was a moment to behold. Once the troops got inside, MG Hugo Salazar, the AZ State Adjutant General, accompanied by the Ordnance Battalion and Brigade commanders and staff, greeted the returning soldiers and then dismissed them. At that point, the families and friends, now numbering about 400, poured out of the bleachers onto the hanger floor to greet their loved ones who they had not seen for many months. After a brief "re-acquaintance" soldiers and their families filed out to the parking lot to head home.

The Chapter provided a 10' "welcome home banner", two sheet cakes decorated with unit logos, bottled water, chips and cookies. We also gave free AUSA memberships to three of the returning soldiers. A group from Bank of America was next to us on the floor also dispensing food and drinks. We have done a number of farewell and welcome home events in the last year. Initially, we went to the units and asked them if we could participate. That situation has recently reversed wherein units are now coming to us asking for our support. Our next welcome home event will be for the 1404th Ordnance Company on 11 July in Show Low, AZ."



Gene and Judie at AUSA Table – sign was then hung on railings
(They chose the motto, not us!)

I'd also like to add some comments from COL (R) Jeanne Blaes:

"I wanted to let you all know that the BN Commander (LTC Sheppard), his CSM, and the entire 3666th Maint. Company and their Family members were so THRILLED with the support that AUSA provided them for their homecoming! I personally want to thank all of you for making that day special for them. I know that they have something that they would like to present to AUSA at our next meeting. Thanks again for supporting our troops ... I know that we can truly say that we made a difference on Wednesday. Jeanne"

We also supported the 1/415 Regiment Welcome Home Warrior function on 16 May and continue to work with the 855th MP CO, who has been "Adopted" by TASER International. We are working on matching up other units and sponsors. If you want to participate in this wonderful activity please let COL (R) Jeanne Blaes or me know (see contacts below).

Army Birthday/Flag Day Luncheon

We had a wonderful function on 13 June, including the guest speaker Rick Smith, CEO and founder of TASER, one of our great corporate sponsors. Mike Perry from the Army Heritage Center Foundation in Carlisle told us about his organization and the need to preserve documents of historical significance. He was in town to review some of the late LTG Sackton's historical items held by Park Shaw. Gene Rafanelli arranged for the Sons of the American Revolution to be the color guard and also for April Manchester to sing the Star Spangled Banner and God Bless the USA – she outstanding, a welcome addition to the whole event.

Star Spangled Banner and God Bless the USA – she was truly excellent, as was the whole event



Color Guard posting flag



Shaw, Morris & Dahle table ignoring me

Military Family Ticket Fund Presentation

This fund allows military families with a deployed spouse, regardless of service, to attend family oriented programs at the Gammage, such as Mary Poppins. It was brought to our attention by CSM (R) Chuck Van Dam, who is also our nominee for the AUSA Volunteer Family of the Year – he and his wife are truly deserving of this honor. This year we made a token presentation of the check for \$1,250 at the luncheon and then the real thing at the Gammage performance of “The Heights”, in front of about 100 family members and the cast. We have been supporting this fund for several years and urge our members to do likewise. If you are interested please review the contact information below:

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LTG Sackton’s Service at Arlington Cemetery

General Sackton, who passed away this past February, was afforded full military honors when he was buried at Arlington on 20 June. It was truly a moving and magnificent event celebrating a great soldier and American. Park Shaw was unable to attend due to a medical ailment at the last minute (which broke his heart!) so I attended as representative for him and his many military friends. Words cannot describe how powerful of an experience it was, and how stirring was the ceremony. I will let these pictures speak for that moment. The flag was presented to Paula Cunningham, LTG Sackton’s niece. LTG (R) Roger Thompson from AUSA was also kind enough to attend.



Upcoming events

Our next scheduled chapter event is the **JROTC Armed Forces Career Officers' Day** luncheon on Tuesday, **23 November** at McCormick Ranch Golf Club. We have been hosting this event for quite some time now, and it is getting bigger and better each year. We need your help in encouraging schools to send cadets, representing any branch of service, and other students interested in a career in the military. We also need sponsors for this event, so we will be asking for your support in the fall.

We have also scheduled our next **Awards Luncheon** for **13 February 2011** at the same location. We planned it that far out in order to get GEN Sullivan as our guest speaker. While he is in town, he will also meet with our corporate members and others interested in becoming corporate members.

Web site

We are continuing to make a great deal more use of our [Chapter Web Site](#), now being maintained by Mary Vetrano. Note that you can now track our upcoming events and even pay for them or make contributions there via Pay Pal, using your credit card. As we mentioned before, all our activities come at a price, both financially and man-power wise. Your contributions will help with the former. But we also ask that you all be recruiters: tell your friends and business acquaintances about the great things our chapter is doing for the soldiers and their families and get them to sign up as new members or corporate sponsors. And bring them to the meetings - we really need the new blood!

Chapter Officers and monthly meeting

Although we get new blood regularly we still need help, especially with the position of Secretary and on some of our functions. Please let any Board/EXCOM member know if you are interested. We normally meet on the 1st Monday of month at 1400 hours at Pettygrew Armory at 5425 E. McDowell, or holding meetings at the site of our corporate members. This provides us with an opportunity to observe their operations and tell them about our Chapter.

Please let me know if your company is interested in sponsoring one of our monthly meetings.

AZ Territorial Chapter EXCOM

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AZ Territorial Chapter EXCOM Continued

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