



Heart of Texas Chapter  
Military Officer Association of America  
P.O. Box 23964 Waco, TX 76702-3964

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April 2018

## **PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

Happy April!

Fields of bluebonnets seem to have exploded over the last few days as we moved into April! The long time tradition of picture-taking alongside Texas highways and roads with children, grandchildren, lovers, and pets posing among the deep blue blossoms is upon us. A safety reminder is warranted as we enjoy the beauty of our wonderful state: please pull safely off the road as far from the traffic as possible, watch out for fire ant beds and emerging snakes as you walk to the thickest patches of blue, and drive cautiously when approaching busy picturesque areas because adults and children are usually mesmerized by the bluebonnet experience. Enjoy the beauty of the Texas Spring!

One place you will not see bluebonnets are the greens of Cottonwood Creek golf course. However, the annual opportunity to enjoy a day of golf, a great barbeque lunch, an exciting silent auction, and prizes totaling over \$5000 await you as you participate in our annual Freedom Is Not Free golf scramble. The beauty of our annual scholarship fundraiser is all funds go toward scholarships and grants for students, and assistance to veterans organizations in Central Texas. Let's all pull together and sign up friends, neighbors, and family members to enjoy a round of golf that directly impacts the lives of promising young people in our area. Remember, each of you can be a walking advertisement to get the word out to friends you know are golfers. Registration forms and signup sheets are available in this newsletter, or you can call me and I will personally send you a packet.

MOAA's advocacy role is active this Spring. A key issue for our national defense is recruiting and retaining quality young people to serve in our military services. And a key factor in

securing the most talented is compensation, specifically military pay. Last month, MOAA included letters for you to send to Congressional majority and minority leaders advocating support for continued pay raises to maintain parity with private sector wages. This month, MOAA includes cards for you to send to our Texas congressmen and senators, again expressing support for continued compensation increases. These cards are important elements of support for key issues impacting our national defense, and they are noted by Congress. For more in-depth information, I encourage you to check out MOAA's website at [www.moaa.org](http://www.moaa.org). Your action does make a difference!

Navy Week activities 2-8 April give us an opportunity to see the latest our US Navy is doing to project US presence around the world. The culmination is the airshow at TSTC on 7-8 April. Of course our annual Freedom Is Not Free golf scramble scheduled for 21 April is our monthly gathering. I look forward to seeing each of you at this event as we continue to support our Central Texas community. Thank you in advance for your service and upholding MOAA's commitment to "Never Stop Serving!"

Respectively,  
Dennis DeGraff

### **PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR 2018**

**17 May**, Thursday Dinner Meeting, RCC, Joyce Denke, "Donut Dolly"

**21 June**, Thursday Dinner Meeting, RCC, guest speaker or entertainment

**19 July**, Thursday Dinner Meeting, RCC, speaker or entertainment to be announced.

**Ridgewood Country Club is at 7301 Fish Pond Rd.**

### **CHAPTER WEB SITE**

We now have a chapter web site, [www.hotmoaa.org](http://www.hotmoaa.org). It now only has the golf tournament info shown but more information will be added in the near future.

## Upcoming Events and Information Items

### **SAT., APRIL 21 GOLF FUNDRAISER INFO**

All are welcome to participate. The April 21, Saturday, morning event at the Cottonwood Creek Golf Course is open to the public and all military. Cost is \$100 per player and includes cart, golf fee, continental breakfast, gift bag, beverages and catered BBQ lunch. Registration starts at 6:30 a.m. and tee-off is at 8 a.m. Registration is requested by April 14TH to help with planning but we will still work to accommodate sign-ups after the date and walk-ups on day of golf as possible. Individuals will be assigned to a team. Payment can be made on day of registration with check or cash; the clubhouse does have an ATM machine. There will be individual and team prizes with four hole-in-one prize opportunities with new car as grand prize on one hole. There will also be a silent auction and prize drawings. Members not golfing are welcome to come for the BBQ lunch at \$10 and it will start around noon. Points of contact are listed below and can assist on golf sign-ups, donations or lunch reservations.

Any and all donations and support are welcome and appreciated. Hole sponsors are a minimum of \$150; all levels of cash donations are welcome; the sponsor of a Wounded Warrior teams is \$400; and donations of gift cards or gift certificates or item donations are welcome for use as prizes plus items are needed for the silent auction.

A donor form and golf registration form are included with this newsletter and also can be obtained any time from the golf event contacts.

Points of Contact are Vince Tobola, email: [vtobola@aol.com](mailto:vtobola@aol.com); Phone #254-709-5795 or Harold Rafuse, e-mail: [hrafuse@hot.rr.com](mailto:hrafuse@hot.rr.com), Phone#254-717-8112 and Jimmie Hanes, e-mail [jhanes@hot.rr.com](mailto:jhanes@hot.rr.com), 254-405-4765.

### **2018 CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES**

The Board is always looking for prospects to join the chapter. Please contact Vince Tobola, [vtobola@aol.com](mailto:vtobola@aol.com) or call 709-5795 cell if you need an application form or a chapter introduction letter or have questions. Chapter member dues are \$25 and due starting January 1st. These can be paid at the dinner meeting or mailed to the PO Box address on first page of newsletter. Thanks to all for renewals and we appreciate your ongoing support.

### **APRIL SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION**

**Birthdays:** Charles Adamo, Judy Bauer, Gaye Bennett, Lori Brubaker, Wally Burns, Voncyle Burns, Kathy Endres, Susan Dossett, Patsy Norman Farr, Betty Goodwin, Jimmie Hanes, Susan Perdue, Lyn Roberts, and Joanie Torbett.

**Anniversaries:** Ted and Lyn Lawson, Gene and Sheila Lednicky, Bill and Susan Perdue, and Don and Ann Speed.

**Congratulations & best wishes to all on your special day.**

### **HEADS-UP NOTE ON SPRING AIR SHOW**

The Heart of Texas Airshow will be held at TSTC Airport on April 7 -8, 2018 with the main feature being an air performance by the NAVY Blue Angels.

### **HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING**

The monthly Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, **April 24, 2018**, 5 p.m., at the Waco Cottonwood Creek Golf Course.

### **SPOUSES BRIDGE CLUB LUNCH**

The next Bridge Club session will be held on 26 April 2018. The contact is Carole Hardeman, 744-1198 and also thanks to Carole as the club sponsor for the bridge activity.

### **MOAA APRIL MAGAZINE CARDS**

Please note that the April issue includes postcards to send to elected representatives on subject dealing with the military pay gap and need to take measures to eliminate the pay gap.

### **LOCAL EVENT**

- The City of Waco's annual free Brazos Nights concert series starts on Friday, April 20 at downtown Waco at Indian Springs Park. The free concert begins at 7 p.m. and there will also be a variety of Waco's food trucks, family-friendly activities and fund along the Brazos River. The other free show dates are May 4, June 8 and July 4 with the annual Fourth of the Brazos celebration at Touchdown Alley at McLane Stadium. More information can be found at [www.brazosnightswaco.com](http://www.brazosnightswaco.com).

## **BUDGET BILL ITEMS**

The funding bill was signed goes through the end of fiscal year 2018. The bill, which provides relief from sequestration budget caps for service members, veterans, and their families, funds the 2.4 percent pay raise for service members and fully funds America's sacred mission to bring home missing Americans from long-ago battlefields.

The omnibus also would provide a 9.5 percent increase for VA and fully fund VA's new electronic health care record, authorize VA to provide mental health care for veterans with other than honorable discharges, require VA to improve claims processing for veterans exposed to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, fund improvements to VA's burn pits registry, opioid abuse treatment and prevention, mental health programs, including mental health screenings and additional services for veterans with other-than-honorable discharges before leaving service, suicide prevention outreach, research on gender-appropriate prosthetics and toxic exposure and other important improvements for veterans. However, the bill omits several items for the VA that supporters had been pushing for. These were consolidating and reforming VA's community care programs, expanding family caregiver support to pre-9/11 veterans, and better aligning VA's infrastructure to its main mission of delivering quality care to veterans and expect these to be discussed again in next budget round.

The bill also includes: a 2.4 percent pay raise for service members, which they've been receiving since Jan. 1; \$700 billion for the military - the largest year-on-year funding increase for DoD in 15 years. That includes \$144 billion for weapons and equipment upgrades; a lift on defense spending caps with spending flexibility that will allow military leaders to use some funds appropriated this year in fiscal 2019; a \$234 million funding increase for NOAA and a 1.9 percent pay raise for federal civilians.

## **COMING FY 2019 BUDGET ITEMS**

The coming proposed budget has a 2.6 % military pay raise, equal to the Employment Cost Index; no new compensation cost share reforms, such as increases in TRICARE fees, and increases in end strength by 25,900. The military budget request is for \$715 billion and includes \$617 billion in the base budget, \$69 billion in overseas contingency funding and an additional \$30 billion for other programs. The budget proposal also puts more resources to sustaining family support initiatives.

## **VA SECRETARY DAVID SHULKIN OUT**

After weeks of speculation about the status of embattled VA Secretary David Shulkin, President Donald Trump announced the end of his tenure in a series of tweets on March 28.

"I am pleased to announce that I intend to nominate highly respected Admiral Ronny L. Jackson, MD, as the new Secretary of Veterans Affairs," Trump said via Twitter. "In the interim, Hon. Robert Wilkie of DOD will serve as Acting Secretary. I am thankful for Dr. David Shulkin's service to our country and to our GREAT VETERANS!" Robert Wilkie currently serves as the under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness at the Pentagon.

Rear Adm. Ronny Jackson, a 23-year Navy officer, currently serves as Trump's appointed physician. Jackson first reported to the White House in 2006 following a deployment to Iraq and has spanned three administrations, serving as President Barack Obama's appointed physician before working for Trump. He went through medical school at the University of Texas medical branch, was last in the headlines when he conducted Trump's physical in January.

For Shulkin, the ouster came after months of speculation on his status as his efforts at reform of the second largest agency in government bogged down amid open feuding with Trump administration political appointees, at the White House and within the VA itself. However, the rumors that Shulkin had lost favor escalated last month when VA Inspector Michael Missal accused him of "serious derelictions" in his travel expenses for a trip to London and Denmark last summer. After initially rejecting the charges from Missal, Shulkin accepted responsibility and agreed to pay the Treasury back for the \$4,132 airfare for his wife.

The IG's office followed up the travel expenses report with another one charging that failures of oversight had put patients at risk at the Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center, a flagship institution among the VA's more than 1,200 hospitals and outpatient clinics.

However, Shulkin's major falling out with the administration appeared to be over the expansion of the Veterans Choice Program allowing veterans under certain conditions to opt for private health care. The White House political appointees had pressed for an aggressive expansion of choice, while Shulkin wanted a more integrated approach that would avoid the "privatization" of VA health care.

## WACO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The HOT Chapter is a member of the Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce so chapter members can attend chamber events. The Chamber is located in downtown Waco at 101 S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street (254 757-5600).

- **Thurs, Apr 12**, 7:15 a.m. to 9:00 a.m. Greater Waco Chamber, YP Coffee with a Coach. A once a month opportunity to enjoy breakfast, conversation, and mentoring with a prominent leader in the Waco Community. The April Coffee will be with Matt Meadows, President/CEO of the Greater Waco Chamber. Cost is \$5.00. Can register on site or can call 757-5600.
- **Thurs, Apr 17**, 12:00 noon – 1:00 p.m. Industry tour at Midway ISD Administration with guest speakers Dr. George Kazanas, Superintendent and Rick Tullis, Midway ISD School Board member. Lunch will be provided and the event starts at noon. Please RSVP by registering on site or 757-5600.
- **Wed., Apr 18, Waco Chamber of Commerce, 10:30 – 11:30.** 1000 Friends of Waco would like to invite the community to participate in our monthly roundtable discussion focusing on Greater Downtown Waco. This monthly meeting series includes updates from various stakeholders working in the greater downtown area including: the city of Waco, the Downtown Merchants Association, the Public Improvement District and the Greater Waco Chamber.
- **Thurs., May 3**, Clay Pot, 416 Franklin Ave, Waco, 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This is the member networking event. Bring your business cards and be prepared to give a 45-second commercial about your business. You will pay the server directly for your meal. Please RSVP due to limited seating, to 757-5600 or register on site.

Note that the Waco Chamber of Commerce has free City maps and local area information for newcomers into the area. Another source of information on local area attractions and items of interest is the Waco Tourist Information Center that is located adjacent to the Texas Ranger Museum and Hall of Fame.

## NEW TRAINER PROPOSED FOR AIR FORCE

This July the USAF will reveal the result of one of its most hotly-contested procurement competitions in years — the T-X trainer. Initially, this will call for 350 new jets to replace the T-38C Talon in the Specialized Undergraduate Pilot Training (SUPT) phases.

The USAF launched T-X on December 30, 2016, when it released its formal request for proposals (RFP) for the Advanced Pilot Training (APT) requirement.

Planned procurement includes as many as 350 new trainers and could be worth as much as \$16.3 billion to the winning team. The USAF expected to select a winner of the T-X competition in 2017 (now slipped to July 2018). The aircraft is expected to enter service no later than Fiscal Year 2024. According to AETC, the period of operation for the T-X is 2026 to 2045, and the aircraft is set to fly 360 hours a year, at a mission readiness rate of at least 80 per cent. The total value of the program could reach \$16 billion.

The Air Force has named Joint Base San Antonio as the preferred location for the first TX-X Advanced Pilot Trainer. The service's other undergraduate pilot training bases are also in line to receive the T-X, including Columbus AFB in Mississippi, Laughlin and Sheppard AFB's in Texas, and Vance AFB in Oklahoma.

Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph is home to the Air Force instructor pilot training and it will help establish a T-X instructor pilot pipeline and also set the conditions to transition to T-X training at the other bases. Three prime contractors – Lockheed Martin, Boeing and Leonardo DRS- are competing for the contract.

## VISION CONCERNS

Over 8 million Americans experience unnecessary vision impairment due to uncorrected refraction errors that result from imperfections in the shape of the cornea and eye or aging of the lens. Persons may be born with a refractive error or acquire one as they age. Far-sightedness increases sharply with age, especially among adults in their eighties. The good news is that 75% can experience improved vision with prescribed eyeglasses, contact lenses or surgery. Although Medicare covers the cost of an annual eye exam, it does not cover the cost of eye glasses. However, new glasses can provide new lease on life so some accommodation should be considered.

## **MEDAL OF HONOR PRESENTATION**

President Donald Trump will soon award the Medal of Honor posthumously to an Army lieutenant who directed artillery fire from an exposed position for three hours while fending off "fanatical German infantrymen" during a 1945 battle near Houssen, France.

Garlin Murl Conner, then a first lieutenant, will be the third service member to be awarded the military's highest combat award since Trump took office. According to a White House statement released Thursday, Conner's widow, Pauline Lyda Wells Conner, and other families will be present at the medal ceremony. The date for the ceremony has yet to be announced.

In January 1945, Conner was serving as an intelligence officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, according to information released by the White House.

"Then-First Lieutenant Conner voluntarily left his position of relative safety to place himself in a better position to direct artillery fire onto the assaulting enemy infantry and armor," the White House announcement said. "He remained in an exposed position, which was 30 yards ahead of the defending force, for a period of three hours." During that time, enemy soldiers came within five yards of him and he was constantly at risk from friendly artillery shells, the announcement states. Despite all that, "he continued to direct the fire of friendly artillery, which ultimately repelled the assaulting enemy elements."

Conner survived the battle and would be discharged from the Army on June 22, 1945. He had first entered the service as an enlisted soldier in 1941, according to released information, and would ultimately participate in an amphibious assault landing on French Morocco and serve in combat operations in Italy and elsewhere in continental Europe. He received a battlefield commission in June 1944 and became a lieutenant.

Trump's announcement comes a day after the Lexington Herald-Leader of Lexington, Kentucky, reported that Pauline Conner, 88, had received a call from Trump notifying her of the award. According to the publication, Conner was a native of Clinton County, Kentucky. He died at age 79 in 1998, the outlet reported.

## **JOHN GLENN AND BASEBALL LEGEND TED WILLIAMS**

Nearly six decades after he retired from the game, Boston Red Sox legend Ted Williams remains one of the most accomplished and revered players in baseball history. The last player to hit .400 through an entire season - a feat he accomplished in 1941 - Williams had a lifetime batting average of .344 and 521 home runs. He was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1966, with 93 percent of the vote.

Williams' stats almost certainly would be much higher had he not left baseball to serve his country - twice. Commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps, he trained as a naval aviator during World War II but saw no combat. Seven years later, reservist Williams was called up again to serve in the Korean War as a fighter-bomber pilot with the 1st Marine Air Wing.

It was in Korea where Williams met John Glenn, the future astronaut and U.S. senator. They quickly became good friends, and Williams flew half his missions as Glenn's wingman. "I had been a baseball fan since I was a boy, and meeting Ted was a thrill," Glenn recalled in his autobiography, *John Glenn: A Memoir*. "He was tall, genial, and easy to like, and he developed a voracious taste for the chocolate fudge [my wife's] sister, Jane, would send from home. ... He was a fine pilot, and I liked to fly with him."

## **PENTAGON AND PROPOSED PARADE**

The Pentagon will plan a parade, as requested by President Trump, will include a "heavy air component," according to a Defense Department memo released recently. US Northern Command will lead the execution of the parade, with is tentatively scheduled for Veteran's Day, with the Joint Staff taking primary responsibility for planning, according to the memo that was addressed to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Joseph Dunford. The parade will integrate with the Washington, D.C., Veterans Day parade and will run from the White House to the Capitol. The parade will represent veterans from previous wars by formations wearing period uniforms, the memo states. It will include only wheeled vehicles, no tanks, to minimize damage to the streets. The air component will "include older aircraft as available," will come at the end of the parade, states the memo.



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