



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

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April 2019

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

President's Column

Greetings,

It seems that each new month offers us opportunities to exercise our freedoms as Americans. April is no exception. We find time honored religious observances, significant days in military history and local special events like the upcoming Air Show. Also, we can't forget that April 15 will soon be here. "What a country."

Special thanks go to Nancy Parrish for an enlightening presentation on WW-II Women Airforce Service Pilots (WASP). Her work on the history of these groundbreaking aviators is most impressive. My thanks to Judy Bauer for recommending Nancy. Additionally, thank you MOAA members for a nice turnout on March 21.

The April 6-7 Heart of Texas Air Show at TSTC gives the community a chance to see modern airpower capabilities as well as historical and unique aircraft. Performances by the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds, F-35 Lightning II Demo, U.S. Army Special Operations Command Black Daggers Parachute Team will take place plus much more. You may obtain advanced tickets by calling (303) 862-2869.

Your help is needed in making our annual HOT MOAA Golf Tournament for Scholarships a success. The May 10 event is quickly approaching and you can contribute in many ways. In addition to playing in the tournament and making a generous Sponsorship contribution or Sponsoring a Hole, you can donate door prizes and help out at the Cottonwood Creek Golf Course. Again your contributions and involvement make our HOT MOAA Scholarships for young folks possible.

In addition to the above, your MOAA Board asks for your help in recommending guest speakers and entertainment for future meetings. Just forward your recommendations to Joe Agueri. And, of course, I'd like to receive your nominations for new members and we will get sign up forms to them.

Have a blessed Easter Season and "Never Stop Serving".

Respectfully,
Gary Urban

PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR 2019

10 May, Friday Afternoon, Annual Scholarship Fundraiser Golf Tournament, Cottonwood Creek Golf Course, Waco.

May, there will be no dinner meeting due to the scholarship fundraiser golf tournament.

20 Jun, Thursday, RCC, Dinner meeting with guest speaker, Wiley Stem, Waco City Manager.

18 Jul, Thursday, RCC, Dinner meeting with speaker or entertainment to be announced
Ridgewood Country Club is located at 7301 Fish Pond Road

HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

The monthly Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, **April 23, 2019, 5 p.m., UNCLE DAN'S BBQ & RIBHOUSE**, 1001 Lake Air Drive.

APRIL SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION

Birthdays: Charles Adamo, Judy Bauer, Gaye Baugh, Mort Bowman, Lori Brubaker, Wally Burns, Kathy Endres, Patsy Norman Farr, Jimmie Hanes, Bill Perdue, Lyn Powers, and D.D. Rogers.

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

CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL

Upcoming Events and Information Items

APRIL 18 THURSDAY DINNER MEETING AT RIDGEWOOD BANQUET ROOM, GUEST SPEAKER, JOHN CORATHERS AND JOHN FERREL ON REACH "HORSES FOR WARRIORS"

****SOCIAL HOUR: 6:00 P.M. **, **CALL TO TABLES 6:30 P.M. *, *INTRO & ANNOUNCEMENTS, 6:35 P.M. **, **DINNER 6:55 P.M. **, **DRAWING & GUEST SPEAKER 7:55 P.M.**

MENU: Champion salad with mesclun greens with sundried cranberries, feta cheese crumbles, spiced pecans and honey balsamic vinaigrette, chicken breast, BBQ brisket, Chef's choice of starch, vegetable and two desserts, Fresh Rolls and Butter, Fresh Brewed Iced Tea or Hot Tea and Coffee. Please note new dinner charge is \$33 per person, payable at registration table, cash or check made to HOT Chapter MOAA. Please call Vince Tobola, 254-709-5795 or e-mail vtobola@aol.com, NLT Tuesday 16 April, 6:00 p.m. for sign-ups. After this time, please contact as soon as possible if plans change and desire to attend and we will work to accommodate you at the dinner meeting.

NOTE: Summer dress code will be in effect, gentlemen collared shirt with slacks, coat and/or tie optional and ladies attire as desired.

WACO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The HOT Chapter is a member of the Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce so chapter members can attend chamber events and not pay non-member costs. Web site is wacochamber.com . The Chamber is located in downtown Waco at 101 S. 3rd Street (254 757-5600).

- Thurs., April 11, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Networking Form at Clay Pot, 416 Franklin Ave. This is opportunity to network for business contacts. Due to limited seating, please RSVP to networking forum on the web site. You will pay the server directly for the meal.
- Wed., April 17, 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon at Hustle, 605 Austin Avenue. 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.

2019 CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES

The Board is always looking for prospects to join the chapter. Please contact Vince Tobola, or call 709-5795 if you need an application form. Chapter member dues are \$25 and due starting January and will be prorated for new members joining later in year. These can be paid at the dinner meeting or mailed to the PO Box address on first page of newsletter. Thank you for your support.

21st ANNUAL "FREEDOM IS NOT FREE" SCHOLARSHIP GOLF TOURNAMENT

Our principal fundraiser will be held on Friday, May 10th. Registration starts at 11 a.m., and tee-off at 1 p.m. BBQ Lunch served at 11:30 a.m. Open to the public and all military. Includes chances for team and individual prizes plus four separate hole-in-one prizes. Golf registration donation is \$100 per person. Please register by May 3rd and registration after May 3rd will be accommodated on a space-available basis. Registration and sponsor & donor forms and donor/sponsor levels are on the web site, hotmoaa.org. Info will be coming to members also.

We are asking for full chapter membership involvement and participation. You can play in the tournament, get a foursome together, sponsor a hole, donate to the fundraiser, ask your colleagues and friends to play and/or donate, provide items as gift cards and certificates for prizes or help with event.

Donors and sponsors over \$150 to date are: Bob Rochell, Jim and Laura Milam, Gary Urban, Bobby and Donna Sammon, Vince Tobola, Charles "Doc" Anderson, Bill Bauer, Jon and Terri Ker, John Householder, Harold Rafuse, Joe Bowden, American Bank, First National Bank of Central Texas, Central National Bank, Community Bank & Trust, Texas State Technical College Foundation, Stonewood Dental, Blackhawk Modifications, TSTC Foundation, Mattson Financial Services, and National United.

Contacts are: Vince Tobola, 254-709-5795, vtobola@aol.com, Harold Rafuse, 254-717-8112 hrafuse@hot.rr.com, & Jimmie Hanes, 254-405-4765, jhanes@hot.rr.com.

MOAA CONCERNS ON ACTIVE DUTY PAY RAISE AND FUTURE ACTIONS

Service members are in line for their largest raise in 10 years, but as with all budget items, there are no guarantees. President Donald Trump's budget proposal calls for a 3.1 percent increase in military basic pay. The figure matches the Employment Cost Index (ECI) from October 2018, the established benchmark lawmakers should use to set the raise service members receive on Jan. 1, 2020.

With the budget request and the ECI in agreement, service members and their families can breathe easy, right? Not exactly.

MOAA has long made the protection of military pay and benefits a top priority. The issue will be one of three core advocacy elements to this year's Storming the Hill event, where MOAA members from across the nation will make their top issues known to representatives in Washington, D.C. April. Here are some of the reasons why:

CBO concerns: Pay caps -- holding the basic military pay raise below the ECI -- aren't off the budget radar. December's Congressional Budget Office report on ways to reduce the federal deficit includes a suggestion to "cap basic pay raises for military service members at 0.5 percentage points below the increase in the ECI for five years starting in 2020 and then return them to the ECI benchmark in 2025." Lawmakers looking to free up funds, or DoD officials seeking to shuffle their budgets, could see the CBO report as cover for a move that could prove costly to service members and their families.

Health of the force: Fair compensation is an element of readiness -- underpaying service members will lead to the loss of well-qualified, well-trained men and women, and that means a less-secure nation. As services struggle with recruiting goals, and as retention experts try to figure out what the new Blended Retirement System will mean to retain the best talent, the last thing the military can afford is a decrease in overall benefits for its members.

Beyond basic pay: Even if the 3.1 percent raise goes into effect, service members still could see reductions in other benefits, including their retirement contributions and housing allowances, and their purchasing power at commissaries and military exchanges. Their families also could face increases in TRICARE fees. An impressive top-line figure is a good start, but it's not enough to ensure military families receive all of the benefits earned by service.

VA RECOMMENDS DROPPING BLUE WATER NAVY LEGAL BATTLE

VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said during congressional testimony at end of March that he would recommend that the Justice Department not contest a recent federal court ruling that will pave the way for the return of earned disability benefits for some 90,000 so-called Blue Water Navy veterans. In *Procopio v. Wilkie*, the VA secretary was sued by Navy veteran Alfred Procopio Jr., a Life member of VFW Post 6587 in Spring Lake Park, Minn., who was denied service connection for prostate cancer and diabetes mellitus — both illnesses are among the 14 presumptive diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure — because he was assigned aboard an aircraft carrier inside Vietnam's 12-mile territorial waters but never on dry land or within Vietnam's inland waterways. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit focused on the intent of the 1991 Agent Orange Act, which was to grant a presumption of service connection for certain diseases to veterans who "served in the Republic of Vietnam."

At issue was whether service within territorial waters constituted service "in the Republic of Vietnam." By a 9-2 decision, the court ruled it did.

BIO – GUEST SPEAKER – JOHN CORATHERS

John is a veteran volunteer with the Horses for Warriors program and is retired from both active duty Army and Department of the Army Civil Service. His Army service included three tours in Viet Nam, one with the 173d Airborne Brigade and two with the 5th Special Forces Group. He also served in Thailand with the 46th Special Forces Company. Following service in Southeast Asia John instructed at the Basic Airborne Course then tried out and was accepted as a member of the U.S. Army Parachute Team, Golden Knights. Upon completion of his tour with the Golden Knights he was accepted for the Aviation Warrant Officer course and completed his Army career as rotary wing aviator and instructor pilot in Huey, Kiowa and Blackhawk helicopters at various U.S. and overseas locations.

John's civil service career started in Wiesbaden, Germany as the Operations and Air Traffic and Airspace officer for the newly re-established Army Airfield. He was then promoted to the position of Chief of Plans and Operations for the Wiesbaden Military Community. Upon completion of his overseas tour he was assigned to Fort Hood, TX as an Exercise Coordinator. He spent the next 20 years in the III Corps Headquarters G-3 and G-5. At the time of his civil service retirement John was the civilian Chief of Plans and Exercises.

Upon retirement he purchased his first horse and began to realize a lifelong dream of becoming a horseman. John resides in Belton, TX and is grateful to be able to participate in the Horses for Warriors program.

FISCAL YEAR 2020 BUDGET FOR VETERANS' PROGRAMS

At end of March, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie testified before a Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs hearing regarding the president's Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 budget request for VA. Secretary Wilkie supported the president's 7.5 percent increase of VA's budget and discussed how it enables VA to improve customer service and implement the numerous recently enacted such as the VA MISSION Act, the Forever GI Bill, and the Appeals Modernization Act. Secretary Wilkie also announced that VA has recommended the president drop the Blue Water Navy legal battle and start providing long-overdue benefits to veterans exposed to Agent Orange while serving off the coast of Vietnam.

Committee members expressed concerns with VA's reduction in funds for construction despite having a \$60 billion construction backlog and VA's plans to rely more heavily on private sector doctors. VA also indicated it would make a decision within the next three months on benefits for bladder cancer, hypertension, Parkinson's-like symptoms, and hypothyroidism related to Agent Orange exposure. The VFW and its Independent Budget (IB) coauthors submitted testimony opposing VA's proposal to round-down cost-of-living adjustments for compensation benefits and encouraging Congress to properly fund veterans' care and benefits.

DOD FISCAL YEAR 2020 NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION BUDGET REQUEST

At end of March, Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick M. Shanahan and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Joseph F. Dunford testified before the House Committee on Armed Services. The hearing focused on the Department of Defense (DOD) Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Budget request for the FY2020 National Defense Authorization Act. The president's budget request for overall defense is \$750 billion for the FY2020, a \$34 billion increase from FY2019. The request focuses on military modernization, which the military has been unable to achieve for the past three decades.

Acting Secretary Shanahan stated that both China and Russia are aggressively modernizing their militaries, especially in the space and cyber

domains, to erode U.S. global hegemony, a "central problem" for DOD. In light of this, the budget will invest heavily in prioritizing innovation and modernization to strengthen competitiveness across all domains—air, sea, land, space, and cyber. \$57.7 billion will go to procurement and modernization for U.S. fighters, \$14.1 billion to space, \$9.6 billion to offensive and defensive cyberspace operations, \$2.6 billion to improving and expanding cyber operations training, \$14.6 billion to fund roughly 6,400 combat and tactical vehicles, and \$14 billion to nuclear capabilities.

AUSTIN EVENT – APRIL 13-14 CAMP MABRY MILITARY MUSTER DAY AND RE-ENACTMENTS

Muster Day traces its roots back to when Texas was still a republic. In the early days, on an annual basis, the troops were 'mustered' or called to report. Over the years, the mustering of the troops became obsolete. However, the Texas Military Forces Museum as part of the Texas Military Forces yearly Open House at Camp Mabry, holds a Muster Day where reenactors of all periods from the Texas Revolution through current times can display their historical uniforms, weapons and equipment and show them to the general public. **There is a large WWII battle reenactment each day.** These battles feature 200 Allied and German soldiers recreating a WWII battle using original equipment, tanks, and weapons from the time period. **The museum (45,000 SF) will also be open Saturday from 8 am to 5 pm and Sunday from 8 am to 5 pm.**

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE, PARKING IS FREE. It is open to the public but an I.D. is required.

The following is the schedule:

Sat and Sun –8:00 a.m. Gates open

Sat and Sun – 9:00 36th ID Band Performance

Sat – 10:30 a.m. Opening Ceremony

Sat and Sun – 11:00 a.m.

Military Partner Demonstrations

First Responder Demonstrations

Sat and Sun – 1:30 p.m.

Texas Revolution Demonstrations

Civil War Demonstrations

Sat and Sun – 2:30 p.m. WWII Re-enactment

Sat and Sun – 3:00 p.m. 36 ID Band Performance

Camp Mabry is located at 2200 W. 35th Street, Austin. Phone number is 512-782-5659. Web site is at: texasmilitaryforcesmuseum.org .

TEXAS COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS **ADVOCACY FOR VETERANS**

Members of the Texas Council of Chapters visited offices of representatives and senators on March 26th to advocate on several issues affecting veterans listed below. Bob Lull and Vince Tobola participated from the HOT Chapter.

The first item was asking for support for House Bill 716. This would provide property tax relief to severely disabled veterans who have a VA disability rating of 80-90% disabled. These veterans would have an exemption of either 80 or 90% of property taxes they would otherwise pay. This will directly benefit over 50,000 Texas veterans. It was mentioned that this bill already has committed support of many veterans and non-profit groups and committed support of over 25 groups from all over Texas representing over 150,000 veterans. As a side note, there are around 1,700,000 veterans residing in the state.

The second item was asking support for House Bill 3412 to help provide access to all Texas veterans to a qualified veterans service officer. Current law requires with over 200,000 to provide the position, but other counties are not covered. All veterans should be able to utilize benefits that they are entitled to and many veterans are unaware of the benefits or the procedures for attaining them are often complicated. A qualified veteran's service officer knows the benefits and procedures to attain them. HB 3412 will establish a task force to study the situation within the state and make recommendations to fix it.

The third item was asking for support of Senate Bill 1180 to establish some funding level to assist with setting up veteran's treatment court to be available to all veterans. The treatment court is intended to facilitate treatment of a veteran to avoid repeat crimes and to address veteran issues as PTSD. It is not meant as a "get of jail card" but to help the veteran to avoid again repeat issues.

Another item was to ask support for House Bill 620 which is to continue and expand the suicide prevention public awareness campaign to work to stop veteran suicides.

Another item was to ask support for House Bill 306 which is provide for the creation of an open burn pit registry for certain service members and veterans. There are suspected side effects from being in the vicinity of burn pits in recent conflicts and this is to augment the VA registry.

APRIL 6 – 7 HEART OF TX AIRSHOW

The Heart Of Texas Airshow takes place in Waco at the Texas State Technical College (TSTC) airport April 6-7, 2019. We are proud to headline the U.S. Air Force THUNDERBIRDS in their third performance in Waco and their only appearance in Central and North Texas in 2019! The NEVER, EVER BEFORE SEEN 1st time in Texas and 2nd in the nation U.S. Air Force F-35 Lightning II Demo Team in full exhibition of the capabilities of this 5th generation fighter along with a Heritage Flight. The USASOC Black Daggers Parachute Team will jump in our flag and conduct a combat jump *and we have more military still signing on!* Our civilian performer lineup includes Wing Walking Greg & Ashley Shelton; Rob Holland- the Only pilot to achieve 7 time US National Aerobatic champion and 8 time US 4 minute freestyle champion; Trojan Phlyers Demo Team, Randy Ball's MiG17 jet demo, David Martin Aerobatics and many more on tap!

Experience exciting air show fun for the whole family as we bring world class military and civilian performers for edge of your seat excitement for all ages! Exhibits, vendors, great food, kids' activities and aircraft rides for the public in historic warbirds and helicopters are available. Follow on Facebook for up to the minute information and keep checking their website, HeartOfTexasAirshow.com for new performers and activities! There you will find everything you need to know - what there is to See & Do during the day, schedule timing, kids activities, vendors, exhibitors, sponsors, parking and directions to the TSTC Airport, lodging, things to do while you are in Waco and much more! Follow on Twitter and Instagram too! There are many ticket options for you. General Admission, Family Packs, Reserved Seating with Flight Line Seating or Chalet Seating, Photo Pit and Photo Tours. Pricing options for Ages 13+; Kids 7-12, Seniors 65+, Military with ID, College Student discounts. Children 6 and under are FREE (reserved seating options described at the web site). Please make sure you check for the correct date, either Saturday or Sunday, when you are purchasing reserved seating. Also, though General Admission does not include seating you must click on the seating map in order to show the discounts available.



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MOAA Capital switchboard hotline 1-800 272-6622
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