



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

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June 2019

**PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

Greetings:

Before jumping into June, let's reflect on the month we just moved on from. May provides special days for all Americans, to include National Day of Prayer and Mother's Day. Mother's Day is by far the occasion to make phone calls and send a card. This day is dearly loved by your Phone Company and Hallmark.

As in most communities around the America, May is probably the most meaningful month for Veterans and their families. With Memorial Day, Military Spouses Day and National Military Appreciation Day there were opportunities to reflect on the sacrifices made by past and present Military members. There were certainly ample events to take part in around our community this year. I hope your Memorial Day events were meaningful and safe.

The month of May was also meaningful for your MOAA Chapter. The final numbers are not all in but it looks like the annual "Freedom Is Not Free" Golf Tournament netted funds to allow us to once again assist young talented folks with their educational futures. Also, we may be able to assist deserving Veterans programs in our community. More on that at our meeting on June 20. In the meantime, join me in thanking our Golf Committee Members for their successful planning and keeping the rainy weather at bay. Thanks to all that contributed to and participated in the tournament on May 10.

The month of June brings us together again on June 20. The guest speaker will be Willey Stem, III, Baylor University graduate and City Manager for the City of Waco. There is a lot going on in Waco these days so be prepared to ask questions. You may also want to ask him about his father's military service in WW-II. Quite impressive.

Our thanks to members that are recommending future guest speakers. Joe Agueri has gotten superb suggestions on speakers and entertainment.

We also need your help in recruiting new members to our chapter. They are out there and want to join, but some of them may not know it yet.

Please remember MOAA members and your friends and neighbors that are experiencing health issues. Your encouragement may be just what is needed and they will appreciate your kindness.

Have a blessed month of June and be safe. As always, "Never Stop Serving".

Respectfully,

Gary Urban

**PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR 2019-20**

**18 Jul, Thursday, RCC,** Dinner meeting with 2019 Scholarship Awards and Entertainment by Ann Harder

**15 August, Thursday, RCC,** Dinner meeting with speaker or entertainment to be announced.

**19 September, Thursday, RCC,** Dinner meeting with speaker or entertainment to be announced.

**17 October, Thursday, RCC,** Dinner meeting with speaker or entertainment to be announced.

**21 November, Thursday, RCC,** Dinner meeting with speaker or entertainment to be announced.

**12 December, Thursday, RCC,** Dinner meeting with entertainment.

**5 June, 2020, Friday afternoon,** Annual Fundraiser Golf Tournament at Cottonwood Creek Golf Course. **Ridgewood Country Club is at 7301 Fish Pond Road**

## Upcoming Events and Information Items

**JUNE 20 THURSDAY DINNER MEETING AT  
RIDGEWOOD BANQUET ROOM,  
GUEST SPEAKER, WILEY STEM III,  
WACO CITY MANAGER**  
**\*\*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:** Garden salad with crisp romaine hearts, cherry tomatoes, English cucumber, herb croutons, cheddar cheese, ranch and Italian dressing, pork loin, chicken fried steak, 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 18 June, 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. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street (254 757-5600).

- Wed., June 19, 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. at Cultivate 7Twelve, 712 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.
- Wed., Jun 19, 12 Noon – 1:00 p.m. This quarterly luncheon is designed specifically for local business professionals and to provide an update on (our economy in one hour). Held at the Waco Greater Chamber. Meal cost is \$15. Go to web site to register.

### **BIO – GUEST SPEAKER – WILEY STEM III**

Wiley Stem III was appointed City Manager in March 2018. He has been with the City of Waco for over 41 years. He began his career at the City of Waco in the positions of: Management Analyst, Assistant Director of Public Works, Water/Wastewater Supervisor, and Director of Water Distribution and Wastewater Divisions. In 1999, he assumed the role of Assistant City Manager.

In 2015, Stem was promoted to Deputy City Manager where he was over all city departments and operations, while reporting directly to the City Manager.

Stem received his Bachelor of Business Administration from Baylor University in 1976. He is an active member of the International City Management Association (ICMA), the Texas City Management Association (TCMA), American Water Works Association (AWWA), and Water Environment Federation. He also served on the United Way Board and the Brazos G Regional Water Planning Group.

He and his wife Tonette enjoy activities with family, farming, cooking and Baylor sports.

### **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.

### **JUNE SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION**

**Birthdays:** Charles “Doc” Anderson, Stan Brubaker, Dennis DeGraff, Markham Dossett, Willie DuBose, Janet Russell, Mary Hanes, Ted Lawson, Gerry Milnor, Sarah Preddy, Wayne Purselley, Sally Robinson, Margaret Ross, Susie Rowe, Delisa Russell, Billie Sawyer, Don Schreiber, and Kay Sullivan.

**Anniversaries:** Pike and Marcia Anderson, Charles and Patsy Norman Farr, Jim and Kay Gompper, Don and Sally McErlean, Bill and Gerry Milnor, and Bob and Margaret Ross.

**CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL**

## HOUSE BILLS IN PROGRESS

On May 21<sup>st</sup>, the House of Representatives passed all 9 bills brought to the floor from the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs getting clear results for veterans on suicide prevention, transition assistance, and homelessness. In the wake of the national public health crisis of veteran suicide, five of these bills focus specifically on suicide prevention and mental healthcare. Full list of passed legislation:

1. **H.R. 2359** – Whole Veteran Act (Rep. Lamb – Veterans' Affairs)
2. **H.R. 1812** – Vet Center Eligibility Expansion Act (Rep. Roe – Veterans' Affairs)
3. **H.R. 1947** – To amend title 38, United States Code, to exempt transfers of funds from Federal agencies to the Department of Veterans Affairs for nonprofit corporations established under subchapter IV of chapter 73 of such title from certain provisions of the Economy Act, as amended (Rep. Roe – Veterans' Affairs)
4. **H.R. 2326** – Navy Seal Chief Petty Officer William Bill Mulder (Ret.) Transition Improvement Act of 2019 (Rep. Levin (CA) – Veterans' Affairs)
5. **H.R. 2333** – Support for Suicide Prevention Coordinators Act (Rep. Brindisi – Veterans' Affairs)
6. **H.R. 2340** – FIGHT Veteran Suicide Act (Rep. Rose – Veterans' Affairs)
7. **H.R. 1200** – Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-living Adjustment Act of 2019 (Rep. Luria – Veterans' Affairs)
8. **H.R. 2372** – Veterans' Care Quality Transparency Act (Rep. Underwood – Veterans' Affairs)
9. **H.R. 2045** – Veterans' Education, Transition, and Opportunity Prioritization Plan Act of 2019 (Rep. Wenstrup – Veterans' Affairs)

## TRUMP PICKS BARRETT TO LEAD THE AIR FORCE

The president at end of May nominated former U.S. Ambassador to Finland Barbara Barrett as the next Secretary of the Air Force. Barrett, who was also chairwoman of Aerospace Corporation, is an instrument-rated pilot who in 2009 became certified for space travel after training at the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center in Star City, Russia, and in Kazakhstan.

## CONGRESS ADVANCES LEGISLATION TO FIX KIDDIE TAX

At the end of May, the Senate and the House both passed legislation to end the Kiddie Tax. The Senate passed S. 1370, the *Gold Star Family Tax Relief Act*. The House passed H.R. 1994, the *Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement Act of 2019*, which includes a fix for the Kiddie Tax. Immediate congressional action is needed to fix the unintended consequence of the *Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017*, which doubled the taxes for military surviving children who receive their parent's retirement pay.

## HOUSE ARMED SERVICES HEARING ON MILITARY SUICIDE

During late May, the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Military Personnel and House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Health held a joint hearing on Military and Veteran Suicide. Ranking member Trent Kelly (R-MS) expressed that with approximately 20 veterans who die by suicide each day, "we must take decisive action to disrupt the status quo and reverse this epidemic." This summer, DOD will be releasing its first annual suicide report to address military suicides and has started leveraging scientific evidence and learned practices to generate an effective initiative to help service members and their families..

## SENATE DEBATES LEGISLATION ON SUICIDE PREVENTION AND WOMEN VETERANS

During late May, the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs held a hearing to discuss the *Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019*, which would create and expand initiatives to ensure veterans have access to high-quality mental health care, such as Project ATLAS which enables veterans to receive VA health care at VFW posts around the country. The *Deborah Sampson Act*, which would improve care and services for women veterans was also considered. Other bills discussed would improve how VA collects debt, expand vet center eligibility to guard and reserve service members, and extend the Highly Rural Veterans Transportation Program.

## HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

The monthly Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, **June 25, 2019, 5 p.m., UNCLE DAN'S BBQ & RIBHOUSE**, 1001 Lake Air Drive.

## **DISABLED VETERANS LIFETIME NATIONAL PARKS ACCESS PROGRAM**

Spring flowers are blooming, the summer travel season quickly approaches and Veterans are joining the 330-million yearly visitors enjoying U.S. National Parks.

Many Veterans, with a service connected disability rating, are entering Federal parks for free with the Lifetime National Parks Access Pass from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service. Good for entry into 400+ National Parks and over 2,000 recreation sites across the country, the Lifetime Access Pass is another way a grateful nation says thank you for the service and sacrifices of Veterans with disabilities.

The Access Pass admits disabled Veterans and any passengers in their vehicle (non-commercial) at per-vehicle fee areas; and, the pass owner plus three additional adults where per-person fees are charged. In addition to free entry at participating parks, the Access Pass includes discounts on expanded amenity fees; such as camping, swimming, boat launching and guided tours.

Veterans who have a VA disability rating, (10 percent or higher) are eligible for the Lifetime Access Pass—with two ways to apply. First, disabled Veterans can apply in person at a participating federal recreation site. Simply present photo identification (Driver's license, State ID, Passport) and documentation proving a permanent disability (VA awards letter, VA ID with service connected annotation, VA summary of benefits, or receipt of Social Security disability income). That's It. The Pass is free and issued at the time of entry.

Second, if applying by mail, send a completed packet and \$10 processing fee to the United States Geological Survey (USGS). The packet should include:

- The Access Pass application form
- Proof of residency
- VA disability award letter, VA summary of benefits, or proof of SSDI income

Pass delivery expected 10-12 weeks after receipt. Make sure to have photo ID available when using your Lifetime Access Pass and enjoy the majestic scenery and abundant recreational opportunities our National Parks provide.

## **CHOICE PROGRAM TO CHANGE IN JUNE**

Around June 6<sup>th</sup>, the Veterans Choice Program is scheduled to be replaced by a new Veteran Community Care Program, which was created by the VA MISSION (Maintaining Internal Systems and Strengthening Integrated Outside Networks) ACT. Aimed at adopting lessons learned from the Choice Program and consolidating all community care (or non-VA care) programs, the Veterans Community Care program will have new criteria for accessing private-sector health care. The new program is intended to expand access to care for veterans, including urgent and walk-in care.

About 70% of veterans currently have their own health insurance, either through Medicare, Medicaid or their employers. The officials said they expect a spike in the number of veterans using health care through the VA under the new program.

President Donald Trump campaigned on a pledge of letting veterans pick their own doctors. The MISSION Act was intended to streamline veterans' care by overhauling and expanding the existing Choice program while consolidating its seven existing care options into one. "All during the campaign, I'd go out and say, 'Why can't they just go see a doctor instead of standing in line for weeks and weeks and weeks?' Now they can go see a doctor. It's going to be great," Trump said at the bill's signing.

Veterans groups initially expressed concerns that the MISSION Act would lead to the "privatization" of VA health care, but officials have repeatedly said that most veterans are satisfied with their care through the department and will remain with the VA.

Under the new access standards going into effect June 6, veterans can see a community provider if they've been waiting for more than 20 days for primary or mental health care, or face a 30-minute drive to the nearest VA facility.

## **BOARD LIFTS STAY ON BLUE-WATER CLAIMS**

Veterans seeking VA compensation for illnesses that might be connected to their service in the waters off Vietnam saw another chokepoint cleared April 1. The Board of Veterans' Appeals will lift a stay that prevented any decisions on such blue-water Navy appeals. This means blue-water Navy veterans serving in those waters would have the same presumption of herbicide exposure as those who served on land and on inland waterways.

**2019 "FREEDOM IS NOT FREE"**  
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**Heart of Texas Chapter TX07, MOAA**  
**P.O. Box 23964**  
**Waco, TX 76702-3964**

Address label

**2019 H.O.T. MOAA OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**President**

Gary Urban, Maj, USAF (ret) 254-715-6560  
 6379 Rosenthal Pkwy, Lorena, TX 76655 [garyurban1@inbox.com](mailto:garyurban1@inbox.com)

**1st Vice President**

Joe Augeri, Maj, USAF (ret) (Karen) 254-366-2544  
 1690 County Road 268, Oglesby, TX 76561 [j\\_augeri@yahoo.com](mailto:j_augeri@yahoo.com)

**2nd Vice President**

Bobby Sammon, LtCol, USAF (ret) Donna) 254-662-5232  
 6662 S. 12<sup>th</sup> St. Rd., Waco, TX 76706 [bgsammon@gmail.com](mailto:bgsammon@gmail.com)

**Secretary**

Paul Thronburg, 1LT, USA (Norma) (254) 876-3303 (home)  
 910 E. Burselson Ave, Mart, TX 76664 [tmartmgb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tmartmgb@sbcglobal.net)

**Treasurer**

Vince Tobola, LtCol, USAF (ret) (254) 709-5795 or 772-5251  
 1704 Laurel Lake Dr. Waco, TX 76710 [vtobola@aol.com](mailto:vtobola@aol.com)

**Immediate Past President**

Dennis DeGraff, COL, USAF (ret) (Debby) 254-848-9212  
 585 Willow Grove Rd., Waco, TX 76712 [dennisdebby@earthlink.net](mailto:dennisdebby@earthlink.net)

**Chaplain**

John Wells, COL, USA (ret) (Su) coljtw@yahoo.com  
 14043 Horseshoe Cir, Waco, TX 76712 254-776-1143

**Surviving Spouse Liaison**

Carol McHaney [carol\\_mchaney@mygrande.net](mailto:carol_mchaney@mygrande.net)  
 3309 Pioneer Circle, Waco, TX 76712 (254) 848-9575

**Legislative Liaison**

Jon Ker, COL, USA (RET) (Terri) (254) 934-2018  
 279 Buffalo Run, Valley Mills, TX 76689 [jon@jonker.com](mailto:jon@jonker.com)

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U.S. Senator John Cornyn Chase Tower  
 517 Hart Senate Office Building 221 West Sixth St, Suite 1530  
 Washington, DC 20510 Austin, TX 78701  
 Website: [www.Cornyn.senate.gov](http://www.Cornyn.senate.gov) 512-469-6034, FAX 512-469-6020  
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U.S. Senator Ted Cruz  
 404 Russell Senate Office Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20510  
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U.S. Rep. Bill Flores (Waco office)  
 1505 Longworth HOB 400 Austin Ave, STE 29  
 Washington, DC 20515 Waco, TX 76701  
 Website: [www.flores.house.gov](http://www.flores.house.gov)  
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