



Heart of Texas Chapter (TX-07)
Military Officer Association of America
P.O. Box 23964 Waco, TX 76702-3964

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March 2020

Chapter Web Site: hotmoaa.org

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Greetings,

March is here and it is a month that holds a lot of history plus it is also a time to look forward to warmer weather in many states that are north of Dallas. As a result, many of us look forward to getting our knees and hands dirty in the garden out back. Also, as Julius Caesar learned back in 44 BC it is a wise idea to heed good advice pertaining to March 15. The rest of the Romans saw this date as a deadline to settle their debts. I knew that world history class back in the 7th grade would come in handy one day.

Speaking of heeding good advice, the March newsletter is full of information we can use to maintain the scholarships and services the Heart of Texas Chapter MOAA has provided over the years. In addition to the general information in the newsletter, please check out the following:

- Guest Speaker Bio and Topic for March
- Contact info for your Board of Directors
- Waco Chamber of Commerce Events
- HOT MOAA Benevolence Fund Donors to Date (Please add your name to Page 5)
- Also, check out HOTMOAA.org for current information about your chapter

On February 20, we had a nice turnout for the dinner meeting with guest speaker Col Bart Bartholomew. His personal battle with a wide-spread disease was both informative and enlightening. Our thanks to Bart and Susan for sharing.

Our guest speaker for our March 19 Chapter Dinner Meeting will be MOAA member, George Littell. George is a Yale graduate and was with the 23rd Infantry (Americal) Division, U.S. Army in Vietnam. His presentation is titled "Is Manmade Global Warming Possible? Talk about a hot topic!"
The MOAA Texas Council of Chapters is

staying on top of their mission of keeping Federal and State elected officials up to date on military related issues and to be informed on their military related priorities in the coming years. As such, MOAA TCC members are planning to once again Storm the Hill in Austin in late March 2020. I'll send out details when they are available.

As with any service organization, Committees play a vital part to ensure our success. We currently have openings on the following Committees: Legislation, Personal Affairs, Fund Raising/Benevolence Foundation, Audit, Budget, Newsletter, Public Relations, Scholarship and Spouse Liaison. Please contact me to volunteer your time and expertise.

Significant annual days of recognition in March include "Star Spangled Banner" made U.S National Anthem (1931) (3rd); Daylight Savings Time Begins (8th) (set clock ahead one hour); St. Patrick's Day (17th); Iraq War Began (19th) (2003); Spring Begins (20th); National Vietnam War Veterans Day (2007). (Fly the U.S. Flag) (watch for scheduled local events).

We hope to continue having interesting speakers lined up for 2020. Also, we are always looking for live entertainment for your pleasure. Many thanks to our members for recommending guest speakers and I ask that you give us some recommendations for live entertainment. Please contact Bill Milnor with your recommendations.

Additionally, we would like to receive recommendations for new members to our Chapter. Please contact Bobby Sammon or any board member to recommend a new member. Your involvement continues to be greatly appreciated. Please have a safe March 2020 and help your fellow Veterans with health issues if possible. God Bless you, your family, current and former military personnel plus the greatest country on earth, "The United States of America".

Respectfully,
Gary J. Urban

Upcoming Events and Information Items

MARCH 19, THURSDAY DINNER MEETING AT RIDGEWOOD BANQUET ROOM, GUEST SPEAKER, GEORGE LITTELL ON WEATHER

****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
and dried cranberries, feta cheese, spiced pecans
and balsamic vinaigrette, fried chicken, catfish,
Chef's choice of starch, vegetable and two
desserts, Fresh Rolls and Butter, Fresh Brewed
Iced Tea or Hot Tea and Coffee. Please note
dinner cost is \$33 per person, payable at
registration table, cash or check made to HOT
Chapter MOAA. Please call Vince Tobola, w54-
709-5795 or e-mail vtobola@aol.com, NLT
Tuesday 17 March, 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: The fall/winter code is effect with
gentlemen's attire as coat and tie and ladies'
attire as desired.**

PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR 2020

Ridgewood Country Club (RCC) at 7301 Fish Pond Rd.

- **16 April, Thursday, RCC**, Dinner Meeting, Guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.
- **May 21, Thursday, RCC**, Dinner Meeting, Guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.
- **5 June, 2020, Friday afternoon**, Annual Fundraiser Golf Tournament at Cottonwood Creek Golf Course.
- **Remaining dinner meetings are planned for 3rd Thursday except for December with dinner/dance on the 2nd Thursday.**

HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

- The next Board meeting will be on Tuesday, March 24, 2020, 5:00 p.m., UNCLE DAN'S BBQ & RIBHOUSE, 1001 Lake Air Dr.

TIME CHANGE SUNDAY MARCH 8

**Time to Spring Forward:
Daylight Saving Time Begins Sunday,
March 8 at 2 a.m.**

MARCH SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION

Birthdays: Marcia Anderson, Bill Bauer, Roland Duty, Michael Flynn, Jim Gompper, George Holmes, Sheila Lednicki, Mike O'Brice, William Rogers, James Wilson and Al West.

Anniversaries: George and Christine Brinegar, Roland and Mary Duty, Matt and Patty Pirko, Tom and Lucia Roe, and James and Shirley Wilson.

CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL

2020 CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES

The Board is always looking for prospects to join the chapter; please contact Bobby Sammon, 254-662-5232 or Vince Tobola, 254-709-5795 and can help with chapter information as needed. Each can also provide a membership application, which is also on the chapter web site, hotmoaa.org. Chapter member dues are \$25 and are due starting January 1 and will be prorated for new members joining later in year. Renewals can be paid at the meetings or mailed to the PO Box address on first page of newsletter. Thank you for your support.

GUEST SPEAKER – GEORGE LITTELL

Henry Groppe founded the predecessor firm to Groppe, Long & Littell in 1955. George joined the firm in 1975 after nine years with Mobil Oil Corporation interrupted by service in the 23rd Infantry (Americal) Division, U.S. Army Viet Nam.

George graduated summa cum laude from Yale in 1966 and is a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He also earned an M.B.A. degree from New York University and a Bachelor of Laws from La Salle Extension University. He is a member of the International Association for Energy Economics.

George has served as a director of Chenier Exploration, Continental Resources (a NYSE company) and Barrier Resources LLC. His other interests include:

- Eagle Scout and Scout Leader for over 27 years

STORIES OF OUR SOLDIERS

The Army is finally getting its own comprehensive museum. The new 185,000 square-foot National Museum of the United States Army opens June 4 in Fort Belvoir, Virginia, just outside of Washington, to tell the story of our country's oldest military branch.

LOCAL EVENTS

- **Mar. 12 – 14; Spring at the Silos (Magnolia Market)**, 601 Webster Avenue. For more info, visit magnolia.com/events/spring-at-the-silos.
- **Mar. 13-15 at Brazos Park East, 2020 Disc Golf Pro Tour at the Waco Charity Open.** For more info, visit www.dgscene.com/waco
- **Mar. 28, Mammoths on the March at the Waco Mammoth National Monument** from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event will feature spring-time activities and fun for the whole family. For more info call 254-750-7946

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 waco-chamber.com. The Chamber is located in downtown Waco at 101 S. 3rd Street (254 757-5600). Please check web site for registration info on events.

- **Wed., Mar. 18, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m., Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce, 101 S. 3rd St. 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.
- **Thurs, Mar. 24, 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. Business After Hours** at Alliance Bank, 191 Archway Drive. This is come & go networking event.
- **Sat., Mar. 28, Texas Food Truck Showdown, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.**, introduced by Waco Chamber of Commerce and located in downtown Waco. Food trucks will be serving 4 oz. portion of their signature dishes for \$5 each from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.; tickets sold at special booths. From 4 to 8 p.m., food trucks will have their items for cash/card purchases. Beverages are available at separate area. Live music and entertainment from starting at noon throughout the day. You can call 254-757-5600 for info or go to web site: thetexasfoodtruckshowdown.com.
- **Thurs, Apr. 2, 11:30 – 1:00 p.m., Networking Forum** at Buzzard Billy's Seafood Kitchen, 100 IH 35 N, this is networking lunch event. You will pay your server directly for lunch.

MOAA STORMING THE HILL

On March 25, council and chapter leaders from across the U.S. will go to Washington, D.C., to participate in MOAA's annual Storming the Hill advocacy event. Representatives from the Texas Council of Chapters will be part of the team effort.

NEW USAF CHIEF OF STAFF NOMINATION

Gen. Charles Q. Brown Jr., commander of Pacific Air Forces, has been nominated to be the 22nd Chief of Staff of the Air Force, Defense Secretary Mark Esper announced March 2, confirming Air Force Magazine's earlier report. Brown will succeed Gen. David Goldfein, whose tenure ends June 30. If confirmed, Brown would be the first African American to serve as Chief of Staff of any of the U.S. Armed Forces. The only other African American to serve on the Joint Chiefs of Staff was Army Gen. Colin Powell, who was Chairman from 1989-1993.

VA UPDATE ON CAREGIVERS AND AGENT ORANGE

At the end of February, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs to discuss the fiscal year 2021 budget request for VA. Committee members asked Wilkie when VA will expand the caregiver program and whether it will add bladder cancer, Parkinsonism, hypertension, and hyperthyroidism to the list of conditions presumed to be associated with exposure to Agent Orange.

Wilkie indicated that VA would release its plan to expand the caregiver program in early March and indicated that his father is impacted by Agent Orange exposure so he is working hard to make it right.

MCLENNAN COUNTY – VETERAN SERVICES OFFICE

The county veteran services offices provides assistance, counsel and advocacy for veterans, spouses, widows and dependents, helping them to obtain state and federal veterans' benefits. The offices can help secure copies of DD214s, medals and certificates, and provide information on VA healthcare, service-connected claims, pensions, dependency indemnity claims, education, home loans, insurance, burial benefits and other veterans concerns. There is a county residence requirement to obtain service. The local contact is Steve Hernandez, phone number 254-297-7171; he is located at Veterans One Stop, 2010 LaSalle Avenue.

BILLS ON SURVIVOR BENEFIT INCREASE

Bills in both the House and Senate would increase the base amount of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC), the benefit paid to survivors who lose their service member-spouse to a service-connected illness or injury.

The base amount of DIC -- currently \$1340 a month, tax-free -- is fixed for all survivors. There can be some adjustments to the amount for special circumstances. DIC increases each year via an inflation-based cost of living adjustment (COLA).

The House and Senate bills, both titled the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Improvement Act, would increase the DIC amount to 55% of the compensation paid to veterans rated 100% disabled by the VA. These 100% disabled veterans now receive \$3,106 a month; a change to 55% of that compensation would result in \$1,708 a month for the survivor.

“This increase addresses a parity issue with other federal programs for these members of our military community,” said Col. Dan Merry, USAF (Ret), MOAA’s vice president of government relations. “Just as MOAA fought, successfully, for military survivors facing the unfair ‘widows tax’ offset, we will work to support this change in how this survivor benefit is calculated for DIC recipients.”

The Senate bill (S.1047) was introduced and referred to the Committee on Veterans Affairs in April 2019. The House bill (H.R. 3221) was introduced and referred to the Subcommittee on Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs in June 2019.

NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY, MARCH 29

The Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017 establishes the day as a national observance; however, it is not an official holiday in any part of the United States.

All across the United States, commemorative events like wreath-laying ceremonies, speeches, and luncheons are held to mark the occasion. Typical venues include the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington DC, war veteran medical facilities, and military cemeteries.

Vietnam War Veterans Day was first observed as a one-time occasion on March 29, 2012, when President Barack Obama issued a proclamation calling on “all Americans to observe this day

with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.”

The day was then introduced as an annual event in 2017 when President Donald Trump signed the Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017.

Lasting from 1955 to 1975, the Vietnam War engulfed the Southeast Asian country of Vietnam as well as its neighboring countries, Cambodia and Laos. It resulted in several million deaths, most of whom were Vietnamese civilians.

The conflict began during the 1950s when the struggle between the country's communist northern part and the anti-communist south escalated. The United States began its military involvement in an effort to back the South's effort to quell the communist onslaught, which, at the height of the Cold War, was feared to promote the spread of communist ideology and influence worldwide. During the long war, around 2.7 million served in Southeast Asia, about 58,000 of who were killed. The conflict ended in 1975 with the fall of Saigon to North Vietnam.

SECURE ACT

On December 20, 2019, a new bill known as the SECURE Act was signed into law. Here are a few key changes, which take effect on January 1, 2020.

- Through the end of the year 2019, individuals may not contribute to a traditional IRA if they are older than 70 1/2. That restriction is eliminated for all contributions made for tax year 2020 and beyond. (Roth IRA contributions have never been subject to age restrictions.)
- Currently, the age at which you must begin taking required distributions from your retirement plan is 70 1/2. That age will rise to 72 for all those who have not yet attained age 70 1/2 by December 31, 2019.
- The new law allows penalty-free distributions from retirement accounts for expenses related to the birth or adoption of a child. The lifetime distribution limit is \$5,000.
- The new law provides for disaster relief, allowing penalty-free distributions from retirement accounts (up to \$100,000) for expenses related to disasters that occurred after 2017 and before February 18, 2020.
- There are changes to on stretch IRA’s.

The official name of the law is the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement Act of 2019.



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USEFUL NUMBERS

MOAA Capital switchboard hotline 1-800 272-6622
 MOAA Membership 1-800 245-8762

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