



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

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Chapter Web Site: hotmoaa.org

## **PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

Greetings,

The dinner meeting was well attended on October 15. COVID precautions were used. An outstanding young scholar, Meghan Malcik was presented the Gen. Goodall scholarship award; her essay on "What America Means to Me" was a convincing part of her selection. Her winning qualifications were described by Harold Rafuse after his committee had put in long hours selecting such an excellent winning candidate.

The after-dinner presentation was on universal/standard precautions with examples from the past and the present COVID-19 pandemic. Universal/standard precautions are needed when we have reason to believe people we are dealing with might be carrying a significant contagious disease. We have been caught unprepared in the past as well as during the current pandemic, needing to scramble to find supplies, mostly from off shore sources. We need to be prepared for the next pandemic at an unknown time. We need an effective vaccine in order to establish "herd immunity" among us and stop the spread of viral illness; I firmly believe the President is correct in attempting to get approval for an effective vaccine in an expedited manner. And we need to keep our economy running. Finally, we need to resist "pandemic fatigue" by doing things that we know how to do, including making the 3 precautions become easy habits. Much of this is use of "common sense and trust in our instincts".

Various sources are telling us that the COVID-19 pandemic is not over, and in fact is worsening a bit. In the present case we need face coverings, as well as disinfectants that were not readily available. Needed precautions now include social distancing, hand washing, and face covering; masks seem to be the most useful and can be combined with additional coverings such as a face

shield; a recent study at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston demonstrated that face shields were effective at preventing spread of the virus that causes COVID-19, but masks remain the most effective face covering short of full HAZMAT suits.

The next dinner meeting is on November 19. Guest speaker will be Mr. Mark G. Childers. Mark has served since 2014 as Baylor University's Associate Vice President for Public Safety. He is a graduate of the United States Marshalls Service Academy and the United States Secret Service Academy and holds a Master of Criminal Justice degree from Boston University. His past jobs have included Deputy US Marshall and Criminal Investigator 1988-1996, and US Secret Service Special Agent/Supervisor 1996-2014, with a tour of duty at the White House during the Bush Administration. Mark has enjoyed answering questions from audience members at previous presentations, so come prepared to ask about his experiences in the White House and the Ranch in Crawford, etc.!

Respectfully,  
William Milnor

### **NOVEMBER SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION**

**Birthdays:** Joe Augeri, Jerrie Buehrig, Patricia Heberlin, Lyn Lawson, Tony Raineri, Don Speed, and Ray Sancton.

**Anniversaries:** Lou and Schelly Storm and Rick and Madeline Sweeney.

### **CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL**

### **HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING**

The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 24, 5 p.m., at Uncle Dan's BBQ on Lake Air Drive.

### **VETERANS DAY PARADE CANCELLED**

The November 11 Veterans Day Parade in downtown Waco has been cancelled.

# Upcoming Events and Information Items

## NOBEM BER 19 THURSDAY DINNER MEETING AT RIDGEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB BANQUET ROOM,

Vote on Proposed Revised HOT Chapter Bylaws and

Guest Speaker, Mark Childers, Baylor VP for Public Safety and former Secret Service agent

\*\*SOCIAL HOUR: 6:00 P.M. \*\*, \*\*CALL TO TABLES 6:30 P.M. \*, \*INTRO & ANNOUNCEMENTS, VOTE ON BYLAWS, 6:35 P.M. \*\*, \*\*DINNER 6:50 P.M.\*\*,

\*\*DRAWING & GUEST SPEAKER 7:50 P.M. MENU: Caesar salad, chopped steak, tilapia, 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 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 Monday, 16 November, 6 p.m. for sign-ups. Early RSVP's are welcome and appreciated.

After this time, please contact as soon as possible if plans change on attending and we will work to accommodate you at the dinner meeting.

NOTE: Winter dress code will be in effect, gentlemen, coat and tie and ladies attire as desired.

## DINNER MEETING HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

- Masks shall be worn inside at all times and all locations except when sitting at the tables.
- Drinks will be available at the bar.
- Buffet line and dessert table will have Club staff serving food items.
- Only one table at a time for food service since only one side available with Club staff serving.
- Tables will have six chairs versus normal eight.
- Please be aware of your personal conditions since fever is one of most likely symptoms of coronavirus and we all need to take proper care to protect others.

## VOTE ON PROPOSED REVISED BYLAWS FOR HEART OF TEXAS CHAPTER MOAA

The membership vote is planned for the coming November 19<sup>th</sup> dinner meeting. The proposed revised bylaws were approved by the Board on October 27<sup>th</sup> and would replace the 2008 version. This 2008 version is also on the web site.

A copy of the revised bylaws has been included with the November newsletter distribution.

A copy of the proposed revised bylaws has been posted to the chapter web site, hotmoaa.org.

## MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2020 -2021

Ridgewood Country Club (RCC) is at 7301 Fish Pond Road.

- 10 December, Thursday, Dinner meeting with chapter election and live entertainment by the Morticians.
- 21 January 2021, Thursday, Dinner meeting with installation of officers and directors and guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.
- 18 February 2021, Thursday, Dinner meeting with guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.

**Note:** The annual fundraiser golf tournament is scheduled on June 4, 2021, Friday afternoon at Cottonwood Creek Golf Course, Waco.

## GENERAL ELECTION NOVEMBER 3

There will be 34 Election Day vote centers in the county available on Tues, Nov. 3. The vote centers will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. More information can be found at 254-757-5043 or

<https://www.co.mclennan.tx.us/337/elections>.

## NOVEMBER MILITARY NOTES

- November is Military Family Monty, a time to honor and celebrate the contributions and sacrifices of the families of U.S. Armed Forces.
- November 10, U.S. Marine Corps birthday.
- November 11, Veterans Day, the anniversary date of the signing of the armistice which ended World War 1. Also, Veterans Day is a remembrance of all U.S. military veterans – past and present. It is celebrated every November 11th, and has been a federal holiday since 1926.

## **MENTAL HEALTH BILL BECOMES LAW**

S. 785, the *Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act of 2019*, was signed into law on October 17. This law supports VA as it continues to make improvements to veterans' mental health care by covering a strategic plan for veterans transitioning from active duty, pilot programs integrating alternative therapies, establishing a VA and DOD clinical provider treatment toolkit, improving care and services for women veterans, and expanding the mental health medical workforce.

## **NATIONAL SUICIDE HOTLINE BILL BECOMES LAW**

On October 17, S. 2661, the *National Suicide Hotline Designation Act of 2020* was signed into law. This legislation designates 9.8.8 as the telephone number for the national suicide prevention and mental health crisis hotline. The existing hotline, which can be reached by dialing **1.800.273.8255**, is operated by the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline and through the Veterans Crisis Line. Both hotlines offer confidential support from qualified responders 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Many of the responders with the Veterans Crisis Line are veterans themselves.

## **2021 RETIREE AND SOCIAL SECURITY PAY RAISE**

Military retirees, those who receive disability or other benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs, federal retirees and Social Security recipients will see a 1.3% increase in their monthly checks for 2021.

The annual Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) is slightly less than the 1.6% increase from last year but in line with the historical increases seen over the last 10 years.

Military retirees and VA beneficiaries aren't the only ones who benefit from the COLA increase. Civil Service retirees and Social Security recipients will also see the 1.3% jump in their monthly checks.

The COLA affects about one in every five Americans, including Social Security recipients, disabled veterans, federal retirees and retired military members.

In 2020, the COLA increase was 1.6% and in 2019, retirees saw a 2.8% increase.

## **ADDING AGENT ORANGE AILMENTS TO VA COVERAGE STATUS**

House and Senate conferees are negotiating contentious provisions in the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which should be completed just after the election. One key provision sought by MOAA – the addition of three ailments to the list of Agent Orange presumptive conditions – has received added attention because of the significant price tag attached.

The Senate version of the NDAA would raise direct spending by an additional \$8 billion from 2021 to 2030, according to a Congressional Budget Office (CBO). Of that amount, \$7.9 billion comes from the addition of bladder cancer, Parkinson's-like symptoms, and hypothyroidism to the list of Agent Orange presumptives. While high, the figure is \$2 billion less than previous estimates. The House's version of the NDAA scored an insignificant budgetary impact, according to the CBO estimate.

The Senate showed broad bipartisan support for this initiative by passing the measure by a 94-6, then following with a conferee letter signed by 46 senators. Given the broad level of support in the Senate, attention turns to the House to see if representatives will agree to include this measure in the final NDAA. The related stand-alone bill introduced by Reps. Josh Harder (D-Calif.) and Pete Stauber (R-Minn.) gained nearly 40 cosponsors but was not considered by the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. When Harder attempted to include a provision for the House NDAA matching what was added to the Senate version by Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.), his amendment did not pass the House Rules Committee.

One promising development: A House conference committee letter of support is being drafted and gaining significant support from representatives. The letter, when released, will send a strong message to House members on the committee of the importance of caring for 34,000 veterans ill from these Agent Orange-related diseases.

Congress is close to adding these three presumptives, but a final push from constituents is needed to ensure these ill veterans are taken care of in the NDAA. Consider contact by calling or writing your lawmakers. MOAA members can go the web site to facilitate this action.

## **MOAA PRESIDENT TALK ON COMING ADVOCACY ISSUES**

MOAA's president and chief executive officer outlined the progress made by MOAA on several advocacy initiatives in a recent podcast interview, covering issues faced by the active force, veterans, and retirees.

Many of those issues share a common starting point, Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret), told Bill Hodges, the host of *Veterans Corner Radio*, in an interview that went online Oct. 12.

"One of the biggest challenges, when we go to Congress and we advocate ... you need to recognize that probably less than 15% now of our congressional leadership has any military service at all," Atkins said. "I spend a lot of my time, literally, just educating congressional leaders about the military, about the compensation packages, about earned benefits, and their job as congressional leaders to insulate those earned benefits from any erosion over time."

Atkins outlined the status of several of those education efforts:

### **Health Care Costs**

The cost and availability of quality health care remains a core concern for service members past and present, and their families, Atkins told Hodges, an enlisted veteran and honorary member of MOAA's Sun City (Fla.) Chapter. That's why MOAA has paid careful attention to early discussions surrounding the next generation of TRICARE contracts, known as T-5, and what those deals could mean for your benefits.

"There could be a potential for enrollment fees to go up," Atkins said. "There could be a potential for copays to go up. There could be a potential for the networks to collapse, because there's really not enough providers out there."

### **Agent Orange**

Atkins highlighted two facets of the work being done to ensure earned benefits for veterans suffering the effects of exposure to Agent Orange and similar toxins.

First, the efforts by MOAA and others to secure passage of the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 have resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars in benefits to veterans who served in the waters off Vietnam, and survivors.

Second, work continues to secure language in the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act to add three conditions— bladder cancer,

hypothyroidism, and Parkinson's-like symptoms – to list of Agent Orange "presumptive diseases."

As with many legislative battles, the key concern for some hesitant lawmakers has been the cost of providing the benefit, Atkins said.

"It's not about dollars. It's about quality of life – the fact that our nation had promised to take care of them for their service commitments," Atkins told Hodges. "And now we're negating that support we promised these service members over time."

### **Strength of the Force**

The ability to recruit new service members is "a looming strategic imperative for our nation," Atkins said, outlining troubling societal trends that could make achieving end strength goals challenging for all services.

Of the more than 20 million Americans in the target age range for new recruits (17-22), only about a quarter qualify for service, Atkins said, and only about a tenth of those qualified have a propensity to join the ranks.

Even if that small pool of talent can be used to fill the force, retaining those members requires compensation on par with the civilian sector – an issue MOAA has fought for over many years.

## **GUEST SPEAKER – MARK CHILDERS**

Mark Childers is the Associate Vice President for the Department of Public Safety at Baylor University. He came to Baylor in 2014 after 18 years in the U.S. Secret Service. He currently leads/manages five branches: police department, emergency services, parking and transportation, fire safety and physical security

Mark is a retired Supervisory Special Agent from the U.S. Secret Service as well as a former Deputy Marshall. As a young man, Mark was influenced by his aunt, one of the first women to service in the U.S. Secret Service. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from Tarleton State University and later earned his Master of Criminal Justice from Boston University.

## **REMINDER ON COVID-19 INFO**

Here is a reminder that current COVID-19 information can be found for McLennan County at the web site, covidwaco.com. This includes current statistics and information on free COVID-19 testing sites and times and how to pre-register for the tests.



## **MEMORIAM FOR PIKE ANDERSON**

Vincent "Pike" Anderson, 76, of Hewitt, passed away Wednesday, October 7, 2020, at Providence Hospice Place surrounded by his family after a brief but courageous battle with cancer. A service to celebrate his life was held 11 a.m. on Monday, October 12, 2020 at Grace Garden Funeral Home in Woodway, Texas. The Rev. John T. Wells officiated.

Pike was born on August 18, 1944 in Sedalia, Missouri to John Kenneth Anderson and Genevieve Katherine Collier Anderson. His family moved to Jackson, Mississippi, where he graduated from Provine High School in 1962. He graduated from Mississippi State University in 1967, where he was a member of the ROTC and a member of the Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity. He completed a master's degree in 1977 from The University of South Alabama.

Pike Anderson had a notable career of military service. After attending Army flight school, he was deployed to Vietnam to fly AH-1G Cobra helicopter gunships for the Air Cavalry. In 1970, he was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for action in the A Shau Valley of Vietnam. In 1973, he was honorably discharged from the Army as a Captain. Pike was on active duty in the Texas National Guard from March 1986 to August 2004, when he retired from the U.S. Army with the rank of Chief Warrant Officer (W4).

Pike retired as Chief of Kinesiotherapy in March of 2000 after working at the Veterans' Administration in Waco since 1977. Upon retirement, he worked with The Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH) where he was a National Service Officer helping Veterans with their VA claims at the Waco VA Regional Office. He was presented the Kenneth Richardson Award as the 2008 MOPH National Service Officer of the Year. He retired from MOPH in December 2015 as the Region 5 Deputy Regional Field Supervisor.

He was active in the local Veterans Community and was a Charter Member; former Quartermaster and former Commander of VFW Post 6008.

Mr. Anderson served sixteen years on the Hewitt City Council, including two years as Mayor. During his tenure, he helped in development of several transportation projects and in the development of the Veterans Memorial at Hewitt Park.

Pike was very active in his church, The Episcopal Church of the Holy Spirit. Over the years, he served on the vestry and became a Lay Minister. Survivors include his wife of 52 years, Marcia Meriwether Anderson of Hewitt; brother Dr. John Donald Anderson (Alice) of Bellingham, Wash., daughters Kathryn Anderson Rodenmeyer (Ron) of Jackson, Miss.; Laura Anderson Green (Neal, Jr.) of Corsicana, Texas; Genevieve "Ginger" Anderson Shelfer (Mark) of Houston, Texas, and nine grandchildren.

Pike leaves behind a legacy of service to family, the community of Hewitt, and country.

## **US ARMY MUSEUM TO OPEN**

The long-awaited National museum of the United State Army will open on Veterans Day, a debut delayed about five months because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The museum, located on a publicly accessible portion of Fort Belvoir, Va., is the first dedicated to the Army's entire history. It will take visitors about 3½ hours to walk through and includes artifacts and documents from the Revolutionary War to the present, a memorial garden, an interactive learning space, and an immersive 360-degree theater that will rumble with sounds from the screen.

## **NEW US NAVY MUSEUM**

The Navy will construct a \$450 million museum at a location to be determined near the Washington Navy Yard, Navy Secretary Kenneth Braithwaite announced on the service's 245th birthday.

The facility would replace the existing museum at Navy Yard, which is closed because of the coronavirus pandemic. A timeline included in the Oct. 13 news release shows a potential 2025 completion, in time for the service's 250th birthday.

## **LOCAL AREA EVENTS**

- Flag Retirement Ceremony, Sunday, Nov. 15, 2 – 4 p.m. Due to COVID, this will be a drive-thru only event to drop off flags for retirement. It will be held at the Carleen Bright Arboretum, 9001 Bosque Blvd. It is recommended to drive down Bosque Blvd from the north as Loop 340 in order to enter the grounds with right turn for the drop-off.
- Reminder that local attractions are open as the Mayborn Museum, Cameron Park Zoo, Texas Ranger Museum, Dr. Pepper Museum, Texas Sports Hall of Fame and others.



**Heart of Texas Chapter TX07, MOAA**  
**P.O. Box 23964**  
**Waco, TX 76702-3964**

Address label

**2020 H.O.T. MOAA OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**President**

Bill Milnor, COL, USA (ret) (Gerry) 972-533-7874  
[oldognew@gmail.com](mailto:oldognew@gmail.com)

**1st Vice President**

Michael Slavens, LtCol, USAF (ret) (Marsha) 703-898-9173  
[m Slavens@aol.com](mailto:m Slavens@aol.com)

**2nd Vice President**

Bobby Sammon, LtCol, USAF (ret) Donna) 254-715-2450  
[bgsammon@gmail.com](mailto:bgsammon@gmail.com)

**Secretary**

Paul Thronburg, 1LT, USA (Norma) (254) 876-3303 (home)  
[tmartmgb@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tmartmgb@sbcglobal.net)

**Treasurer**

Vince Tobola, LtCol, USAF (ret) (254) 709-5795  
[vtobola@aol.com](mailto:vtobola@aol.com)

**Immediate Past President**

Urban, Gary, Maj, USAF (ret) 254-715-6560  
[garyurban1@inbox.com](mailto:garyurban1@inbox.com)

**Chaplain**

John Wells, COL, USA (ret) (Su) coljtw@yahoo.com  
 254-776-1143

**Surviving Spouse Liaison**

Carol McHaney (254) 716-6376

**Legislative Liaison**

Jon Ker, COL, USA (RET) (Terri) (254) 934-2018  
[jon@jonker.com](mailto:jon@jonker.com)

**Directors**

Dr. Harold Rafuse, LtCol, USAF (ret.) (RoseMary) (254) 717-8112  
 Jimmie Hanes, COL, USAF, (ret) (Mary) (254) 848-5493  
 Roland Duty, LT, ANG, (Mary) (254) 722-8939  
 Bob Lull, COL, USA (ret) (Penny) (254) 751-7824  
 Don Speed, CAPT, USAF (Ann) (254) 366-5528  
 Jim Milam, COL, USAF (ret) (Laura) 254-845-1310  
 Joe Augeri, Maj, USAF (ret) Karen 254-366-2544  
 Carol McHaney 254-716-6376

**ELECTED OFFICIALS**

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  
 202-228-2856

U.S. Senator Ted Cruz  
 404 Russell Senate Office Building  
 Washington, D.C. 20510  
 202-224-5922

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)  
 202-225-6105; fax 202-225-0350

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