



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

Volume MMXXI, Issue XII

December 2021

Chapter Web Site: hotmoaa.org

President's Column

Greetings,

Our November dinner meeting was very well attended; all seemed to enjoy the occasion.

We passed bylaws amendments establishing positions of Directors Emeritus and establishing the meeting days for the Board of Directors as the Tuesday immediately following the general membership dinner meeting each month.

We heard from Dr. Bill Ferguson concerning the COVID pandemic: The situation has improved for now, with fewer cases and deaths. There are pills to treat the infection; the approved Remdesivir is only good for very early stages of the disease, and the others are still experimental. Nonetheless, people in Texas are still succumbing to the disease every day, and another increase in COVID cases is anticipated for next spring. Dr. Ferguson highly recommended that each of us talk seriously with our health care providers about getting vaccinated if we have not already been vaccinated because that still remains the best line of defense against the disease.

We heard from Melinda Bonds who is in charge of the Veterans' One-Stop; she urged anyone who wants to know more about it to stop by the facility.

We mourned the passing of member Paul Thronburg, long term officer and board member and friend. Paul's funeral service was held on November 24 and attended by many chapter members. We have been notified that his wife Norma has requested in lieu of flowers, that donations be made to the HOT Chapter MOAA Benevolence Fund or the Salvation Army or Christ Episcopal Church Mexia; the Board has subsequently elected to establish a 2022 scholarship in Paul's memory, and has started that fund with a \$50 donation from the chapter.

Terry Wright and Doug Baldwin, President and Vice President of Baylor's Life Long Learning (LLL) program gave the after-dinner presentation on that program. It is a valuable community resource and forum for exchange of ideas among mature members of the

community at large. LLL sponsors many social activities to get mature community members together, like coffees and bus trips, in addition to classes at Baylor through the Mayborn Museum. The LLL is separate from the previous continuing education program that Baylor offered. And the LLL is open to ideas and volunteer participation by members of the community at large. Finally, the LLL produces brochures announcing its upcoming events; the brochures for upcoming semesters are being printed and I will be given copies to distribute at a future dinner meeting.

We distributed a list of the board-recommended nominees for 2022 officer and director positions; we will vote on those positions at the general membership dinner meeting on December 9.

At the Board of Directors meeting on November 23 the list of nominees was revised and will be submitted for the general membership meeting on December 9 to elect next year's officers and directors.

The Board noted with mourning the passing of long-time member Paul Thronburg; it was decided to dedicate a 2022 scholarship in Paul's name, and the Board acted to make Paul an honorary Director; a certificate will be presented to Norma Thronburg marking that award.

The Board appointed Harold Rafuse and Jimmie Hanes to be Directors Emeritus.

Several potential speakers were discussed by the Board for 2022 and it looks like 2022 will be off to a good start; when dates of speaking programs are established they will be published in the Newsletter. Any member is encouraged to submit names of potential speakers to the Board.

Jim Milam has done an excellent job as membership chairman; our membership has shown significant growth during the past year. Good work Jim!

It was noted that the expected COLA raises to various government retirees is higher than in recent years, in keeping with inflation.

Respectfully,
Bill Milnor

Upcoming Events and Information Items

THURSDAY DINNER MEETING NOVEMBER 18, AT RIDGEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB. CHAPTER ELECTION FOR 2022 AND ENTERTAINMENT BY THE BAND, THEMORTICIANS, A CLASSIC ROCK AND ROLL BAND WITH AREA
****SOCIAL HOUR: 6:00 P.M. **, **CALL TO TABLES 6:35 P.M. *, *INTRO & ANNOUNCEMENTS 6:40 P.M. **, **DINNER 6:55P.M.** , **DRAWING & ELECTION & ENTERTAINMENT 7:50 P.M.**

MENU: The culinary staff of Ridgewood Country Club will be preparing a special Christmas dinner for the chapter membership. Dinner cost 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, 7 December, Noon for sign-ups.**

Early RSVP's are welcome and appreciated. After this time, please contact Vince Tobola as soon as possible if plans change on attending and we will work to accommodate you at the lunch meeting. Dinner cost may be charged for missed attendance, depending on total turnout for the meeting date.

NOTE: Winter dress code will be in effect, gentlemen, coat and tie and ladies attire as desired. Also, for this dinner, military uniforms are welcome.

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2021/2022

Ridgewood Country Club (RCC) is at 7301 Fish Pond Road. Meetings are normally held on the third Thursday.

- **9 December 2021**, Dinner Meeting, Election for 2022 and Live Entertainment by the band, The Morticians.
- **20 January 2022**, Dinner Meeting, Installation of Officers and Directors and Guest Speaker or Entertainment.
- **2022 meetings are expected to be on the 3rd Thursday except in June and December.**
- **Note:** The next fundraiser golf tournament is scheduled for Friday afternoon, June 10, 2022 at Waco Cottonwood Creek Golf Course.

DECEMBER SPECIAL HAPPENINGS

Birthdays: Christine Brinegar, Beau Crosby, Ken Mays, Carol McHaney, Larry Pennington, Barbara Purselley, Rusty Rowe, Ann Speed, and Gary Urban.

Anniversaries: Jim and Joan Alexander, Michael and Teresa Flynn, John and Nora Householder, Harold and RoseMary Rafuse, Josh and Amy Schnelle, Don and Pam Schreiber, AND Russel and Renee Swann.

CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL

HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

The next Board meeting will be on Tuesday, January 25th, 2022, 5 p.m., at Uncle Dan's BBQ, 1001 Lake Air Drive. Meetings in the future will be the following Tuesday after the monthly meeting. **There will be no Board meeting in December.**

ENTERTAINMENT – THE MORTICIANS

The Waco-based Morticians have been a mainstay of the Central Texas music scene since the band was formed by five high school students in 1965. Devoted to classic rock from the '50s, '60s and '70s, the group earned "Best Oldies Band" for 2006, 2007 and 2008 from the Music Association of Central Texas and has been voted "Best Band" in Central Texas in the Waco-Tribune Herald's Annual Reader's Poll several times. Band members have come and gone over the years, but The Morticians' distinct sound has always remained. A dance area will be included in the banquet room area

LOCAL EVENT

- Waco Wonderland will happen downtown Waco on 3 – 5 Dec. It kicks off on Friday at 5 p.m. with the opening of the Ferris Wheel, live music, food and merchant vendors and visits with Santa Claus. A tree-lighting ceremony and fireworks show will take place at 7 p.m. and visitors can meet one of Santa's reindeer from 6 – 9 p.m. Saturday will feature the Wonderland Parade at 10 a.m. along Austin Avenue in downtown Waco. Additional activities, such as a snow tube hill, open Saturday afternoon thru Sunday afternoon. Waco Wonderland will conclude on Sunday at 6 p.m.

MEMBERSHIP CORNER BY JIM MILAM

As we near the end of this calendar year, the Membership Committee is still focused on its goal of having 91 Regular members. As of last month, we have 84 Regular members, not a bad effort when one considers 11 new members were recruited this year, we lost 3 due to death, and were unable to get 4 members from 2020 to renew their membership. Can we reach or exceed the goal of 91 Regular members during this last month of 2021? Sure, if one or more of the 4 members in 2020 renew their membership (they all have been asked a number of times to do so), 7 or more potential new members submit their application forms and pay their 2022 dues of \$25 (more than 7 have been encourage to join us and provided an application form), and we lose no more members to death.

As I leave my 2nd VP position and Chair of the Membership Committee at the end of this year, I hope you will support Ken Ratajczak as he takes over those two functions. **You can start by renewing your 2022 membership, if you have not already done so. Write that 2022 dues check for \$25 and either bring it to the December dinner/meeting or mail it to the HOT Chapter of MOAA at P.O. Box 23964, Waco, TX 76702.**

THE 2022 PAUL THRONBURG SCHOLARSHIP

Paul Thronburg, at the age of 91, was still an active member of the HOT Chapter of MOAA when he passed away last month. He had recently given up his duties as Secretary after serving for many years.

Norma, his wife of 57 years, requested that those who are moved to remember Paul, could make a donation to a charity in lieu of funeral flowers, and named the HOT Chapter of MOAA as one of three such charities. With that knowledge, your Board of Directors agreed that all donations to the Chapter in memory of Paul would go to a 2022 Paul Thronburg Scholarship.

You can fulfill Norma's request and help the Chapter in its annual effort of providing scholarships to deserving local students, who are seeking a higher education and having linkage to the military, by noting on the memo line **"In memory of Paul Thronburg"**, making out your donation check to **"HOT Chapter MOAA Benevolence Fund"** and mailing it to the Chapter at P.O. Box 23964, Waco, TX 76702.

MEMORIAM – PAUL S. THRONBURG, JR.

Paul S. Thronburg, Jr. was promoted to Glory on Nov. 17, 2021. A memorial service was held at 10 a.m., Wed., Nov. 24, in the Chapel of Grace Gardens Funeral Home, 8220 Woodway Dr. with Rev. Dr. Ray Bagby and Rev. John Wells officiating.

Paul was born in Blackwell, OK, on Jan. 28, 1930, to Paul and Lucile Thronburg who served as Salvation Army officers in the Southern Territory. Paul graduated from Forest Park H.S. in Baltimore and Western Maryland College before being commissioned as a U.S. Army officer and serving with the 27th Infantry Regiment along the DMZ during the Korea conflict.

Paul continued his education at Baylor before teaching at Hillsboro, Mart and Alvarado. He married Norma Harter on December 27, 1963. Paul completed his master's degree at North Texas University; the family returned to Mart in 1977. There he taught music at all levels and was the high school band director. He continued his military service in the Army reserves and National Guard.

Before retiring, Paul was elected to the city council where he was instrumental in creating Mart EMS. After retirement he was elected as Mart's mayor; served on The McLennan County Conflict Resolution Center Board, volunteered at the TYC Juvenile Correction Facility and Mart EMS; played trombone in the Waco Community Band; was "nurse" at Camp Tahuaya; served as Choirmaster, on the Vestry and as Senior Warden at Holy Spirit Episcopal Church. Paul also was also a member and secretary of Heart of Texas Chapter Military Officers Association of America, a Mart Lions Club, VFW and American Legion member. He "flunked retirement" repeatedly and shared his extensive knowledge of music part time at Crawford, Reicher, Hallsburg and Riesel.

Paul is survived by his wife of 57 years Norma; son, Paul Scott (wife Tracy); and daughter, Adrian Carole.

In lieu of flowers, note on memo line donation "in memory of Paul Thronburg" may be made to Christ Episcopal Church-Mexia, 505 E. Commerce St., Mexia, TX 76667; Salvation Army, 4721 W. Waco Dr., Waco, TX 76710; or HOT Chapter MOAA Benevolence Fund, P.O. Box 23964, Waco, TX 76702.

ACTIVE DUTY QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUE

The Pentagon is increasing housing allowances and temporary lodging reimbursements to military families as it grapples with food insecurity and hard economic times caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said Nov. 17. Austin said he ordered the department to come up with a new strategy within three months to help hungry service members and their dependents. In the meantime, military leaders will get an "economic security toolkit" on how to identify troops experiencing food insecurity and connect them with resources, the secretary directed in a newly published memo.

The assistance comes as housing and rental rates surge in some military communities in the U.S. due to shortages caused by COVID-19, and aid groups say many service members have struggled to feed themselves and their families since the virus emerged in early 2020.

The pandemic, which caused more people to work from home, led to a boom in housing sales and increased prices, while the cost of renting dropped off, making it more affordable, but construction was slowed and could not keep up with demand, leaving families to compete for places to live. Austin said "the pandemic and tight housing markets across the country have made financial struggles even tougher" for the military's 2.2 million active-duty and reserve troops.

Food insecurity among military families has been a striking and largely unseen effect of the pandemic. As many as 160,000 active-duty enlisted service members have difficulty getting enough food, and 29% in junior enlisted ranks reported food insecurity over the previous year, the group Feeding America estimated.

CONGRESS PASSES VETERANS LEGISLATION

Congress passed four bills — S. 796, S. 894, S. 1031, S. 1095 — that would improve maternal health care, increase coordination for hiring veteran health professionals at VA, study racial and ethnic disparities in VA claims, and establish tuition fairness for those utilizing the Survivors' and Dependents' Education Assistance program. These bills were previously passed by the Senate and now head to the president's desk for signature.

PROPOSED 2022 SLATE OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR THE DECEMBER 9TH MEETING AND ELECTION

Officers

President: Michael Slavens
1st VP: Beau Crosby
2nd VP: Ken Ratajczak
Treasurer: Vince Tobola
Immediate Past President: Bill Milnor
Secretary: George Littell (Appointed)

Directors

Joe Augeri
Jim Milam
Barbara Purselley
Don Speed
Norma Thronburg
Bill Easley
Bill Porter
Rusty Rowe
Ennis Sullivan
Jon Ker
Carol McHaney
Gary Urban

Directors Emeritus

Jimmie Hanes (Appointed)
Harold Rafuse (Appointed)

REMEMBERING DECEMBER 7TH

"December 7th, 1941 – a date which will live in infamy – the United State of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan ... Always will we remember the character of the onslaught against us. No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated invasion, the American people in their righteous might will win through absolute victory.", per President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in a speech to Congress on Dec. 8, 1941.

There were 2,008 Navy personnel killed in action, 218 Army personnel killed in actions, 109 Marines killed in action and 68 civilian casualties. There were 15 Navy Medal of Honor recipients and 51 Navy Cross recipients.

Three Navy ships were lost: Arizona BB 39, Oklahoma BB 37 and Utah AG 16. Eighteen ships were repaired and returned to service. One Navy ship sunk, raised, repaired and present at Tokyo Bay during Japan's formal surrender Sept. 2, 1945 (West Virginia BB 48).

VA CONCERNS ON BUDGET BILL STATUS

If Congress fails to pass a full-year budget for the Department of Veterans Affairs in the next few months, the funding shortfall would have “serious ramifications” for veterans medical services, according to the department’s secretary. “I’m very concerned about a full-year [budget extension], and we’ve communicated that concern to lawmakers, both Republicans and Democrats,” said Secretary Denis McDonough during a press conference Nov. 18.

“There will be very serious ramifications for community care. There’ll be very serious ramifications for direct care. I am very concerned about that.”

A day earlier, House Appropriations Chair Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., and the panel’s subcommittee chairs released a statement urging Republican colleagues to “come to the table” and help finalize the annual appropriations process in coming weeks. The group said a lengthy budget extension would be “nothing short of catastrophic” for numerous government agencies.

In September, lawmakers approved a short-term extension of the federal budget until Dec. 3 in order to give them more time to work out funding disputes between the two parties. Lawmakers are expected to do another extension when they return from Thanksgiving recess later this month, since many of those disagreements have not yet been resolved.

That has prompted discussion about simply running all federal operations on fiscal 2021 spending levels throughout fiscal 2022. White House officials have decried the move as dangerous for a host of defense and domestic priorities, since money for new program starts and expansions would not be made available to government agencies.

The administration has requested a \$270 billion budget for Veterans Affairs for fiscal 2022, an increase of almost \$30 billion from the current yearlong spending level. Lawmakers also authorize advance appropriations each year for the department, to ensure that any budget disruption from political infighting does not interrupt VA medical care or benefits delivery.

Members of the House and Senate have offered few objections to the White House’s planned VA budget level, but the agency’s spending is stalled alongside other more complicated issues like defense spending.

McDonough said running VA at 2021 fiscal spending levels for all of fiscal 2022 would leave numerous medical care expansion efforts without adequate support at a time when the department is looking to increase health care appointments deferred during the pandemic. Officials have planned a significant boost in mental health care spending (up 13.5%, to \$10.7 billion) and assistance programs for veterans facing homelessness (up 14.5%, to \$2.6 billion).

He said that officials are making plans for the possible failure of Congress to adopt a new budget, but did not offer any specifics. The VA budget has grown significantly over the last two decades. In fiscal 2001, it totaled just \$45 billion, roughly one-sixth of the White House request for fiscal 2022.

WHITE HOUSE ANNOUNCES VA ACTIONS FOR TOXIC EXPOSURE PRESUMPTIVE CONDITIONS ON VETERANS DAY

On Veterans Day, the Biden Administration announced a series of actions, that has been years in the making, that VA will take to address the health conditions veterans experience due to burn pits and other toxic exposures. VA will pilot a new model to accelerate the process to establish presumptive conditions by reviewing the available science from the National Academies, analyzing VA data, and gathering evidence from other scientific sources. VA says it already used this model when it added sinusitis, rhinitis, and asthma as presumptive conditions related to particulate matter last May. Within 90 days, VA will use the model to assess rare cancers and constrictive bronchiolitis. Over the next few months VA will use this model to consider additional presumptives.

Additionally, DOD plans to accelerate the implementation of the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record (ILER) that tracks service members’ environmental and occupational exposures.

2022 CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES

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 dinner meeting or mailed to HOT Chapter MOAA, PO Box 23964, Waco, TX 76702. Thank you for your support.



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

Address label

2021 H.O.T. MOAA OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Bill Milnor, COL, USA (ret) (Gerry) 972-533-7874

1st Vice President

Michael Slavens, LtCol, USAF (ret) (Marsha) 703-898-9173

2nd Vice President

Jim Milam, Col, USAF (ret) (Laura) 817-909-3588

Secretary (Acting)

George Littell, 1LT, USA (ret) (Helen) 713-254-0972

Treasurer

Vince Tobola, LtCol, USAF (ret) (254) 709-5795

Immediate Past President

Urban, Gary, Maj, USAF (ret) 254-715-6560

Chaplain

John Wells, COL, USA (ret) (Su) 254-776-1143

Surviving Spouse Liaison

Carol McHaney (254) 716-6376

Legislative Liaison

Jon Ker, COL, USA (RET) (Terri) (254) 934-2018

Directors

Dr. Harold Rafuse, LtCol, USAF (ret.) (RoseMary) 254-717-8112
 Jimmie Hanes, COL, USAF, (ret) (Mary) 254-848-5493
 Don Speed, CAPT, USAF (Ann) 254-366-5528
 Joe Augeri, Maj, USAF (ret) (Karen) 254-366-2544
 Carol McHaney 254-716-6376
 Ennis Sullivan (Kay) 214-797-1464
 Beau Crosby, Col, USAF (ret) (Kathy Endres) 254-709-9588
 Barbara Purselley 254-716-4572
 Ken Ratajczak, COL, USA (ret) (Anne) 254-776-4804
 George Littell, 1LT, USA (Helen) 713-254-0972
 Norma Thronburg (Paul) 254-749-0957

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 512-469-6034, FAX 512-469-6020
 202-228-2856

U.S. Senator Ted Cruz
 127A Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510
 202-224-5922

U.S. Rep. Pete Sessions Office of Congressman Pete
 2204 Rayburn Building Sessions – 17th District of TX
 Washington, D.C. 20515 400 Austin Avenue Suite 302
 202-225-6105 Waco, TX 76701
 254-633-4500

USEFUL NUMBERS

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

Free Weekly E-mail Legislative Updates

Subscribe to MOAA's Free Weekly E-mail Legislative Updates:
[\(https://www.moaa.org/\)](https://www.moaa.org/) click on Legislative Action Center or call (800) 234-6622 (MOAA) to get the information.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
DINNER MEETING, DECEMBER 9– CHAPTER
ELECTION FOR 2022 AND ENTERTAINMENT BY
THE BAND, THE MORTICIANS
CANDIDATE 2022 SLATE OF OFFICERS AND
DIRECTORS LIST FOR DEC 9 ELECTION
MEMORIAM – PAUL S. THRONBURG, JR.
MEMBERSHIP CORNER AND SCHOLARSHIP
VA BUDGET CONCERNS FOR 2022