



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 COVID pandemic and anxiety are still with us, and news reports predict a surge of cases. My reading and understanding of the issue is this: in order to control the disease we must set a goal of developing adequate population (herd) immunity, which is accomplished through naturally acquired immunity after being infected, and by getting vaccinated against the virus. It has been reported that there is a difference between the news-reported number of "cases" of COVID based on individuals who are sick enough to be hospitalized, versus number of "infections" based on all people who have had a test-proven infection regardless of symptoms; the number of "infections" has been said to be about 10 times the number of "cases", but the number of cases is generally used to calculate mortality rates reported in the news, so the mortality rates are really only 10% of what are being reported in most news media. Furthermore the risk of fatality among young, healthy people who become infected is extremely low, so some have suggested that schools and businesses be opened and the young healthy population be allowed to develop naturally acquired immunity; this is not to say that there have been no tragic fatalities in younger individuals. Conversely for the older population, over age 60 or so, and those with underlying chronic health impairments, there should continue to be "focused protections," i.e., those individuals need to continue to avoid exposure to the disease and should be immunized. And there are reported definite economic and psychosocial consequences to overreacting and closing our businesses and social activities. Much of this is explained in The Great Barrington Declaration which was produced in recent months by a

group of epidemiologic and economic researchers and supported by available statistics; it can be found online.

The immunizations are reported to be roughly 90-95% effective; information from Pfizer (manufacturer of the first available vaccine which is given in 2 doses, 3 weeks apart) through the AMA is that the vaccine is about 95% effective. About 75% of people will experience some mild side effects of immunization including injection site soreness and some will experience fatigue, headache, muscle soreness or malaise, usually within 3 days of being vaccinated and lasting about 12-24 hours which can be helped by taking acetaminophen or a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug; some (about 10%) will experience unusually uncomfortable side effects, with symptoms usually lasting 12-48 hours and some individuals spike fevers over 104 degrees. Rare serious reactions have been reported, making it advisable to receive the vaccine in a setting where trained personnel and equipment are available to respond to serious reactions. Bottom line: I personally believe that for me, in my age and health category, the efficacy and safety of taking the vaccines outweigh those of other treatment and preventive measures and from being infected by the virus, so I plan to discuss it with my family doctor and most likely will take one of the vaccines; I do not have a good reason to choose one vaccine over another. Due to reported limited quantities of the vaccines I do not know when we can be vaccinated; however, the best source I found for following availability in the Waco area is covidwaco.com.

Respectively,

Bill Milnor

Upcoming Events and Information Items

JANUARY 21, THURSDAY DINNER MEETING AT RIDGEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB BANQUET ROOM

GUEST SPEAKER, GEORGE LITTELL ON
OIL, NATURAL GAS AND COMPETITION

**SOCIAL HOUR: 6:00 P.M. **, **CALL TO
TABLES 6:35 P.M. *, *INTRO &
ANNOUNCEMENTS, CHAPTER ELECTION
FOR 2021, 6:40 P.M. **, **DINNER
6:55P.M.** , **DRAWING & GUEST SPEAKER
7:50 P.M.

MENU: Caesar salad with crisp romaine hearts, brioche croutons, grated Parmesan cheese and club made Caesar dressing, 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 Tuesday, 19 January, 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 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.

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2021

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

- 18 February 2021, Thursday, Dinner meeting with entertainment by Ken Ratajczak performing John Denver and Friends.
- 18 March 2021, Dinner meeting with guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.
- 15 April 2021, Dinner meeting with guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.
- 20 May 2021, Dinner meeting with guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.
- 4 June 2021, Annual fundraiser golf tournament, Friday afternoon at Cottonwood Creek Golf Course, Waco.

HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING UPDATE

We are tentatively planning a Board meeting for Tuesday, Jan 12, 5 p.m. at Uncle Dan's BBQ on Lake Air Drive. The meeting will have regular agenda plus review and vote on 2021 Chapter slate of officers and directors. We have the room reservation at Uncle Dan's and we also now have a Zoom subscription. The President e-mailed the Board members to determine whether the live or virtual meeting would be appropriate. A follow-on e-mail will be sent out once feedback has been received. Meanwhile, the Current Officers and Board members will continue to serve, as per the bylaws.

JANUARY SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION

Birthdays: Rita Dampier, Gloria DuBose, Mary Aileen Edwards, Charles Farr, Mary Gee, Kay Gompper, Hope Hacker, Joe Herbelin, Gene Lednicky, Linda Pitzer, Harold Rafuse, Donna Sammon, Rosemary Sancton, Mauve Sawyer, Amy Schnelle, and Paul Thronburg.

Anniversaries: Jimmie and Mary Hanes, Jon and Terri Ker, and Mike and Karen O'Bric.

CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES ARMY OPENED

The National Museum of the United States Army officially opened Nov. 11 at Fort Belvoir, VA. The 84-acre museum campus honors the service and sacrifice of more than 30 million men and women who have worn the Army uniform since 1775.

CORONAVIRUS AND BUDGET BILL AND DOD LEGISLATION

Many military personnel, their families and veterans would be eligible for one-time stimulus checks of \$600 under the \$1.4 trillion federal funding package and coronavirus relief bill released by Congress on Monday.

The proposal calls for direct payments of \$600 to eligible Americans, plus \$600 per dependent child. Under the plan, those earning up to \$75,000; \$112,500 as head of household; or \$150,000 as a married couple filing jointly qualify for the full payment.

This means a family of four could potentially receive a \$2,400 check. While not as large as the \$1,200 stimulus awarded earlier this year, it's "in the bill," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said in a statement Monday.

The bill extends the time frame for service members, Defense Department civilians and federal workers to pay back the 6.2% Social Security tax that has not been withheld from their paychecks since September, when President Donald Trump signed an executive order deferring the tax. Without the legislation, personnel would be expected to pay the taxes back between January and March.

Democrats who worked to get the extension included in the omnibus appropriations bill, H.R. 133, said the measure would reduce the impact on military families and civil servants. Payroll taxes were not withheld from military and federal worker pay checks since September thru December. With this payroll tax fix, military families and federal workers will see that repayment spread across a much larger number of pay periods, minimizing their short-term decrease in income."

In addition to the direct payments to many Americans of \$600, the proposed coronavirus legislation includes an additional \$300 per week for those on unemployment and \$13 billion in increased food stamps and child nutrition benefits to address hunger during the pandemic.

The DOD legislation allots 73 billion in non-emergency discretionary spending for the DOD for fiscal 2021 and includes a number of provisions for military personnel and families above the president's budget request, released earlier this year.

This includes an extra \$116 million to upgrade child care facilities, an additional \$284 million for on-base schools and a total of \$1.5 billion for environmental restoration programs -- \$430 million more than requested.

The current version of the bill included funding for DOD to study and possibly change the names of military installations that honor Confederate officers -- a condition that prompted President Donald Trump to veto the DOD legislation.

The DOD legislation was going back to Congress who will be voting for a veto override; the House has approved the veto override and at this time, the proposed vote was still pending in the Senate

The COVID and Budget bills were the work of negotiations between House and Senate lawmakers from both sides of the aisle and passed both chambers. The COVID and Budget bills were signed off by President Trump after an initial delay. This avoided a shutdown of the federal government.

VA LAUNCHES NEW SINGLE ACCESS PHONE NUMBER

VA announced a new phone number to access all VA services. 1.800 MyVA411 (1.800.698.2411) is available 24 hours-a-day, 365 days-a-year, to serve veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. Callers have the option of pressing 0 immediately to be connected with a customer service agent. The Veterans Crisis Line (1.800.273.8255) and the White House VA Hotline (1.855.948.2311) will still be available at their current numbers.

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 Vietnam. He is a member of Phi Beta Kappa, International Association for Energy Economics, Military Officer Association of America, and Veterans of Foreign Wars. 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
- Former Trustee of Awty International School

2021 CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES

The Board is always looking for prospects to join the chapter; please contact Vince Tobola, 254-709-5795 and he will provide chapter information and a membership application. 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.

MOAA CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE: YOUR ASSOCIATION'S GOALS FOR 2021, By Gen.

Walter L. "Skip" Sharp, USA (Ret)

" In 2020, despite an unprecedented pandemic, MOAA emerged stronger. The "widow's tax" is being eliminated thanks to MOAA's advocacy; The MOAA Foundation stood up the COVID-19 Relief Fund; and staff productivity increased despite a switch to a teleworking environment. MOAA has a strong cadence executing its strategic plan with the six pillars of advocacy, membership, member engagement, chapters and councils, finances, and organizational capacity.

Advocacy. We cannot ignore the impact of fiscal challenges such as the national debt and deficit, budget caps, and sequestration. We center on service-earned entitlements such as health care, pay, and benefits. As we approach spring, we will align Storming the Hill topics with these objectives.

Expanding the scope of MOAA's charities. We will use the generous donations to the Scholarship Fund for the largest possible number of deserving students. We're working to increase donations to The MOAA Foundation to better support programs that help military families. The COVID-19 Relief Fund provides emergency financial assistance for struggling service members and veterans. We expect to institutionalize this type of assistance.

Increasing engagement and member experiences. We will build on our success to attract and retain members. Programs such as career transition services and financial education, spouse programs, advocacy, scholarships, and insurance opportunities are key components targeting newer members and valued by our

current members. Our magazine and digital products have been re-engineered, setting us up for innovation in how we influence, connect, and serve.

Increasing membership. We can increase membership if people understand and value what we're doing. Getting the word out on who we are and how we advocate for service members and veterans and their families will drive our great value as worthy of membership. I ask all MOAA members to talk to others about the work MOAA is doing as well as the value of membership.

Innovating chapters and councils. Chapters are the lifeblood of MOAA, but their recruiting and community engagement efforts are challenged by the current crisis. We're countering with additional financial and training support to our state council presidents. Our virtual chapter program is thriving and expanding. We recently added a chapter supporting the U.S. Public Health Service and will look to initiate others in the future.

Focusing on diversity. Diversity of membership gives us diversity of thought — something that will position MOAA for even greater success in the future. We're working to further diversify the board of directors to ensure proper representation.

In the months ahead, I look forward to working with the entire board, MOAA staff, and MOAA members to strengthen MOAA and our ability to serve the uniformed services, their families, and survivors.

Never stop serving!"

U.S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE (USPHS)

The USPHS Commissioned Corps celebrates its birthday this month. They are the front line of the nation's public health defense – and they have been serving as such, in one form or another, for more than two centuries. The Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service, created in 1889, now has nearly 7,000 members. Over the years, they have responded to everything from wars to natural disasters to disease outbreaks and pandemics. The head of the USPHS Commissioned Corps is the Surgeon General. The USPHS's uniforms and rank structure are patterned after those of the Navy. The head of the USPHS released a landmark report in 1964 that connected cancer with smoking. USPHS personnel are assigned to 800 locations in the U.S. and nations around the world.

TROOPS WITH DEBILITATING CASES OF COVID-19 OR THEIR SURVIVORS TO GET DISABILITY PAY

Under sweeping veterans legislation approved December 16 by Congress, service members who contract COVID-19 while on duty and suffer disability or death as a result will be eligible for Department of Veterans Affairs benefits.

A provision in the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 designates COVID-19 as a presumptive illness – a descriptor that paves the way for affected service members or veterans who suffer long-term consequences of the virus to receive compensation and benefits.

The benefit would apply to active-duty service members and Reserve members, as well as National Guardsmen on training duty under Title 10; activated Guard members serving on or after March 13; or those working full time during the national emergency as declared by the president.

Of the 94,644 service members who have contracted COVID-19 since the beginning of the outbreak, 57,590 have recovered, according to Defense Department data published Dec. 16.

Nearly 880 have been hospitalized for the illness, an indication of a serious case of COVID-19 with the potential for long-term effects and, possibly, VA benefits.

In addition to the COVID-19 provisions, the legislation creates an Office of Women's Health within the VA and mandates that every VA hospital have a dedicated women's health provider. It includes a number of provisions to address sexual assault and harassment within the department. Other items are also addressed:

- Would require VA to make Disability Benefits Questionnaires available for public use, again.
- Would lower the age from 57 to 55 to remarry without incurring penalties for surviving spouses receiving Dependency and Indemnity Compensation
- Would modernize the Service-Disabled Veterans Insurance (SDVI) program.
- Would increase from \$5 million to \$10 million the maximum amount VA may grant in a fiscal year to states and tribal organizations for maintaining veterans' cemeteries.

- Would require VA to create a database on its website to explain public institution requirements for in-state tuition.
- Would expand benefits and services for homeless veterans.
- Would create certain education, employment, and housing protections for veterans impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

DESERT STORM REMEMBRANCE

The Gulf War began with the unwarranted Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on Aug. 2, 1990, an act of aggression which shocked the world. Build-up of military forces for Operation Desert Shield started Aug. 8. After Iraq failed to meet the Jan. 15, 1991, deadline for withdrawal of forces set by the United Nations, the coalition launched Operation Desert Storm. After more than five weeks of coalition air attacks and the menace of potential amphibious assault from Marine Corps and Navy Forces in the Persian Gulf, the coalition the coalition hurled a multi-corps attack at Iraqi forces on Feb. 24. In a 100-hour ground campaign that charged forward relentlessly under an umbrella of air superiority, allied forces destroyed, captured or routed Iraqi military formations and liberated Kuwait. Bush called an end to combat operations, later formalized in an armistice March 3.

TO EDUCATE AND TO HONOR

The National Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial in Washington, D.C., is nearing final design approval, but requires \$20 million more in fundraising before the project can break ground.

Located at 23rd Street and Constitution Avenue – just north of the Lincoln Memorial and a short walk from the Vietnam Memorial – the memorial will commemorate the Gulf War's historical significance, as well as honor the hundreds of thousands of U.S. and coalition military personnel who served and helped liberate Kuwait.

The estimated cost to build the Desert Storm memorial is \$40 million. More than \$9.2 million has been raised, with an additional \$10 million pledge from Kuwait.

Go to the National Desert Storm War Memorial Association's website, ndswm.org, to donate and to learn more about the memorial's history and design.



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U.S. Rep. Pete Sessions
 Contact information pending.

USEFUL NUMBERS

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