



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,

Our monthly dinner meeting on April 15 was well attended by over 40 members and spouses.

The highlight of the evening was a presentation by four cadets (Micah Stark, Bronson Links, Cullen Eppright and Sara Naylor) and a faculty sponsor (Lt Col Jeff Gardner, USAF, (ret)) of the Parsons Mounted Cavalry, Corps of Cadets, Texas A&M University. We learned that they represented the only such mounted cavalry unit of any college or university in the United States. They represent an extremely competitive group matching any intercollegiate extracurricular activity anywhere, starting as sophomores after which most beginning cavalry candidates are eliminated, leaving only an extremely dedicated group. Most impressive is that as part of leadership training, the cadets run the program themselves, including selecting new members, training riders and horses, caring for their horses, and arranging the fantastic ceremonies before widely televised athletic and other collegiate events. Several Board members believe the Parsons Mounted Cavalry is such an outstanding leadership training program, particularly compared with issues on other college campuses across the nation, that a financial support fund is being developed; since the fund will not be directed to individual scholarships like our normal funds, this fund will be made by individual donors, and a separate message will be forthcoming about how to contribute to that fund.

The Chapter Board met on April 27. There is to be a fun golf tournament this year on the afternoon of Friday June 4<sup>th</sup>; that will replace our usual large fundraising golf tournament since there

was not ample opportunity this year to recruit sponsorship for a large tournament; an email was sent May 1<sup>st</sup> to all members concerning the fun golfing and donation to help with our scholarship efforts and will need to be answered by May 10 for those who wish to participate – it's a-gonna be fun, so c'mon an' join in! A copy of the e-mail is repeated on page 2 of the newsletter for your info.

The next regular dinner meeting will be May 20 at RCC; member Bill and Bernie Easley will discuss what they saw on a recent tour of the Holy Land in Israel – very interesting indeed! There will not be a dinner meeting in June since we will be having our fun golf outing.

Respectfully,  
Bill Milnor

**MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2021**

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

- **4 June 2021**, Chapter fun golf outing, Friday afternoon at Cottonwood Creek Golf Course.
- **15 July 2021**, Dinner meeting with entertainment by Ken Ratajczak, performing music by John Denver and friends.
- **19 August 2021**, Dinner meeting with guest speaker, Terry Flood.
- **16 September 2021**, Luncheon, Baylor Club – President's Suite, Speaker to be determined.
- **21 October 2021**, Dinner Meeting, Speaker or Entertainment to be determined.
- **18 November 2021**, Dinner Meeting, Speaker or entertainment to be determined.
- **9 December 2021**, Dinner Meeting, Election and proposed Live Entertainment by The Morticians Band.

## Upcoming Events and Information Items

### MAY 20, THURSDAY DINNER MEETING AT RIDGEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB BANQUET ROOM

GUEST SPEAKER WILL BE BILL EASLEY WITH ISRAEL TRIP PRESENTATION, \*\*SOCIAL HOUR: 6:00 P.M. \*\*, \*\*CALL TO TABLES 6:35 P.M. \*, \*INTRO & ANNOUNCEMENTS 6:40 P.M. \*\*, \*\*DINNER 6:55P.M.\*\* , \*\*DRAWING & PRESENTATION 7:50 P.M.

**MENU:** Berry salad, Tri Tip Beef with mushroom demi-glace, Ancho Glazed Salmon, Chef's choices on vegetables, starch, 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, 18 May, 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. Dinner cost may be charged for missed attendance, depending on total turnout for the meeting date.

NOTE: Summer dress code will be in effect, gentlemen, collared shirts and slacks, optional for coat and/or tie and ladies attire as desired.  
Masks are no longer required at Ridgewood Country Club

### HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

The next Board meeting will be on Tuesday, May 25, 5 p.m., at Uncle Dan's BBQ, 1001 Lake Air Drive, which is located near the intersection with Valley Mills Drive and Lake Air Drive.

### MAY SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION

**Birthdays:** Bob Corwin, Sandy Corwin, Robert Powers, Sam Wright and John Wells.

**Anniversaries:** Tim and Nancy Pfanner, Ray and Rosemary Sancton, Elmer and Norricia Speights and Doug and Pat Young.

### CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL

### HOT CHAPTER GOLF OUTING JUNE 4<sup>TH</sup>

The information below was sent out by e-mail and select postcards to the membership on May 1<sup>st</sup> and is repeated again in case some missed it.

We appreciate our past support and participation in previous fundraiser golf events.

The HOT Chapter Board at its April 27, 2021 meeting discussed the currently scheduled June 4<sup>th</sup> afternoon golf outing fundraiser and decided we needed to do a survey to get a player count with inputs by May 10<sup>th</sup>. This was due to the difficulty in planning due to COVID guidance, impacts, and uncertainties. We cancelled the 2020 event and it is not practical to work the normal event items such as business and individual sponsorships, donations for prizes and Hole-In-One prize, gift bags and other similar amenities as before for 2021. The Board did decide to plan for a normal 2022 scholarship fundraiser golf tournament.

The Board discussed the reduced scope for proposed golf outing on June 4, 2021. This event is open to the membership and guests. Registration cost for golf would be \$100 per player; a portion of this will be a donation after the golfing expense is covered. It is proposed that player registration start at 12 noon and tee-off at 1:00 p.m. Golf cost includes use of cart, play, and range balls. The City golf course currently requires wear of masks in the Clubhouse and allows one player per cart and can allow two if from the same household.

The HOT Chapter Benevolence Fund is a Section 501 (c) (3) charitable organization, EIN 84-2070780. The chapter is conducting a limited awards program this year similar to last year. HOT Chapter MOAA, PO Box 23064, Waco, TX 76702 is address to be used for registration fees later and also for donations.

Please provide your player count input by Monday, May 10<sup>th</sup>, 5 p.m. to Vince Tobola, [vtobola@aol.com](mailto:vtobola@aol.com) or 254-709-5795. Please provide number and names if available. No registration payment is required at this time until we finalize holding the event after we receive the inputs and discuss responses.

Thank you.  
Vince Tobola

## **RESTAURANT REVITALIZATION FUND TO PRIORITIZE VETERANS**

The Restaurant Revitalization Fund was created by the American Rescue Plan which was signed into law in March by President Biden. The Fund will provide \$28.6 billion in direct relief funds through the Small Business Administration (SBA), to restaurants and other food establishments financially impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. SBA will prioritize veteran applications for the first 21 days after applications open on Monday, May 3, 2021, at noon EDT.

## **VETERANS IN CONGRESS**

The number of veterans serving in the current Congress is the fewest since the end of World War II. Only 91 veterans were sworn in on Jan. 3, with just 16 being newly elected. The 117<sup>th</sup> Congress just comprises 74 veterans in the House and 17 in the Senate. The number of veterans in Congress currently is down 18 from the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress (2019-20). The peak decade for veterans in Congress remains in the 1970s. The high point was the 93<sup>rd</sup> Congress (1973-74), in which 390 lawmakers, or about 73 percent of the total, were veterans. Most of the veterans had served in WWII and the Korean War. Today, veterans account for only about 19 percent, the lowest proportion since at least the end of WWII, when such records were first compiled.

## **NEW AIR FORCE FIGHTER COMING**

The Air Force unveiled the name of its newest fighter jet—the F-15EX Eagle II—during an April 7 ceremony at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. ANG Director Lt. Gen. Michael A. Loh said during the ceremony the F-15EX's improvements will be key to its mission of homeland defense. The Air National Guard will be the first to receive the new jet operationally. The first two F-15EXs will be delivered within nine months of the contract award, as opposed to the normal 39 months, Richardson said. This is key, given that 10 percent of the fleet is grounded due to structural issues, with 75 percent flying beyond their certified service life, he said. The aircraft is being by Boeing at its St. Louis facility. The Air Force is planning to buy up to 144 F-15EXs to replace the F-15 C/D fleet, which is at an average of 37 years and starting to see structural strain. It has large weapons capacity, digital backbone and open architecture. It will be able to carry hypersonic weapons that are in development.

## **HOT Chapter of MOAA – Membership Corner:**

Our efforts to grow the Chapter continues. At the beginning of the year, we had 66 Regular, 6 Surviving Spouses, 4 Associate and no Honorary member. Since then, we have added 11 Regular and 2 Associate members, and an Honorary member – Congressman Pete Sessions. We hope in the near future that his schedule and ours will align so we can hear from him at one of our dinner/meeting.

Each month we discover potential new Regular members – those former and current Officers living in the HOT area – and try to persuade them to join us. The discovering part of this two-step process is much easier than the persuading part. Our goal by the end of 2021 is to have 91 Regular members. At present we are 14 short of that goal.

We, the Membership Committee, thought our growth would be the greatest with the addition of good number of Associate members. **An Associate member is a spouse of existing Regular member, who agree to pay dues. This allows an Associate member to vote, be on committees, and hold any position in the Chapter that a Regular member can, including being the President of the Chapter. At present we can accept 11 more Associate members – PLEASE CONSIDER BECOMING ONE!**

## **DEFENSE HEALTH PROGRAM SEES \$1.8 BILLION SHORTFALL**

The Defense Department is anticipating a \$1.8 billion budget shortfall as the result of unexpected COVID-19 pandemic expenses, military health officials said Tuesday.

Medical treatment and the military response to the pandemic are expected to push Tricare costs \$1 billion higher than anticipated in the fiscal 2021 budget. The remaining balance in unexpected increases will be in the military health system itself, according to Dr. Terry Adirim, acting assistant secretary of defense for health affairs.

And that estimate could rise once the DOD assesses the financial impact of its pandemic response support to the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Adirim told members of the Senate Appropriations defense subcommittee during a hearing on the military medical budget.

Adirim said the DOD doesn't anticipate asking Congress for additional funds and instead will look inside the department and at "sustainment and modernization funding and postponing facilities maintenance" to cover the costs.

## **LOCAL ACTIVITIES**

- Waco Mammoth National Monument, 6220 Steinbeck Bend Drive, Waco, TX 76708. Open Sun. thru Sat., 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission cost: Adults, \$5.00; Seniors over 60, Military with ID, and Educators with ID, \$4.00; Students (7<sup>th</sup> Grade to College), \$4.00 and Infants and toddlers under 3, Free. Phone number, 254-750-7946. Free Parking.
- Waco Farmers Market in downtown Waco, 500 Washington Avenue, Waco, TX 76701. Open every Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Located across Washington Ave from the County Courthouse. Free parking.

## **TEXAS VETERAN LEADS AND DRIVE WAR MEMORIAL PROJECT IN MCALLEN, TEXAS**

In 1988, when Col. Frank Plummer, USA (Ret), began his designs for a war memorial in McAllen, Texas, he wanted to build something that honors U.S. veterans from all conflicts. "I could picture it perfectly," he said. But today, when he looks at the 105-foot-tall black granite spire at the center of the Veteran's War Memorial of Texas, he admits it's beyond what he ever could have envisioned. "It's so majestic, beautiful, and peaceful," he said.

Surrounding the spire on the memorial's 5-acre site are statues, pedestals, granite walls, flagpoles, plaques, and other historical objects divided into sections representing the wars and conflicts in which U.S. service members have fought.

Plummer's military service is represented in three of these. The 95-year-old served in World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. He joined the Army in 1943 and attended Officer Candidate School, graduating a second lieutenant. The paratrooper then deployed to the Philippines. When the war ended, he returned to the U.S. and headed to the University of Oklahoma on a football scholarship. Still in the reserves, Plummer was asked to go to Germany when the Berlin Airlift began. "I had plans to become a doctor," he said. "But I wanted to go back into the Army." After serving five months at Rhein-Main air base in Frankfurt, Plummer had several other assignments before making regular Army. His career continued with assignments teaching ROTC, in Korea and Japan, and then with the

82nd Airborne Division. He later served in Vietnam from 1964-65 and again from 1971-72. While there, he was wounded, for which he received a Purple Heart. After retiring from the Army in 1975, Plummer and his wife and children moved to McAllen, where he began working as a real estate broker.

The patriotism of the city's residents was part of the inspiration for the memorial. "This is one of the most patriotic places I've ever been," he said. Around 1999, just over 10 years after getting approval for the project, he finally had raised enough money to start building the first section of the memorial on the 5 acres of land the city had donated. "You name it, we did it for fundraising," he said. "We sold bricks, went to stores and asked for donations, held dances and parties, and sold flagpoles and benches to business and schools."

With his design coming to fruition, he quit his real estate job to focus full-time on the memorial. He projected the memorial would take until 2017 to complete. Today, only a few finishing touches remain, including installation of a sound system and the dedication of the Martha Washington statue. In total, Plummer, who continues to serve as president of the Veterans War Memorial Foundation of Texas, has raised over \$4 million for the project. "I've always liked a challenge, and I've never quit at anything," he said. "This isn't a job to me. I enjoy it."

He especially enjoys seeing children visiting the memorial. "I designed [the memorial] on the concept of an outdoor schoolroom," he explained. "I wanted to make it interesting for children. ... They are the future leaders of our nation, and if they aren't exposed to patriotic things and should our children not understand their importance, they won't go on to serve."

Looking back at his decades working on the project, Plummer admits it doesn't seem possible that it happened. "I'm not sure why I did it, but I felt like the city deserved this place."

### **Quote:**

Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving. -- Albert Einstein

### **Quote:**

America was not built on fear. America was built on courage, on imagination and an unbeatable determination to do the job at hand. -Harry Truman

## **PRESIDENT NOMINATES AIR FORCE SECRETARY**

President Joe Biden plans to nominate Frank Kendall, a former top Pentagon official, to be the next **Air Force** secretary, the White House announced at end of April. Defense News first reported the news of Kendall's expected nomination.

Gina Ortiz Jones, a former Air Force captain, has also been nominated to be the undersecretary of the service, the White House said. Jones, an intelligence officer who deployed to Iraq and is openly gay, ran as a Democrat for Congress in 2018 and again in 2020.

John Roth is currently the acting Air Force secretary. Barbara Barrett, who served as the fourth female Air Force secretary and succeeded Heather Wilson, was the last person to officially fill the role.

Kendall currently holds a number of positions, including senior fellow at the Center for American Progress and senior adviser to the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the White House said.

"Frank Kendall is exactly the kind of public servant we need at the helm of the Air Force at a time when the service is navigating so many unique challenges, including effective acquisition to meet our nation's future threats," Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said in a statement. "With more than 40 years of experience in defense and national security, and with a particular focus on acquisition policy during his tenure in the Obama administration, I cannot think of a better, more equipped leader to tackle these issues head on."

Smith also praised Biden's nomination of Jones, who would be "the first woman of color to serve as Under Secretary of the Air Force, marking yet another historic nomination as the Biden-Harris administration continues to prove their commitment to building a diverse Department of Defense that reflects the American population."

Kendall spent 10 years on active duty and retired as a lieutenant colonel from the Army Reserve. Under the Obama administration, he served as the undersecretary of defense for acquisition, technology and logistics at the Pentagon between 2012 and 2017. He is a graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, and also received a degree in aerospace engineering

From the California Institute of Technology and a law degree from Georgetown University.

Kendall was instrumental in facilitating an expensive overhaul of the Pentagon's military health system in 2015. The Defense Department that year awarded a \$4.3 billion contract to a team that included Leidos Inc. and Cerner Corp. to modernize the military's digital medical records system.

The program, known as MHS Genesis, is being introduced gradually across the DOD health system. The Department of Veterans Affairs later contracted with the Cerner team to use the same system. The VA launched its version last fall in eastern Washington; the program is currently on hold while the department reviews issues with the initial rollout. Kendall at the time said he spent more time on the health IT program than any other during his tenure -- even over the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, which remains the Pentagon's most expensive weapons program.

The former acquisition chief is best known for his "Better Buying Power" reform effort, aimed at streamlining and improving how the Pentagon buys equipment and weapons, including better cybersecurity protections for next-generation systems that rely heavily on software. Kendall later joined the consulting firm Renaissance Strategies; in 2017, he became a Leidos board member.

The news of the nomination comes more than a week after the Biden administration announced it intends to nominate Christine Wormuth, a former top Defense Department official, as the first female **Army** secretary. Wormuth, currently director of the Rand International Security and Defense Policy Center, served as undersecretary of defense for policy during the Obama administration from 2014 to 2016. In January, she led the Biden-Harris Defense Agency Review Team.

The Biden administration has yet to name its pick for the **Navy's** top civilian post.

## **TYNDALL AFB FL REPURPOSED FOR F-35'S**

Tyndall AFB near Panama City Florida was severely damaged by Cat 5 Hurricane Michael in 2018. The F-22 squadrons were relocated and it was decided not to rebuild the base and return the F-22's. The federal government opted to design an "installation of the future" that could accommodate the newest fifth-generation fighter. Service officials chose Tyndall to house the advanced fighters because of its infrastructure, airspace, and quality of life for its personnel.



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