



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 membership luncheon meeting on September 18 was attended by 43 of us at the Baylor Club. What a great setting; perhaps we can arrange schedules to use that location more often. The acoustics were great. We heard a presentation by Kevin Davis, manager of the Baylor VETS Program; Kevin told us about assistance to military veterans who attend Baylor as full time students following active duty service. Assistance is offered in generous financial terms by both the Veterans Administration and Baylor University, as well as assistance in socializing by meeting with other veterans who are attending Baylor as students now. This was an added benefit on top of the program that Terry Flood discussed last month. Those who want more information about the Baylor VETS program can contact Kevin at Kevin.Davis1@baylor.edu.

Next month we will have a dinner meeting at Ridgewood Country Club on Thursday evening, October 21. Senator Brian Birdwell will be our after-dinner speaker. Brian has some interesting experiences to talk about and I think we will all enjoy hearing him speak.

The Chapter Board met on September 28.

The commemorative coins have arrived and the Board approved making them available for personal possession in exchange for a minimum donation to the Chapter of \$15; several were dispensed that way. They will be available for members to acquire at the upcoming dinner. Donated money will go to the Chapter scholarship benevolence fund. Some of the coins will be reserved to use as mementos for our meeting speakers.

Wording of Chapter bylaws pertaining to eligibility of applicants for our scholarships was finally amended and corrected and approved by the Board. The bylaws will allow for a broad range of students with interest in being future military leaders, to compete for the scholarships.

It was announced that the McLennan County Veterans Association will host the annual fundraiser Vets Fest luncheon at VFW Post 6008, 725 Sun Valley Blvd in Hewitt. It will be held on Wed., October 13 from 11:00 a.m. to 13:00 or until the meat is all gone. The menu will be sliced brisket, potato salad, beans, soft drink or water and a cookie. Donation is \$10 per plate dine in or takeout.

The 13th annual Freedom Ball is to be held at the Waco Convention Center on Saturday, February 26, 2022, 6:00 – 11:00 p.m. The Freedom Ball is a patriotic celebration honoring active-duty service men and women and veterans with the focus of saluting those who have sacrificed so much for our nation. There will be tables of eight for individuals, veterans and significant others. More information will be coming on registration, costs and possible table groupings for chapter members.

Respectfully,
Bill Milnor

OCTOBER SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION

Birthdays: Lew Arend, Teresa Flynn, Bill Hearn, Nora Householder, George Littell, Penny Lull, Don McErlean, Scott Pitzer, Richard Sweeney, Norma Thronburg, Pat Young.

Anniversaries: George and Pam Holmes, Rusty and Susie Rowe, and John and Su Wells.

CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL

HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

The next Board meeting will be on Tuesday, October 26, 5 p.m., at Uncle Dan's BBQ, 1001 Lake Air Drive.

Upcoming Events and Information Items

THURSDAY DINNER MEETING COTOBER

21, AT RIDGEWOOD COUNTRY CLUB.

GUEST SPEAKER IS STATE SENATOR
BRIAN BIRDWELL

**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: Champion salad, Salmon Picatta, Pot Roast, Chef's choices of a starch, a vegetable and two desserts, rolls and butter, fresh brewed iced tea and coffee. 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, 19 October, 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: Summer dress code will be in effect, gentlemen, collared shirts and slacks, optional for coat and/or tie and ladies attire as desired.

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2021

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

- **21 October 2021**, Dinner Meeting, Guest Speaker, State Senator Brian Birdwell.
- **18 November 2021**, Dinner Meeting, Guest Speake, Terry Wright, Baylor University Life Long Learning.
- **9 December 2021**, Dinner Meeting, Election for 2022 and Live Entertainment by the band, The Morticians.
- **Note:** The next fundraiser golf tournament is scheduled for Friday afternoon, June 10, 2022 at Waco Cottonwood Creek Golf Course.

OCTOBER REMEMBRANCE DATES

- **October 11, Columbus Day**
- **October 13, Navy Birthday**
- **October 26, National Day of the Deployed**
(a day set aside to honor all of the brave men and women who have deployed and are sacrificing, or have sacrificed, their lives to fight for our country and acknowledges their families that they are separated from.)

OCTOBER LOCAL AREA EVENTS

- Oct. 7 – 17, HOT Rodeo and Fair. The Heart of Texas Fair & Rodeo will have its 11-day run with rodeo action, midway rides, concerts and agricultural attractions in and around the Extraco Events Center, 4601 Bosque Blvd. Call 254-776-1660 or go online, hotfair.com for more info.
- Oct. 8, Baylor's Lifelong Learning Program at the Mayborn Museum will present "Understanding Cybersecurity in Today's World" with Keith Kooyman, cybersecurity instructor at TSTC. Refreshments will be served at 9:30 a.m. and the program begins at 10:00 a.m. in the Mayborn Theater. No advanced registration is required for this free event, which is open to adults 50 and over. More info on line at baylor.edu/mayborn.
- Oct. 13, Vets Fest Fundraiser Lunch. It is hosted by McLennan County Veterans Association; it will be held this year at VFW Post 6008, 725 Sun Valley Blvd in Hewitt. Lunch will be held on Wed. from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. or until all meat is gone. The menu is sliced brisket, beans, potato salad, water or soft drink or cookie. VFW Post 6008, 725 Sun Valley Blvd in Hewitt
- Oct. 23, Cattle Baron's Ball. The Cattle Baron's Ball of Central Texas, benefiting the American Cancer Society, 6 p.m. at the MCC Highlander Ranch. More info at web site: wacocattlebaronsball.org.
- Oct. 28 – 30, Silobration. This year's Silobration will include evening concerts with Ben Rector and Johnnyswim as well as daytime music and a vendor fair at Magnolia Market at the Silos, 602 Webster. Go to web site magnolia.com for more info and for evening concert costs. Daytime visit is free.

BIO – GUEST SPEAKER – BRIAN BIRDWELL

Brian Birdwell, LTC, USA (ret) was born in Fort Worth; Brian is a graduate of Lamar University in Beaumont, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and the University of Missouri-Kansas City, where he earned a Master of Public Administration degree.

As the Distinguished Military Graduate of the Lamar Army ROTC program in 1984, Brian was commissioned as an officer in the U.S. Army and served a 20-year career with numerous training deployments and two operational deployments. In 1990, he deployed to Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm, where he was awarded the Bronze Star for Exceptional Meritorious Achievement. In 1998, he deployed to Central America as the Joint Operations Officer for Joint Task Force Aguila to execute humanitarian relief operations in the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch. In 2001, Brian was serving on the Department of the Army staff at the Pentagon as the military aide to the Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management.

On September 11, 2001, when American Airlines Flight 77 was crashed just yards away from his second floor Pentagon office, Brian was critically wounded and severely burned. Of the burns that covered more than 60 percent of his body, nearly half were third degree in severity. Today, following 39 operations, months of hospitalization and numerous skin grafts, Brian has made a miraculous recovery. Despite physical limitations, he testifies not only to his physical healing, but the ultimate miracle of grace through Christ. He was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds received that day. Upon retirement in July 2004, he was awarded the Legion of Merit.

From 2004 to 2017, Brian and his wife, Mel, operated Face the Fire Ministries, a non-profit organization they jointly founded to support critical-burn survivors and wounded service-members and their families.

Brian was first elected to the Texas State Senate in a June 2010 special election, and has since been re-elected by his constituents three times, averaging more than 85 percent of votes cast. Brian serves as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development, which provides oversight to the Railroad Commission, the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), and the Workforce

Commission. Senator Birdwell also serves as vice-chair of the Senate Committee on State Affairs and as a member of the Senate Committees on Criminal Justice, Higher Education, and Select Committee on Redistricting. Since 2013, Brian has served as Chairman of U.S. Senator Ted Cruz's 22-member U.S. Service Academy Nominations Board.

The Birdwells have been married for more than 30 years and reside in Granbury. They have one son, Matt, a 2013 graduate of Texas Tech University, and a daughter-in-law, Ann Marie, who reside in Tarrant County with the Birdwell's two grandchildren.

GET AN EARLY START TO TAX SEASON

Tax season will be here before you know it. The first step in preparing for tax season is to make sure you have an active myPay account and your mailing address is up-to-date.

With a myPay account, you will be able to access your 1099-R tax statement much sooner in myPay than through the postal mail. The 1099-R's generally become available in myPay in late December while paper copies are not mailed until mid-January. You can also download or print our current tax statement, as well as prior year 1099Rs (up to four prior years for retirees and up to two prior years for annuitants).

You can log into your account at <https://myPay.dfas.mil>.

If you are not using myPay, it is easy to get started. DFAS has a handy step-by-step, downloadable (Get Started with myPay) guide available at: <https://www.dfas.mil/RetiredMilitary/manage/mypany/>

You can also call myPay customer support unit at toll free, 1-800-321-1080, office hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., EST.

SHINING BRIGHTLY

The Olympic flame has been extinguished after the Tokyo games, but a gold medal still shines brightly for Lt. Amber English, USAR.

English is a world-renowned shooter who won gold for TEAM USA at this year's Olympic Games. Her 56 hits in the competition set an Olympic record and allowed her to finish ahead of Diana Bacosi of Italy (51 hits) and Wei Meng of China (46 hits). English, a native of Colorado, was a full-time resident athlete in Colorado Springs, CO before she joined the Army in 2017.

Membership Corner

We have welcomed eight new Regular members to the Chapter since the year began, while losing one with the passing of Lynn Day in August. Three of the eight new members joined last month. If we can continue that level of effort for the next three months, adding three each month, we will exceed the goal of having 91 Regular members by the end of 2021. **With your help, we can make it happen!**



Colonel William Y. "Bill" Porter, received his commission through the Army ROTC program at Texas A&M University in 1978. Bill began his career at Fort Hood as a Platoon Leader and Company Executive Office, 2nd Battalion/12th Cavalry (Mech), 1st Cavalry Division, and some 30 years later he finished his career as the Chief Information Officer, G-6, U.S. Army Sustainment Command, Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois. Between those assignments he served in numerous positions, mainly as an information officer, but also as a light infantry company commander, advisor to the Army Reserve component, systems analyst, chemical training battalion commander, group operations officer, and deputy inspector general. In the early 2000s he was the Director of Operations, Coalition Provisional Authority-Baghdad at the Federal Department Center in Kuwait, followed by duty as the Director of Logistics, J-4, Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, Djibouti, Africa.



Chief Warrant Officer Frank M. "Gunner" Slaby, U.S. Navy (Ret), was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1950. He began his career in the Navy

in 1969 and served until 1997. His enlisted occupations were Aviation Machinist Mate Reciprocating, Gunner's Mate Technician, and Weapon's Technician. Highest enlisted grade was Senior Chief Weapon's Technician (E-8). Commissioned as Chief Warrant Officer, Surface Ordnance Technicians in 1992. Early duty was working on piston engine aircraft. Later he worked on all types of Navy special weapons, including Polaris A-3 missiles and Tomahawk cruise missiles. Officer duties included supervising maintenance on all types of naval surface ordnance and related handling equipment. Duty stations and home ports included: Corpus Christi TX, San Diego CA, Guam, Subic Bay R.P Guam, and Norfolk. He served on the USS CORAL SEA (CV-43), USS PROTEUS (AS-19), and did three tours on USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN-69). During his naval service, he literally "sailed around the world".



Lt Colonel Lee L. Harkins, USAF (Ret), was born in Tomball, TX and grew up in Humble Oil Camps, where 10 to 12 families lived to be near the oil fields where they worked. Lee received his commission through the Air Force ROTC program at Baylor University in 1959. He wanted to be a pilot, but his near-sightedness disqualified him for that goal. His first assignment was not to some exotic place, but to Texas A&M University to become a meteorologist. He served in that career field for 22 years, except for five years as a Minuteman missile crew member, instructor and commander for the Strategic Air Command. Lee spent five winters in Rapid City, North Dakota, where one of his challenging duties was to provide weather conditions over the North Pole for B-52's crews as they maintained their 24/7 presence, as a show of force to the Soviets. Lee finally got his assignments to exotic places around the world. They included a station near Mount Pinatubo at Clark AB in the Philippines, Osan AB in Korea and Germany. State side he was stationed in Georgia, Texas (twice) and Louisiana. He and his wife of 63 years, Jeri, were blessed with three children. **Jim Milam Membership Chairman**

PENTAGON AWARDS CONTRACT FOR NEW B-52 ENGINES

Engine maker Rolls-Royce North America has won a \$2.6 billion contract for the Air Force's B-52 Commercial Engine Replacement Program (CERP), the Pentagon announced the evening of September 24, beating out bids from GE Aviation and Pratt & Whitney. With work on the new engines estimated to be completed in September 2038, the venerable bomber could remain in service 100 years after its first flight, given planner service life into the 2050's.

The CERP is one aspect of a multi-pronged update of the B-52, which is also slated to receive a new radar, digital cockpit, and new connectivity upgrades. The Air Force plans to retain the B-52 into the 2050s, as a standoff weapon platform and as a direct attack aircraft when enemy defenses are limited or already beaten down. The last B-52H now in service was built in 1962, but the type is still flying with its original Pratt & Whitney TF33 engines. Early in the program, Pratt proposed an upgrade of the TF33, which the Air Force rejected. The CERP is supposed to deliver up to 40 percent improved range and fuel economy for the B-52, reducing its tanker requirements and increasing its on-station loiter time. The engine is also supposed to be of such improved reliability that the engines need never come off the wing during the bomber's remaining service life.

VA CAREGIVER PROGRAM CHANGES

Veterans enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs' Family Caregiver Program before new eligibility requirements went into effect last year and who might lose the benefit as the result of a reassessment of cases will receive an extra year of support.

The VA announced Sept. 22 that it still needs to scrutinize 19,800 cases to determine whether the veterans meet the new standards -- a review that could result in dismissal from the program or higher or lower monthly stipends.

Last year, the department expanded the program to veterans from World War II through the Vietnam War who needs significant assistance from a caregiver -- a spouse, family member, friend or helper -- with their daily needs. At the same time, it set new eligibility criteria, reducing the number of categories from three to two and announced it would review the cases of injured post-9/11 combat veterans for whom the program

was initially created.

The VA had expected to get through those assessments by Oct. 1, 2021. But, VA officials said Sept. 22, the department received more than 107,000 applications from the newly eligible cohort -- a number they said was significantly higher than expected -- and decided to prioritize that group rather than reassess current beneficiaries, known as the "legacy" group. "We felt the legacy group was already receiving care and receiving stipends payments and services, and the veterans applying for the program did not have anything," Caregiver Support Program Executive Director Colleen Richardson said during a call with reporters.

Under the system, veterans are assessed on the level of assistance they need with their daily tasks, such as getting dressed, bathing, cooking and taking medications. The new system divides eligible veterans into two groups, down from the previous three-tiered approach: Level 2 participants need the highest level of care, such as round-the-clock supervision and help with at least three or more basic activities, while Level 1 veterans require substantial care but are more independent.

Richardson said that all veterans in the lowest tier of the old system and 2% of the second and third tiers, or 6,700 veterans, will lose their caregiver benefits, while the remainder may see their stipends increase or decrease.

According to an interim rule published September 22 in the Federal Register, the group that is removed from the program will receive 12 months of benefits, until Oct. 1, 2022, followed by another 60 days of benefits during processing and an additional 90 days of coverage -- for a total of 17 months -- before they are dismissed from the program.

Veterans whose stipends will be lowered will see that change go into effect Oct. 1, 2022.

And veterans who are reassessed and deemed to need a higher stipend will receive it as soon as they are found eligible for the increased benefits.

Richardson said the reassessments will begin in the next couple of weeks, and the VA plans to send letters and call veterans to notify them of the effort. The assessments will include home visits or, if the veterans prefer as a result of the pandemic, an assessment by video.



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