



PRESIDENT’S COLUMN

Greetings

The Christmas season is upon us. The actual date of Jesus birth is unknown but December 25 became widely accepted in the third century. The cause of celebration has changed over the centuries and become highly commercialized. For whatever reason you celebrate Christmas- Christ’s birth, spirit of giving, connecting with friends and family. Marsha and I wish you all the best.

It has been an honor getting to know you while serving as Chapter President for the past two years. We, as a Chapter, have recovered and accomplished a great deal, especially after the COVID years (2020-2021). In 2022, the Chapter awarded \$13,150 in scholarships and grants compared to \$1,650 awarded in 2021. We also increased our donations to local veteran’s organizations from a 15 year average of \$503 to \$1,300. We exceeded 2022 levels by awarding \$18,500 in scholarships and grants and \$3,650 in donations to local veteran’s organizations. The majority of our funds received for these activities were donated by you – our Chapter membership. I hope this trend continues in the future and we increase donations received from the local community so the Chapter can do more. Remember the date of our next fundraiser - April 8, 2024.

Our December meeting is very important as we will vote for our 2024 leadership team and Board of Directors. We will also have special guests – Capt Frank Michael, USN (Ret), who is a MOAA Program Director, Council and Chapter Affairs and Col Si Simondson, USA (Ret), President, Texas Council of Chapters.

More importantly, it is an opportunity for fellowship, fun and celebration of our success in 2023 while looking to the future.

**Donations Needed:** Please bring a non-perishable food item to our dinner meeting and receive an extra ticket for our nightly drawing. Collection being made for donation to the Veteran’s One Stop.

Duty/Honor/Country---Always Serving

v/r

Michael Slavens

**INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHTS FROM OUR FOUNDING FATHERS**

“The accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands, whether of one, a few, or many, and whether hereditary, self-appointed, or elective, may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny.” – James Madison, *Federalist* 47, 1788

“It will not be denied that power is of an encroaching nature and that it ought to be effectually restrained from passing the limits assigned to it.” – James Madison, *Federalist* 48, 1788

“I own I am not a friend to a very energetic government. It is always oppressive.” – Thomas Jefferson, Letter to James Madison, 1787

“I can only say that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the abolition of slavery.” – George Washington, Letter to Robert Morris, 1786 “

“To preserve liberty, it is essential that the whole body of people always possess arms, and be taught alike, especially when young, how to use them...” – Richard Henry Lee

“I ask who are the militia? They consist now of the whole people, except a few public officers.” – George Mason

Sources: <https://billofrightsintstitute.org/resources/founders-quotes>  
<https://thefederalistpapers.org/us/10-essential-quotes-2nd-amendment-founding-fathers>

**THINGS TO REMEMBER AND REFLECT ON IN DECEMBER:**

- Dec 1, 1941 – Civil Air Patrol founded
- Dec 7, 1941 – Japan attacks the US Naval base at Pearl Harbor
- Dec 8, 1987 – President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev signed the INF treaty
- Dec 10, 1898 – Treaty of Paris signed after Spain defeated in the Spanish – American War

Dec 12, 1870 – Joseph Rainey of South Carolina became first African-American to serve in the US House of representatives  
 Dec 13, 1862 – Union Army defeated at the Battle of Fredericksburg Va., with over 12,500 Union and 6,000 Confederate casualties  
 Dec 14, 1799 – George Washington dies at Mount Vernon  
 Dec 16, 1773 – The Boston Tea Party occurred  
 Dec 16, 1944 – The Battle of the Bulge began  
 Dec 17, 1777 – Continental Army settles in at Valley Forge  
 Dec 17, 1903 – Wright brothers first powered flight near Kitty Hawk  
 Dec 18-29, 1972 – Operation Linebacker II against North Viet Nam  
 Dec 20, 1989 - US invaded Panama  
 Dec 24, 1814 - Treaty of Ghent signed ending War of 1812  
 Dec 26, 1776 – Washington defeats the Hessians at Battle of Trenton – Five Americans wounded  
 Dec 29, 1880 – 7<sup>th</sup> Calvary massacres over 250 Sioux at Wounded Knee

Source:  
<https://www.historyplace.com/specials/calendar/December.htm>

**SECOND THURSDAY DINNER MEETING, DECEMBER 14, 2023, PRESIDENT’S SUITE, AT MCLANE STADIUM – 5<sup>th</sup> FLOOR.**

- Enter stadium parking lot through gate 1, off of MLK Blvd and bear right. Continue on I-35 side and look for double door at end of parking area near white column with President’s Suite sign above the door. This is past the Baylor Club main entrance of three sets of double doors. Go through door and take elevator to the fifth floor. There is normally placard sign at the white column saying President’s Suite.

As before, you can park in any numbered space.

**DINNER SCHEDULE**

- \*\* 5:00 P.M. Registration Table Opens and Social Period.**
- \*\* 5:35 P.M. Call to Tables.**
- \*\* 5:40 P.M. Intro & Announcements**
- \*\* 5:50 P.M. Dinner.**
- \*\* 6:50 P.M Election, Multiple Drawings & Frank Michael, MOAA Chapters and Council Address & followed with live entertainment by the band, The Morticians.**

**MENU:** Fresh fruit salad, tossed salad with balsamic and ranch dressings, artisan bread, Salisbury Steak, Chicken Picatta, Sautéed Seasonal Vegetables, Red Roasted Potatoes, Iced Tea and Water. Coffee available at beverage bar.

A bar will be available and payment will be credit card payment only due to Baylor Club policy.

**Dinner cost is \$35 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 Thursday, 7 December Noon for sign-ups.**

Early RSVP’s are welcome and appreciated. After the 7th, please contact Vince Tobola as soon as possible if you are planning to attend and we will update the attendee list to accommodate you at the dinner meeting.

**NOTE: Winter dress code will be in effect, gentlemen, slacks, collared shirts and coat and tie and ladies attire as desired. Military uniforms are welcome for this dinner.**

**DECEMBER MEETING GUEST SPEAKER**

**Capt Frank Michael, USN (Ret) Biography**

Capt Michael is responsible for direct support of MOAA’s robust nationwide network of more than 400 active and engaged affiliates as they influence legislation, serve their local communities in impactful ways, grow membership at the local and national levels, and increase MOAA brand awareness nationwide. He coordinates with senior headquarters staff, as well as national oversight committee and board leadership, to improve and support the vibrancy and effectiveness of MOAA’s affiliate network. Michael also provides in-person support to council and chapter activities and events, and plans and organizes quarterly council and chapter leader in-person workshops and other training opportunities.

Career Highlights:

- Commanded Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light 47 (HSL 47). Led Navy helicopter relief efforts following the 2004 Indonesian tsunami and Hurricane Katrina.
- Commanded USS Boxer (LHD 4). Participated in the 2011 Captain Phillips rescue operation in the Indian Ocean.

- Extensive experience in nonprofit program and volunteer member support.

Source: <https://www.moaa.org/content/about-moaa/meet-our-leaders/moaa-staff/councilchapter-and-member-support/frank-michael/>

## **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 President's Suite area.

## **2024 CHAPTER MEETING SCHEDULE**

**\*18 January 2024, Thursday dinner meeting in the Media Room at McLane Stadium.** Guest speaker will be Stan Parker of the Stan Parker Foundation.

## **HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING DATE**

There will be **no** Board meeting in December. The next Board meeting will be on **Tuesday, January 23, 2024**, 5:00 p.m. at Uncle Dan's BBQ that is located at 1001 Lake Air Drive.

## **2024 CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES**

Chapter member dues will still be \$25 for renewing members in 2024. Member renewals can be paid at a chapter meeting or mailed to HOT Chapter MOAA, PO Box 23964, Waco, TX 76702.

We are always looking for prospects to join the chapter; please contact Bill Porter, 254-495-5601 or Vince Tobola, 254-709-5795 with prospect names.

Reminder that our website, hotmoaa.org, does have the chapter membership application form plus copies of newsletters. Newsletters are sent to members monthly, by e-mail or regular mail.

## **AUGUST VETERAN'S DONATION**

Our membership was well represented at the Veterans Appreciation Luncheon, sponsored by the Stan Parker Foundation, held August 9<sup>th</sup> at the Lee Lockwood Library & Museum. The BBQ and fellowship were excellent. At the luncheon, HOT

MOAA presented the Stan Parker Foundation with a \$500 donation and chapter challenge coin for their ongoing support of central Texas veterans.



*Pictured from left to right: Vince Tobola, Treasurer HOT Chapter; Stan Parker; and Michael Slavens, President HOT Chapter.*

## **NOVEMBER EVENTS RECAP**

Chapter Challenge Coin an MOAA pen presented to our November 16<sup>th</sup> Guest Speaker, Ashley Millerd.



*Pictured left to right: Ashley Millerd, guest speaker; and Michael Slavens, President HOT Chapter.*

She shared her knowledge on recycling procedures and initiatives by the City of Waco Solid Waste Department. Good question and answer session after her presentation.

**Two of our members received Congressional Veterans Commendations** on November 11, 2023 after the Veterans Day Parade downtown Waco's Heritage Square. A total of six veterans were recognized.

Pictured below, Congressman Pete Sessions presents the Congressional Veterans Commendation and flag flown over the U.S. Capitol to Vince Tobola.



*From left to right: Vince Tobola and Congressman Pete Sessions. .*

Below, Congressman Session presents the Congressional Veterans Commendation and flag flown over the U.S. Capitol to John Wells.



*From left to right: John Wells and Congressman Pete Sessions.*

Both John Wells and Vince Tobola received a flag flown over the National Capitol, the commendation in a blue award folder and a framed copy of the commendation. The commendation wording itself was posted in the Congressional Record. The award these veterans received was well deserved!

### **DECEMBER SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION**

**Birthdays:** Christine Brinegar, Beau Crosby, TJ Huntinghorse, Carol McHaney, Larry Pennington,

Barbara Purselley, Rusty Rowe, Marsha Slavens, Ann Speed, and Gary Urban.

**Anniversaries:** Jim and Joan Alexander, Michael and Teresa Flynn, John and Nora Householder, Harold and RoseMary Rafuse, Don and Pam Schreiber, and Russell and Renee Swann.

### **CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL**

### **MEMBER SPOTLIGHT – KEN RATAJCZAK, 1ST VICE PRESIDENT**



Colonel Ken Ratajczak (USA Ret) was born and raised in South Bend, Indiana. After high school he attended Indiana University for 2 years and in 1966 enlisted in the Army. During Basic Training at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri he maxed the language test and was assigned to the Viet Nam Language School at Fort Bliss, Texas. While there, Ken applied and was accepted to attend the United States Military Academy Preparatory School in 1967. After completing “Prep School”, he received an appointment to West Point. He graduated in 1972 and was commissioned in the Medical Service Corps and became an executive officer and general’s aide at Fort Sam Houston.

In 1973, Ken attended Indiana University School of Medicine under the HR-2 program. After graduation in 1977, he started a pediatric internship at Fitzsimons Army Medical Center. Ken turned down his residency and spent a year as a general medical officer at Pine Bluff Arsenal, Arkansas. In 1979, he returned to Fitzsimons Army Medical Center and completed radiology residency in 1982 and was certified by the American Board of Radiology. After three years at Fort Dix as a staff radiologist and chief of ultrasound, COL Ratajczak joined the Texas National Guard and later transferred to the U.S. Army Reserve and retired with 24 years of service.

After the army, Ken began private practice in Riverton, Wyoming. A year later, he became a staff radiologist for 3 years at Scott & White Taylor Texas regional clinic. He then took a position in Mesquite, Texas, and after a year, returned Waco’s Scott & White clinic. He moonlighted in and numerous clinics and hospitals in Kansas and Texas and retired a second time in 2015.

Ken is an exceptional musician, both the guitar and banjo, with years of experience. The summer between high school and college, he spent the summer touring with *Sigma Five* who had a recording, *Comin' Down*. At West Point, Ken played with *Stained Soul* and was president of the Rock Bands his senior year. Ken has played locally as a soloist and with *2 Drink Minimum and Brazos River Knights*.

A man of many talents, Ken authored *The Wrong Man Out*, a book about Shoeless Joe Jackson.

In 2002, he married the love of his life, Anne. They are very active in St. Mary's of the Assumption in Waco. He is a member of the Knights of Columbus and has served as Grand Knight, Faithful Navigator and District Deputy.

Ken is an active member of the Heart of Texas Chapter, Military Officers Association of America.

### **FREE BAYLOR LAW VETERANS LAW CLINIC**

This is free legal advice for veterans and their spouses in Central Texas to be held from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Friday, December 1, 2023, at the Heart of Texas Veterans One Stop at 2010 La Salle Ave., Waco. This is by appointment only; please call 254-710-4244 or e-mail [LegalClinics@baylor.edu](mailto:LegalClinics@baylor.edu) to make an appointment.

### **PROPOSED 2024 SLATE OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS FOR THE DECEMBER 14<sup>H</sup> MEETING AND CHAPTER ELECTION**

#### **Officers**

President: Ken Ratajczak  
1<sup>st</sup> VP: Bill Porter  
2<sup>nd</sup> VP: Lew Arend  
Treasurer: Vince Tobola  
Immediate Past President: Michael Slavens  
Secretary: George Littell (Appointed)

#### **Directors**

Beau Crosby	Bill Hulsey
John Jacques	Gene Lednicki
Bill Milnor	Barbara Purselley
Don Speed	Mike Strain
Ennis Sullivan	Norma Thronburg
Gary Urban	Jane Winston

### **MOAA NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP**

If needed, there is a MOAA membership form at the chapter website: [hotmoaa.org](http://hotmoaa.org). **Basic membership**

is free and fees are shown for annual and life memberships.

### **DECEMBER AREA EVENTS**

Per [destinationwaco.org](http://destinationwaco.org) the following events are planned:

- Lights of West – Nov 22- Dec 30 in West, TX
- Christmas at the Silos – Nov 24- Dec 31 at Magnolia Market
- Wild Lights at the Zoo – Nov 24-Dec 31 at Cameron Park Zoo
- Homestead Fair – Nov 24-26, Dec 1-2, Dec 8-9 @ Homestead Craft Village
- Christmas Experience with Waco Tours – Nov 25-Dec 22 @ Waco Tours
- A Charlie Brown Christmas – Nov 29 – Dec 9 @ Waco Civic Theatre
- 11th Annual Waco Wonderland– Dec 1-3 @ Heritage Square - more information at [www.wacowonderland.com](http://www.wacowonderland.com)
- Christmas Lights in the Village – Dec 8-10 and 15-17 @ Governor Bill and Vara Daniel Historic Village, Mayborn Museum
- A Dr Pepper Christmas – Dec 8 @ Dr Pepper Museum
- Breakfast With Santa – Dec 9 @ Lee Lockwood Library
- The Nutcracker with Waco Symphony – Dec 9 & 10 @ Waco Hall
- “White Christmas” – Dec 14-23 @ Waco Civic Theatre
- Dec 20 Yuletide Guitar at Segovia's !! #7 @ Segovia Wine Bar
- Girl Named Tom – One More Christmas Tour – Dec 21 @ Waco Hippodrome

### **IRS CHANGES COMING IN 2024**

#### **Standard Deduction Increases**

The standard deduction will rise to \$29,200 for married couples filing jointly and \$14,600 for single filers and married couples filing separately. The standard deduction is a specific dollar amount that reduces taxable income.

#### **Marginal Rates Steady, Brackets Adjusted for Inflation**

The top tax rate is still 37% for married couples filing jointly with income greater than \$731,000 (\$609,350 for single filers).

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

Address label

**2023 H.O.T. MOAA OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**President**

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

**1st Vice President**

Ken Rataczak, Col, USA (ret) (Anne) 254-776-4804

**2nd Vice President**

Bill Porter, COL, USA (ret) 254-495-5601

**Secretary**

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

**Treasurer**

Vince Tobola, Lt Col, USAF (ret) 254-709-5795

**Immediate Past President**

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

**Chaplain**

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

**Surviving Spouse Liaison**

Carol McHaney 254-716-6376

**Legislative Liaison**

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

**Directors**

Don Speed, CAPT, USAF (Ann) 254- 366-5528

Joe Augeri, Maj. USAF (ret) (Karen) 254-366-2544

Carol McHaney 254-716-6376

Ennis Sullivan, CAPT, USAF (Kay) 214-797-1464

Barbara Purselley 254-716-4572

Beau Crosby, COL, USAF (ret) (Kathy Endres) 254-709-9588

Norma Thronburg 254-749-2146

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

Bill Easley, 1LT, USAF (Bernie) 214-693-4085

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

Bill Hulsey, LTCDR, USN (ret) (Donna) 512-658-7173

Arend, Lew, 1LT, USA (Liz) 713-254-1334

**Directors Emeritus**

Jimmie Hanes, COL, USAF, (ret) (Mary) 254)-848-5493

Dr. Harold Rafuse, LtCol, USAF (ret.) (RoseMary)254)-717-8112

**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 300 E. 8<sup>th</sup>, Ste 961  
127A Russell Senate Office Building Austin, TX 78701  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
202-224-5922

U.S. Rep. Pete Sessions 400 Austin Ave,  
2204 Rayburn HOB, Washington, D.C. 20515 Suite 302  
202-225-6105. Waco, TX 76702

**USEFUL NUMBERS**

MOAA Capital switchboard hotline 1-800 272-6622

MOAA Membership 1-800 245-8762

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