



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

Volume MMXXIII, Issue II

February 2023

Chapter Web Site: [hotmoaa.org](http://hotmoaa.org)

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Greetings!

In 2023, our chapter looks forward to improving our brand as a veteran's organization and increasing our support for veterans, veteran dependents, and JROTC/ROTC students. We need to prepare those who will lead in the future and remember those who are serving and have honorably served our nation.

The cornerstone of our assistance programs is our annual golf fundraiser that provides resources necessary to support our scholarship program and local/national organizations supporting veterans and their families, such as -- Veterans One Stop, Daedalians (James Connally Chapter), Baylor Vets, Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS), Gary Sinise Foundation, Tunnels to Towers Foundation, etc. Last year we provided over \$14,000 to support our scholarship and veteran's assistance programs.

**Save the Date -- June 10, 2023 Golf Fundraiser --**  
Our fundraising committee is actively planning this year's event. This is a HOT MOAA team event and volunteers are needed to assist with contacting businesses and at the event. Please be ready to assist us again in making our 2023 fundraiser an even bigger success! Please contact Vince Tobola to learn how you can help.

Our 2023 scholarship application schedule will be released the first of February to Region 12 and will be placed on our HOT MOAA website. Dr. Harold Rafuse will also submit scholarship information to the Waco paper for their free notice.

February will be an exciting month with several upcoming events.

- Baylor People's Law School will be held on February 11, 2022 from 9:00am - 12:45pm. This in-person event is free to the public and helps educate citizens of their legal rights. I encourage you to sign up at <https://www.baylor.edu/law>
- February 14 - Valentine's Day – forget at your peril.
- On February 25, the Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce will hold the annual Freedom Ball from 6-11pm in Chisholm Hall at the Waco Convention Center.

At our Jan 19<sup>th</sup> Dinner Meeting, our guest speaker, BJ Elliot Prior, shared her life and stories of the heroes who served in Viet Nam. An insightful and outstanding presentation!!!

**Our February speaker** will be Mrs. Frank Gentsch will discuss her father COL. Robert Howard, Medal of Honor winner and one the most highly-decorated American soldiers since World War II. This will be must hear presentation!

**Challenge Coins.** We still have HOT MOAA challenge coins available. Pick up one or two at the registration table. The proceeds go toward our fundraising efforts. Time to pitch in!

Finally, please continue to pray for our leaders to support and defend the Constitution and to reestablish trust in our institutions and to restore civility.

Thank you for your good work and support. I look forward to seeing you at our Feb 16<sup>th</sup> luncheon - come out and enjoy!

***Duty, Honor, Country – Always Serving***

v/r

Michael Slavens

# Upcoming Events and Information Items

## **CONSOLIDATED APPROPRIATIONS ACT**

Some veterans' provisions in the 4,155-page bill seek to:

- Fill gaps in accessing health care for veterans living in remote or hard-to-reach areas. The legislation requires the VA to evaluate and make improvements to community care access standards, establish a pilot program for veterans to self-schedule community care appointments, and improve provider credentialing, rural telehealth, and mental health interventions.
- Permanently expand emergency relief funding to provide grants and services to veterans experiencing homelessness.
- Establish a pilot program to reimburse travel expenses for low-income veterans living in rural areas.
- Expand treatment and research for veterans diagnosed with prostate cancer.
- Increase transparency, accountability, and improve performance over the department's information technology systems and projects like the electronic health record.
- Improve supply chain issues so the VA can respond more effectively to national emergencies like those that surfaced during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Strengthen mental health programs, to include expanding research and staffing; delivering care and services to American Indian and Alaska Native veterans; and improving VA's Crisis Line.
- Cut unnecessary paperwork for veterans receiving VA clothing allowances. Veterans who have lifelong injuries will not be required to resubmit for this allowance each year.

## **THURSDAY LUNCH MEETING FEBRUARY 16, AT MCLANE STADIUM – PRESIDENT'S SUITE, FIFTH FLOOR, HOSTED BY THE BAYLOR CLUB.**

- Enter stadium parking lot thru gate 1, off of MLK Blvd and bear right. Continue on I-35 side to the end of parking lot past the Baylor Club entrance and Founder's Club entrance and find the last inset doorway near the column;

- There will be a President's Suite sign above the inset double door entrance located near the white column. There is usually a sidewalk placard against the column with President's Suite name on it. Go thru the doorway and take the elevator to the fifth floor.

- The numbered spaces starting with rows 1-001, 1-025, 1-045 or 1-064 and up are across from the door entrance. You can park in any numbered space.

### **LUNCH SCHEDULE**

**\*\* 11:00 A.M. Registration and Social Period**

**\*\* 11:35 A.M. Call to Tables**

**\*\* 11:40 A.M. Intro & Announcements.**

**\*\* 11:50 A.M. Lunch**

**\*\* 12:20 P.M Multiple Drawings for Door Prizes & Guest Speaker, Mrs. Frank Gentsch, talking on her late father, Colonel Robert Howard, USA (ret) recipient of the Medal of Honor during service in the Vietnam War.**

**MENU:** Tossed salad, artisan bread, Chicken Picatta, Chicken Fried Steak, Sautéed Seasonal Vegetables, Red Roasted Potatoes and Fresh Fruit, Fresh Brewed Iced Tea and water will be on the tables.

**Please note lunch 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, 9 February, 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 to attend and we will work to accommodate you at the lunch meeting. Lunch 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.**

## **MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2023**

- **Mar 16, Thursday, Lunch in President's Suite at McLane Stadium**, guest speaker will be Robert Gager from Shepherds Heart. Registration table opens at 11 a.m.
- **Apr 20, Thursday, Lunch in President's Suite at McLane Stadium**. Guest speaker will be Dr. Brad Livingstone with a talk, "What Do You See? The incredible stories of history right in front of us." Registration table opens at 11 a.m.
- **May 18, Thursday, Lunch or Dinner at McLane Stadium**, depending on guest speaker or entertainment.
- **June 9 Thursday, possible Lunch Meeting in President's Suite at McLane Stadium**. More information to follow closer to the date on MOAA National attendees.
- **June 10, Saturday morning**. Annual scholarship golf fundraiser tournament will held with registration start 6:45 a.m. and shot-gun start at 8:00 a.m. Location is City of Waco Cottonwood Creek Golf Course, 5200 Bagby Avenue in Waco. Open to the public and all military.

## **FREE LEGAL ADVICE FOR VETERANS**

There will be a free veteran's clinic by Baylor Law on Friday, February 17, 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. at the Heart of Texas Veterans One Stop, 2010 La Salle Ave, Waco, TX.

This is by **Appointment Only**, phone 254-710-4244, or e-mail: [LegalClinics@baylor.edu](mailto:LegalClinics@baylor.edu). Contact for the program is Joshua Borderud.

## **HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING DATE**

The next Board meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 21, 2023**; 5:00 p.m. at Uncle Dan's BBQ that is located at 1001 Lake Air Drive.

## **WACO AREA EVENTS AND ATTRACTIONS**

For current local info, go to website, [wacoheartoftexas.com](http://wacoheartoftexas.com).

Also, stop by the Waco Welcome Center and Gift Shop at 106 Texas Ranger Trail, which is adjacent to the Texas Ranger Museum and Hall of Fame. It has free maps, visitor guides, free coupon books and numerous local attraction brochures.

Another website to go to for Waco area events and attractions is [www.travelhost.com](http://www.travelhost.com). This is also a magazine that is published quarterly.



From right to left, President Michael Slavens presents Past President Pins to members Bob Baugh, Bob Rochell and John Wells. This was in recognition for their past service and continuing participation in the chapter.

## **CAFÉ HOMESTEAD TO REOPEN**

For those familiar with Homestead Heritage and Craft Village north of Waco on Gholson Hwy, you may know that the Café Homestead building had a fire before the Christmas holidays and will need to be completely rebuilt. For the coming year, they will be operating at another location, 388 Halbert Lane, Waco, TX 76705. This is on the same road and you will see a sign to make right turn. They will be open Monday – Saturday, 11 am to 3 pm. Phone number is 254-754-9604. They are expecting to open in early February.

A blue banner for MOAA Insurance Plans. The logo features the letters "MOAA" in a stylized font with vertical bars to the left, and "INSURANCE PLANS" below it. The slogan "Standing with you at every stage." is written in white text. At the bottom, the phone number "1-800-247-2192" and website "www.moaainsurance.com/plans" are listed. A small number "97017" is in the bottom right corner.

1-800-247-2192 • [www.moaainsurance.com/plans](http://www.moaainsurance.com/plans)

## **2023 CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES**

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

The Board is 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 2023 chapter membership application form and plus copies of newsletters. Newsletters are sent to members monthly, by e-mail or regular mail.

Dues for the chapter and MOAA National are separate from each other.

There is a MOAA membership form at the chapter website: hotmoaa.org. Basic membership is free and the form shows fees for annual and life memberships.

Note that MOAA National is the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. It is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization.

The web address for MOAA's online legislative Take Action Center is [www.moaa.org/takeaction](http://www.moaa.org/takeaction).

## **INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**

The installation ceremony for the 2023 chapter officers and directors was conducted at the Jan. 24<sup>th</sup> dinner. Those present were Beau Crosby, Bill Easley, Vince Tobola, Michael Slavens, Ken Ratajczak, Bill Porter, Don Speed, Ennis Sullivan, Barbara Purselley, Norma Thronburg, Jim Milam and Bill Hulsey.



## **MILITARY MEDICAL BILLETS ISSUE**

Provisions in the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) will halt proposed military medical billet cuts for five years and require a series of reports before DoD makes any similar plans to cut personnel at its military treatment facilities (MTFs).

This marks the fourth consecutive MOAA "win" on this issue – a streak that wouldn't be possible without tens of thousands of MOAA members mobilizing to support this critical association priority.

Original DoD plans to cut about 18,000 medical billets, put in place before the COVID-19 pandemic, have been delayed and reevaluated multiple times since first released in March 2019, as part of the FY 2020 defense budget. What began as a serious threat to beneficiaries' access to patient care took on even greater significance as Gen. Mark Milley, USA, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told lawmakers last year that proposed reductions could leave the military lacking in trained medical personnel "in the fielded force to handle combat conditions."

## **118th CONGRESS SELECTS LEADERSHIP**

The House has chosen its speaker of the house, and its majority and minority leaders for the 118th Congress.

Rep. Mike Bost (R-Ill.), a Marine Corps veteran, has been named as chairman of the Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

## **NEW ROTC SCHOLARSHIP FOR OLDER CADETS**

The Air Force recently announced an expansive new ROTC scholarship available to older Cadets committed to commissioning, with the goal of recruiting and retaining more future Airmen in the program. The Brig. Gen. Charles A. McGee Leadership Award, named after the legendary Tuskegee Airman, will give either \$18,000 per year in tuition or \$10,000 per year in housing assistance to every Cadet not already on a scholarship who has completed field training and entered the Professional Officer Course at the start of their junior year.

## **NEW SEAFOOF RESTAURANT**

Fish City Grill has opened in Legends Crossing at 5401 Crosslake Pkwy, Waco, TX 76712. Phone number is 254-339-1063. This is at end of building next to Salt Grass Steakhouse.

## **FEBRUARY SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION**

**Birthdays:** Norm Beu, Bill Bewley, Pam Holmes, Jim Igleheart, Terri Ker, Bob Lull, Jim Milam, Nancy Pfanner, Diana Ramey, Claire Raineri, Anne Ratajczak, Bob Rochell, Ennis Sullivan, Vince Tobola and Su Wells.

**Anniversaries:** Joe and Karen Augeri, Jim and Jerrie Buehrig and George and Helen Littell.

## **CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL**

### **AUSTIN DEERS/ID CARD LOCATION**

The Defense Enrollment and Eligibility Reporting System (DEERS) database and the Real-Time Automated Personnel Identification System (RAPIDS) client application were developed to provide a means of gathering and storing personnel and benefits eligibility information for Department of Defense (DOD) employees and dependents including military members, civilian employees, contractors, and more.

One location to consider for use on renewing ID cards is the Camp Mabry at 200 West 35th St., Austin TX, 78703. The phone number is 512-782-6841 (Opt. 1). Camp Mabry is home of the Texas headquarters of the Texas Military Forces, which are made up of the Texas Army National Guard and the Texas State Guard.

This location is typically less busy than Fort Hood or other bases plus it has a military museum on site.

It is also home of the Texas Military Forces Museum, which documents history of Texas military from 1830's to current status with displays, exhibits, vehicles and equipment. Admission is free and need to check times when open. Phone number is 512-782-5659 and website <https://www.texasmilitaryforcesmuseum.org>. Address is 2200 West 35<sup>th</sup> Street, Bldg. 6, 3039 W 35<sup>th</sup> St, Austin, TX 78703.

### **TEXAS COUNCIL OF CHAPTERS (TCC)**

The Texas Council of Chapters is made up of representatives from the various MOAA chapters in the state. The Military Officers Association of America, its state councils, and the individual chapters are concerned about the benefits due to all who have worn the uniform and the benefits due to the spouses and dependents who have also served in support of their service members. TCC members will be advocating of veterans in the Texas legislative session.

## **GAO REPORT AND VA OUTREACH**

The VA could do more to work with veterans' organizations like MOAA to help service members in their first year after leaving service, a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report revealed.

The GAO audited VA's Solid Start program, an outreach initiative launched in 2019 to proactively connect with veterans during their first year after leaving service. A VA representative contacts the veteran at a minimum three times a year to identify their specific needs and to identify benefits and services to address their needs and interests. The program is also intended to build a relationship of trust between the veteran and the VA.

Veterans' contact rates and benefits usage have steadily increased since the program's inception, per the GAO report. "In 2021, representatives successfully contacted about 71% of eligible veterans," the report stated. "VA's analysis showed these veterans used benefits, such as VA health care, to a greater extent than their peers who did not speak with a Solid Start representative."

While a successful program, GAO determined the VA could do more with the assistance of veterans organizations to help VA identify gaps and to develop strategies to connect with hard-to-reach groups of veterans. "Veterans organizations can leverage their relationships with these ... veterans to provide them with information about Solid Start directly and encourage them to engage with Solid Start representatives," the report states.

Some of the outreach gaps and groups identified in the report included veterans under the age of 23, the homeless, those with technology challenges, or individuals skeptical about connecting with the VA.

The VA launched the Solid Start program in response to a 2018 White House executive order to curb the rising rate of suicides in the uniformed services community. At the time, suicide rates for veterans in their first year of separation from service were twice the rate of all veterans. The program was part of a broader administration joint action plan to help connect veterans with their benefits and resources across the federal government. MOAA and other veterans' organizations worked with the administration and Congress last year to codify the program in law.

**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, LtCol, 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) 479-616-2929

**Secretary**

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

**Treasurer**

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

**Immediate Past President**

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**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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**HOWARD, MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENT**  
**BUDGET AND VA UPDATES**  
**ID OFFICE CAMP MABRY IN AUSTIN**  
**FREE LEGAL CLINIC**