



PRESIDENT’S COLUMN

Greetings

1. I want to thank you for electing me president of the Heart of Texas Military Officers Association of America. It is an honor, and I hope that I will serve you with honesty, integrity, and intelligence. My goals for the upcoming year are to increase membership by 5%, increase support at local veteran and athletic events, improve HOT MOAA web presence, improve branding through media outreach, increased participation in fund raisers and committees, increased participation and income from the fund raisers, and resume’ writing for Baylor Vets. I cannot achieve these goals on my own, and I call for help from all of you to let HOTMOAA shine in our community. I need help with recruiting new members. I also ask you to consider making a cash contribution to our Golf fundraiser. Last year, we took in \$14,900 from HOTMOAA members. I hope that you can contribute whatever amount that you can to beat last year’s contributions. I would also like to continue the non-perishable goods donations every month at our meetings. Ask not what HOTMOAA can do for, but ask what you can do for HOTMOAA. I hope everyone has a happy and prosperous New Year.
2. The December Dinner Dance was a success with the Morticians providing their usual great classic music and Christmas songs. Of note, in attendance were Doc Anderson and his wife Lynn, Devvie Duke, and Stan Parker who will be the guest speaker in January.
3. The guest speaker was Captain Michael, USN, Ret, from MOAA national who spoke on recruiting efforts on the national level and how it would benefit the local chapters. He was impressed with the efforts of HOTMOAA in the viability of the chapter and the contribution to scholarships and veterans’ organizations. Earlier in the day, Capt. Michael, Michael

Slavens, I, Bill Porter and Lew Arend visited the Army and Air Force Baylor ROTC and Baylor Vets.

v/r

Kenneth Ratajczak

INSPIRATIONAL THOUGHTS FROM OUR FOUNDING FATHERS

“We may define a republic to be ... a government which derives all its powers directly or indirectly from the great body of the people, and is administered by persons holding their offices during the pleasure for a limited period, or during good behavior.” – James Madison, Federalist 39, 1788.

“The price of freedom is eternal vigilance.” Thomas Jefferson.

EVENTS TO REMEMBER IN JANUARY

- January 1, 1863** - The Emancipation Proclamation issued by President Lincoln ¹
- January 3, 1777** - General George Washington defeated the British at Princeton ¹
- January 4, 1790** - President George Washington delivered the first State of the Union address ¹
- January 8, 1815** - The Battle of New Orleans - General Andrew Jackson and American troops defended themselves against a British attack, inflicting over 2,000 casualties¹
- January 10, 1776** - *Common Sense*, a fifty page pamphlet by Thomas Paine, was published and sold over 500,000 copies in America and Europe¹
- January 12, 1991** - Congress authorized President George H.W. Bush to use military force against Iraq following its invasion of Kuwait ¹
- January 13, 1847** -The Treaty of Cahuenga signed ending the fighting of the Mexican-American War²
- January 16, 1991** - The war against Iraq began as Allied aircraft conducted attacks on Iraqi air defenses¹
- January 23, 1907** - Charles Curtis of Kansas became the first person of Native American ancestry to serve in the U.S Senate. He later served as vice president under President Herbert Hoover from 1929-33 ¹

January 23, 1968 - The American ship USS *Pueblo* was seized by North Koreans and its crew held in captivity until December, with one fatality¹

January 25, 1945 - The Battle of the Bulge ended with approximately 19,276 casualties²

January 27, 1943 - U.S. 8th Air Force conducted the first all-American daylight bombing raid on Germany as 55 bombers targeted Wilhelmshaven, losing three planes. The success of this raid encouraged military planners to begin regular daylight bombing raids that eventually resulted in high casualty rates for the American crewmen involved¹

January 27, 1967 - Three American astronauts were killed as a fire erupted inside Apollo 1 during a launch simulation test at Cape Kennedy, Florida¹

January 27, 1973 - U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War ended as North Vietnamese and American representatives signed Paris Accords. Over 58,000 Americans killed, 300,000 wounded and 2,500 declared missing. A total of 566 prisoners-of-war were held by the North Vietnamese, with 55 reported deaths¹

January 28, 1915 - The U.S. Coast Guard was created by an Act of Congress, combining the Life Saving Service and the Revenue Cutter Service¹

January 28, 1986 - The Space Shuttle *Challenger* exploded 74 seconds into its flight, killing seven persons¹

January 30, 1968 - Tet Offensive in Vietnam begin as North Vietnamese troops attacked 36 provincial capitals and 5 major cities in South Vietnam¹

Sources:

1. <https://www.historyplace.com/specials/calendar/january.htm>
2. <https://nationalvmm.org/this-month-in-history-january-8-28/>

**THIRD THURSDAY DINNER MEETING,
JANUARY 18, MEDIA ROOM AT MCLANE
STADIUM – 5th FLOOR.**

-- Enter stadium parking lot thru gate 1, off of MLK Blvd and bear right. Continue on I-35 side and for double door with Media Entrance located above door. This is before the Baylor Club main entrance. Go thru door and take elevator to the fifth floor. There is normally placard sign at the white column. 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 Multiple Drawings. Installation of 2024 Officers and Directors & Guest Speaker, Stan Parker**

MENU: Fresh fruit salad, tossed salad with balsamic and ranch dressings, artisan bread, Dr. Pepper Pork Loin, Grilled Tilapia, Roasted Asparagus, Red Roasted Potatoes, Iced Tea and Water. Coffee will be available at the beverage bar.

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

New Dinner cost for 2024 is \$40 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, 11 January Noon for sign-ups.

Early RSVP's are welcome and appreciated. After the 11th, 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 optional on tie and ladies attire as desired.

JANUARY 18 MEETING GUEST SPEAKER

Stan Parker from the Parker Foundation will provide a talk on the Freedom's Path Waco project for adaptive reuse development of three historic structures on the Doris Miller VA campus plus new construction and a new multi-purpose community building to provide housing for 34 veterans.

HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING DATE

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. Our thanks to Uncle Dan's for providing the meeting room at no charge.

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.

JANUARY SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION

Birthdays: Rita Dampier, Charles Farr, Mary Gee, Hope Hacker, Joe Herbelin, Donna Hulsey, Gene Lednicky, Linda Pitzer, Harold Rafuse, Donna Sammon, Mauve Sawyer, and Doris Strain.

Anniversaries: Jimmie and Mary Hanes, Bill and Donna Hulsey and Jon and Terri Ker.

CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL

MOAA VISIT – FRANK MICHAEL

In the morning, Frank Michael was escorted to see local activities as Baylor University Army ROTC and AFROTC and the Baylor Vets.



Pictured from left to right: Michael Slavens, LtCol Ken Sterling of Baylor AFROTC, Frank Michael, MOAA. One of morning stops for Frank Michael to show local programs.



Pictured left to right: Frank Michael, MOAA, ARMY ROTC LTC Kevin Nogle; and Michael Slavens, President HOT Chapter.



From left to right: Michael Slavens, Ken Davis of Baylor Vets and Frank Michael, MOAA. One of morning stops for Frank Michael to show local programs.



From left to right: Frank Michael, MOAA and guest speaker and Michael Slavens. Frank is presenting a MOAA challenge coin to the chapter. He also received one from the chapter.

**MEMBER SPOTLIGHT –MICHAEL
SLAVENS, PRESIDENT**



Lt Col Michael Slavens was born and raised in Ashland, Kentucky. He graduated from Paul G Blazer High School. After graduation, he enrolled in Baylor University and was commissioned through the Baylor Air Force ROTC program. He completed undergraduate pilot training at Webb AFB, Texas and KC-135A training at Castle AFB, California. Next, he was assigned to the 46 Air Refueling Squadron (AREFS) at K.I. Sawyer AFB, Michigan. While assigned to the 46 AREFS, Michael completed Squadron Officers School in residence and KC-135 pilot upgrade training at Castle AFB where he received the Distinguished Award. He was then assigned to Headquarters, 410 Bomb Wing as the KC-135 Emergency War Order Training Officer where his training program received three consecutive Outstanding Ratings from the Strategic Air Command (SAC) Inspector General. Then after meeting and marrying Marsha, they took an accompanied 27 month “honeymoon” to the 39th Tactical Group, Incirlik AB Turkey followed by an Air War College (AWC) tour at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. After AWC, he was assigned to the SAC Headquarters as a duty controller and Chief of Operations and Training. Lastly, he was assigned to Air Force Operations Support Center (AFOSC) in the Pentagon. Here he held a variety of positions culminating as the Chief of Future Systems. In this position, he redesigned the AFOSC command briefing room to provide the Air Force Chief of Staff and leadership team with a current common operating picture of ongoing Air Force operations world-wide. After retirement, Michael held several positions in the defense industry: modeling and simulation, public affairs, information technology network and web site management (unclassified and classified), information security, business development and capture management. In 2016, he and Marsha moved to Waco Texas and enjoy Baylor sporting and other events, traveling to see America and their three children and four grandchildren. Lt Col Slavens is an active member in the Heart of Texas Chapter Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), a life member of Order of Daedalians and MOAA.

Marsha and Michael are members of Highland Baptist Church.

**INSTALLATION OF 2024 SLATE OF
OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS**

The following officers and directors were elected at the December 14, 2023 dinner meeting.

Officers

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

Directors

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Beau Crosby | Bill Hulsey |
| John Jacques | Gene Lednický |
| 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. **Basic membership is free** and fees are shown for annual and life MOAA memberships. This is separate from the chapter membership.

2024 CHAPTER MEETING SCHEDULE

***15 February 2024, Thursday dinner meeting in the Media Room at McLane Stadium.** Guest speaker will be Agent Matthew Maley from the Border Patrol.

21 March 2024, Thursday dinner meeting in the Media Room at McLane Stadium. Guest speaker will be Gerald Powell, author with talk on Catfish Calloway Series on his legal thrillers set in 1890’s.

18 April 2024, Thursday dinner meeting in the Media Room at McLane Stadium. Guest speaker is pending.

21 May 2024, Thursday dinner meeting in the Media Room at McLane Stadium. Guest speaker will be C.C. Adams on B-52’s.

8 June 2024, Saturday morning, Annual Scholarship Fundraiser Golf Scramble at Waco Cottonwood Creek Golf Course.

LOCAL DINING OPPORTUNITIES

A new Italian restaurant opened called La Bottega. It is part of Di Campli's Italian Restaurant but serves lighter fare as pizzas, sandwiches, and Italian ice cream, gelato. It is located at 911 Jordan Lane, Suite 108, Woodway. It is located on the Hwy 84 service road just past the Hewitt Drive and Estates intersection going south. For more info, the phone number is 254-294-8509.

Hotel 1928, the former Grand Karem Shrine Building at 701 Washington Avenue opened recently. Hotel entrance is on Seventh Street. It has 33 guest rooms, two restaurants, a café, 5,800 SF ballroom and rooftop terrace with unparalleled views of downtown Waco. The street level restaurant, the Brasserie, serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. The other restaurant, Gertie's on the Rooftop has indoor dining plus the rooftop terrace has tables with umbrellas and nook with fire pits, all centered on a bar that serves classic and creative cocktails.

The December Wacoan magazine has an article on Hotel 1928. The phone number for information or reservations at either restaurant is 254-342-3911. Gertie's need reservations and opens at 4 p.m. The street level restaurant is busy at times so better to call for their status. Website is thehotel1928.com.

CONGRESS AND PENDING BUDGET WORK

After passing a short-term budget extension in early November, lawmakers are again faced with the possibility of disruptions in military funding and government operations if they can't come to an agreement over a full-year budget plan in the next few weeks.

The short-term spending deal approved in November extended funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and a few other agencies until Jan. 19. If a budget deal is not reached before then, only those offices would be forced into partial closure. The VA does have advance appropriations to keep hospitals, benefits offices and most other operations going past that date. So, a partial government shutdown in late January may have a limited impact on military and veteran families.

But Defense Department funding, as well as Homeland Security and the rest of the government, only runs until Feb. 2. If a budget deal is not

reached before then, troops' paychecks will halt, non-essential base services will shutter and family moves will be postponed.

Both Democrats and Republicans in Congress have said they hope to avoid that, but they remain far apart on a compromise. House Republican leaders have insisted that spending limits must be part of any full-year budget deal.

PAY INCREASES COMING IN 2024

The 2024 National Defense Authorization Act, or NDAA, was approved by Congress this month. Current troops get a bump in basic pay for the second year in a row starting in January, while veterans will receive an above-average increase as well. Common allowances are also going up.

Active-duty troops, drilling Guard and reserve members will receive a 5.2% pay raise in January. Set according to an established formula, the 5.2% raise was part of Biden's fiscal 2024 budget request to Congress and was included in the House, Senate and conference versions of the NDAA.

The 2024 relative increases in the Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) and the Basic Allowance for Subsistence (BAS) are comparatively modest. The BAS, an allotment received by active-duty troops who live outside the barracks, is going up only 1.7% for both officers and enlisted members. In 2023, by comparison, BAS went up 11.2%. In 2024, the monthly BAS payment will be \$316.98 for officers, up from \$311.68, while enlisted members' BAS will increase from \$452.56 to \$460.25.

The 5.4% increase in the BAH coming in 2024 is similar to the increase in basic pay but can't match 2023's 12.1% rise. BAH is set at 95% of housing costs in a given area.

The 5.2% raise in basic pay for active-duty, Guard and reserve members in 2024 joins a 3.2% cost of living allowance (COLA) given to military retirees and to veterans who receive disability checks from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

While 3.2% may look low compared to the 2022 (5.9%) and 2023 (8.7%) adjustments, it's still above the average of 2.6% for the prior 20 years.

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

Address label

2024 H.O.T. MOAA OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

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

1st Vice President

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

2nd Vice President

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

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

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

Immediate Past President

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

Chaplain

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

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Vacant

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

Directors

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

Jane Winston, Lt, USAF 979-777-8076

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

John Jacques, MAJ, USA (Dawn) 254-394-2373

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

Gene Lednicki, CPT, USMC 254-206-1097

Mike Strain, Capt., USAF 281-565-3110

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 512-469-6034, FAX 512-469-6020
202-228-2856

U.S. Senator Ted Cruz 300 E. 8th, 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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