



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

Volume MMXXI, Issue II

February 2021

Chapter Web Site: hotmoaa.org

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Greetings,

The MOAA Board held its first Zoom meeting on January 12, 2021; it went surprisingly well, attended by at least 10 Board members. Some minor glitches remain to be solved, like ease of inviting participants and audio/video capabilities of a few online hookups. Both PCs and iPads worked well for participation.

The chapter Board is considering ways to host the annual golf tournament and other fund-raising means this year.

The January dinner meeting of the HOT Chapter, as scripted by Vince Tobola, was very well attended; over 40 of us enjoyed each other's company! We celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Chapter with a certificate displayed by Past President Dennis DeGraff; it will be kept in Chapter archives. Annual chapter elections of officers and directors were held, directed by Past President Dennis DeGraff, and those elected were sworn in by Immediate Past President Gary Urban; the new list of Officers and Directors is included later.

Chapter member George Littell spoke very academically after dinner about oil and natural gas, the prices of each related to supply and demand, as well as the myths about the dangers of greenhouse gases and global warming, and that the sun, like all stars, is becoming gradually warmer but no one is measuring its yearly temperature increases and the effects of the sun's warming on the earth's climate. I was able to find an appointment for my first COVID-19 immunization shot after frequent Internet searching and help from friends to know where and very importantly when, to go online. I tried sharing my information with acquaintances but I was informed later that the online site to register for appointments filled in much less than one hour early on a Sunday afternoon! I wish there were a better way that we all could know when and where to find the appointments; hopefully with the

roll-out of more vaccine, it will not be such a problem. Anyway, my injection experience was quite positive and pleasant, followed by enough local muscle soreness to know that I indeed got the real thing (mine was Moderna) but not requiring any medications to ease. It seems that initially there was a hold-back of some vaccine to use as second doses for those who received first doses; that has changed and now all the vaccine is being offered as first doses; as more arrives, then second dose appointments should become available in addition to continued offerings of first doses. My injection was given by a nurse for the Waco/McClennan County Health Department at the Waco Convention Center, with ambulances and EMS personnel on site for emergencies and police security. Other vaccination locations found by members have included the VA Medical Center and local hospitals under special circumstances; others expected to become available soon include grocery pharmacies like HEB and Brookshires, chain and maybe even local pharmacies like Walgreen and CVS, etc., and maybe even our family doctors' offices.

Interestingly for those who do contract the COVID-19 infection, there is new information that some anti-arthritis medicines might be helpful in treatment of advanced symptoms; some antibody drugs have also been approved for use in the US. Research continues in that area. And online sources state that nanotechnology is in trials as a platform for delivery of drugs that can prevent (vaccines) and treat (antivirals) virus infections such as the SARS Co-V2 (cause of COVID-19); possibly they could be inhaled rather than injected (more appealing!).

We are adding a new "Membership Corner" to the Newsletter, scripted mainly by the Membership Committee Chairperson. If you have anything that you would add to that section, please discuss it with Jim Milam, 2nd V-P and Membership Committee Chairperson.

(President's Column continues on the next page)

Upcoming Events and Information Items

One task the Chapter takes on at this time each year is to get all Regular members (those who have served or are serving in the military) to pay their annual dues of \$25. At present we have 61 such members who have paid their 2021 dues, and 20 who have not. If you are one of the 20, please send in your 2021 dues. One other request, if you are a spouse of a Regular member and would like to help grow the Chapter's membership and qualify to server on the Board of Directors, please consider becoming an Associate member by simply paying annual dues of \$25. A small number of Associates have been paying dues, and one, Norma Thronburg, was just elected as a Director. We could use a few more Associate members on the Board, as Officers and Directors. See the Membership Corner on next page for the details on receiving a membership application and renewal form, and where to send your dues.

Jim Milam, Membership Committee Chairperson has reminded me that we all should be or become members of the national chapter of MOAA; membership in our local Heart of Texas chapter does not automatically include national MOAA membership. Becoming a national member can be accomplished quite easily online. Jim has also recommended that anyone who knows former military officers in our area, please reach out to them about our chapter of MOAA.

Respectfully,
Bill Milnor

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2021

Ridgewood Country Club (RCC) is at 7301 Fish Pond Road.

- **18 March 2021**, Dinner meeting with guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.
- **15 April 2021**, Dinner meeting with guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.
- **20 May 2021**, Dinner meeting with guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.
- **4 June 2021**, Annual fundraiser golf tournament, Friday afternoon at Cottonwood Creek Golf Course, Waco.

HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

The next Board meeting will be on Tuesday, February 23, 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. Entrance is at rear of the building where the main parking lot is located.

**FEBRUARY 18, THURSDAY DINNER
MEETING AT RIDGEWOOD COUNTRY
CLUB BANQUET ROOM
UPDATES ON GOLF TOURNAMENT &
SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM AND
ENTERTAINMENT BY KEN RATAJCZAK
PERFORMING MUSIC BY JOHN DENVER
AND FRIENDS**
****SOCIAL HOUR: 6:00 P.M. **, **CALL TO
TABLES 6:35 P.M. *, *INTRO &
ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPDATES ON
TOURNAMENT AND SCHOLARSHIP
PROGRAM 6:40 P.M. **, **DINNER
6:55P.M.***, **DRAWING &
ENTERTAINMENT 7:50 P.M.**

MENU: Champion salad with mesclun greens and dried cranberries, feta cheese, spiced pecans and balsamic vinaigrette, Chicken Breast and Pork Loin, Chef's choice of starch, vegetable 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, 16 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 on attending and we will work to accommodate you at the dinner meeting. **NOTE: Winter dress code will be in effect, gentlemen, coat and tie and ladies attire as desired.**

DINNER MEETING HEALTH PRECAUTIONS

- **Masks shall be worn inside at all times and all locations except when sitting at the tables.**
- **Drinks will be available at the bar.**
- **Buffet line and dessert table will have Club staff serving food items.**
- **Only one table at a time for food service. Tables will have six chairs versus eight.**
- **Please be aware of your personal conditions since fever is one of most likely symptoms of coronavirus and we all need to take proper care to protect others.**

MEMBERSHIP CORNER!!

Meet Our Newest Member – James “Bill” Ferguson



Bill was born on Ohio but moved to Texas at age 6. I graduated from The Ohio State University in 1971. I studied medicine at The University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), partly on a Navy Health Professions Scholarship, graduating in 1975.

Bill did a combined internship/residency in Pediatrics at the Naval Regional Medical Center (NRMC) at Portsmouth Virginia, finishing in 1978. He was then sent overseas serving as a pediatrician at the Naval Hospital at Yokosuka Japan and was assigned on paper to the Service Support Group of the 3rd Marines.

He returned to more training at UTMB in Developmental Pediatrics. He was offered a teaching post at NRMC Oakland in 1982, but declined after meeting his prospective Department head. He joined the faculty at UTMB and taught until October of 1984, when Bill began a private practice of pediatrics in Waco. I closed the office in June of 2015.

MEMBERSHIP

Special request to spouses of Regular members - who wish to pay an annual \$25 due to become an Associate member.

By IRS rules 75% of our Chapter's membership must have had prior military service or is serving in the military - who are known as Regular members that have paid their annual \$25 dues - and no more than 22.5% of our membership may be Surviving Spouses (of Regular members), Associates (spouses of Regular members, who elect to pay dues) and Future Officers. Currently with only 58 Regular members who have paid their dues, we can

have no more than 17 members in those three non-Regular membership categories. As we now have 9 of those (6 Surviving Spouses, 3 Associates and 0 Future Officers), we would welcome 8 spouses of Regular members to become Associate members by paying dues, and thus increasing our membership number to 75. Additional Associate members will be added when additional Regular members who have not as yet paid their dues, do so. Until then, the first 8 spouses who agree to become an Associate member and calls or emails Jim Milam at 254-845-1310 or jimmilam@aol.com will be accepted as new members to the HOT Chapter of MOAA.

Those who need a membership application and renewal form to become an Associate member and/or to pay ones dues, also contact Jim Milam, Chairman of the Membership Committee, at the above phone number and email address. Dues payment checks should be made out to HOT Chapter of MOAA and mailed to the same at P.O. Box 23964, Waco, TX 76702-3964.

FEBRUARY SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION

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

Anniversaries: Joe and Karen Augeri, Jim and Jerrie Buehrig, George and Helen Littell, Ken and Anne Ratajczak.

CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL

CHAPTER SLATE FOR 2021

OFFICERS

President, Bill Milnor
1st Vice-President, Michael Slavens
2nd Vice-President, Jim Milam
Treasurer, Vince Tobola
Secretary, Paul Thronburg

DIRECTORS

Dr. Harold Rafuse	Jimmie Hanes
Bob Lull	Don Speed
Joe Augeri	Carol McHaney
Ennis Sullivan	Beau Crosby
Ken Ratajczak	Barbara Purselley
George Littell	Norma Thronburg

MOAA MILITARY COMMUNITY PRIORITIES

As with previous administrations and sessions of Congress, it takes time to establish cabinet officials, set up staffs, and put administrative and committee rule-making structures in place to be ready to do business.

That ramp-up has not prevented MOAA, our partners in The Military Coalition – a group of organizations representing a combined 5.5 million members of the military community – and other veterans service organizations (VSOs) from communicating with newly appointed VA staff and the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs to share and compare individual and collective priorities for the coming months.

Both chambers are focusing intently on teeing up a vote for another COVID-19 relief package and on confirmation hearings for cabinet nominees, among other pressing issues. MOAA and other VSOs have provided several provisions for consideration in the relief package — issues ranging from ensuring benefits for survivors of veterans who die from COVID-19 to increasing aid and attendance rates for veteran home care, as well as resolving the growing backlog of disability claims during the pandemic.

Meanwhile, MOAA's work with committee staff on veterans' health care is also starting to take shape, indicating more of an alignment, at least for now, on pressing issues needing attention in the short term. Some of these issues were presented to President Joe Biden in a recent letter sent by Jerry Moran (R-Kan.), the outgoing chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs (set to be the new ranking member as of Jan. 27). Moran urged the administration to continue building on efforts in Congress to improve the lives of our veterans.

MOAA shares many of these interest areas with congressional leaders and looks forward to helping Congress address these matters either through legislation or oversight hearings:

- **Implementing the VA MISSION Act.** The 2018 legislation represented a major shift in VA health care delivery. The massive bill will take years to implement but will result in more options where veterans can receive care, expand caregiver programs to veterans of all eras, enhance VA's workforce capabilities, and modernize medical facilities.

- **Expanding access to care for veterans in rural communities.** While not a new priority, this issue has taken on greater importance during the pandemic, where lack of internet access may limit a veteran's ability to access much-needed online or telemedicine resources.
- **Implementing several critically important measures signed into law in 2020.** These MOAA-supported laws address the rising rates of mental health conditions and veteran suicides, as well as provide health care and benefit improvements for veterans, particularly those in need. Examples include the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act; the Veterans Comprehensive, Prevention, Access to Care, and Treatment (COMPACT) Act; and the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act.
- **Implementing the joint VA-DOD electronic health record.** This long-sought move would allow clinicians to easily access veterans' medical information.
- **Eliminating health disparities for women, minority, and underserved veterans.** The VA must ensure a welcoming and safe environment, and should remove barriers to provide timely, sensitive, and high-quality care, particularly for veterans at high risk.
- **Assessing the impact of COVID-19 on VA's workforce.** MOAA has worked with Congress in recent years to strengthen and modernize the VA workforce and to fill ongoing critical employee shortages. It is important to fully assess the pandemic's impact on the workforce and to apply lessons learned during the crisis to make improvements to human capital and throughout the health care system.
- **Improving care in state veterans' homes and VA long-term care facilities.** These improvements include strengthening VA's oversight and engagement in facility inspections, as well as requiring documented resolution of reported discrepancies.

MOAA plans to stay engaged on these issues in the coming months as well as others that may develop.

NEW DOD SECRETARY

Former U.S. Central Command leader Lloyd Austin was confirmed Friday as the next defense secretary, a historic vote that makes him the nation's first Black chief of the Pentagon.

Austin, a four-star Army general who spent more than 40 years in the ranks, was approved by an overwhelming 93-2 vote in the Senate. Earlier, the House and Senate also approved waiver language to allow Austin, who retired in 2016, to serve in the post despite a law mandating a seven-year gap between military service and the top civilian defense job.

The vote, which came two days after President Joe Biden was sworn in as commander in chief, erased fears of a possible lengthy wait for the new administration's national security team to be put in place. Biden has said that Austin, 67, has "intimate knowledge of the Department of Defense" that will be crucial as his team rewrites four years of military and defense policy under former President Donald Trump, and faces ongoing threats from overseas adversaries.

AIR FORCE NEW BOMBER

The first B-21 stealth bomber will roll out in early 2022, with first flight expected in the middle of next year, Air Force Rapid Capabilities Office Director Randall Walden said in a recent interview. The second Raider is now in production as well, and will be used for structural tests. Beddown efforts are proceeding well, Walden said, and the Air Force is using a business jet to vet the B-21's avionics and sensors. The B-21 will be operational in 2026 or 2027, the Air Force's senior nuclear policy official added.

MOAA VACATIONS

As a member of MOAA, you can use MOAA VACATIONS to assist with planning travel trips. You can find this on the MOAA web site. Their official travel agency has the mission to provide the very best vacation experience for every member. In addition to the opportunity to enjoy the camaraderie of traveling with your fellow MOAA members from across the country we have also negotiated special value-added offers to enhance your next vacation.

VETERANS SERVING IN CONGRESS

When elected officials gathered on Capitol Hill to formally convene the 117th Congress in January, they did so with 91 veterans among their ranks, the lowest total since at least World War II.

The number of veterans in Congress has declined almost steadily since the mid-1970s, as the military shifted from an end strength of largely drafted individuals to an all-volunteer force. In 1973, nearly three in every four members of Congress had some type of military service. In 2021, it'll be about one in every six members who have military experience.

That's the lowest since at least the start of World War II. Information on congressional members with veteran experience before then is incomplete, making comparisons difficult.

However, the number could grow in coming years. Of the 79 lawmakers elected to the 117th Congress who are aged 45 or younger, 21 (about 27 percent) served in the military.

But for now, the shrinking cohort of veterans elected to the House and Senate this session will be charged with sharing their knowledge of Defense Department operations and Veterans Affairs procedures with colleagues who lack direct personal experience on the topics.

- 91 total veterans in the 117th Congress.
- 17 will serve in the Senate, 74 will serve in the House.
- 28 are Democrats, 63 are Republicans.
- 13 served in the military in the 1960s or earlier.
- 50 served in the military after 2000.
- More than half (49) had overseas combat deployments.
- 15 are first-time lawmakers.
- 6 are women, a decrease of 1 from last Congress

AIR FORCE FLYOVER AT SUPER BOWL

The Air Force will mount a first-of-its-kind flyover of the Super Bowl with all three types of strategic bombers, the service announced Jan. 25. The event will take place over Raymond James Stadium in Tampa, Fla., on Feb. 7. The flyover, timed to coincide with the National Anthem, will include a B-1B Lancer from Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D.; a B-2A Spirit from Whiteman Air Force Base, Mo., and a B-52H Stratofortress from Minot Air Force Base, N.D.



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

Address label

2020 H.O.T. MOAA OFFICERS & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

Bill Milnor, COL, USA (ret) (Gerry) 972-533-7874
oldognew@gmail.com

1st Vice President

Michael Slavens, LtCol, USAF (ret) (Marsha) 703-898-9173
msslavens@aol.com

2nd Vice President

Jim Milam, Col, USAF (ret) (Laura) 817-909-3588
jimmilam@aol.com

Secretary

Paul Thronburg, 1LT, USA (Norma) (254) 876-3303 (home)
tmartmgb@sbcglobal.net

Treasurer

Vince Tobola, LtCol, USAF (ret) (254) 709-5795
vtobola@aol.com

Immediate Past President

Urban, Gary, Maj, USAF (ret) 254-715-6560
garyurban1@inbox.com

Chaplain

John Wells, COL, USA (ret) (Su) coljtw@yahoo.com
 254-776-1143

Surviving Spouse Liaison

Carol McHaney (254) 716-6376

Legislative Liaison

Jon Ker, COL, USA (RET) (Terri) (254) 934-2018
jon@jonker.com

Directors

Dr. Harold Rafuse, LtCol, USAF (ret.) (RoseMary) 254-717-8112
 Jimmie Hanes, COL, USAF, (ret) (Mary) 254-848-5493
 Bob Lull, COL, USA (ret) (Penny) 254-751-7824
 Don Speed, CAPT, USAF (Ann) 254-366-5528
 Joe Augeri, Maj, USAF (ret) (Karen) 254-366-2544
 Carol McHaney 254-716-6376
 Ennis Sullivan (Kay) 214-797-1464
 Beau Crosby, Col, USAF (ret) (Kathy Endres) 254-709-9588
 Barbara Purselley 254-716-4572
 Ken Ratajczak, COL, USA (ret) (Anne) 254-776-4804
 George Littell, Capt, USAF (Helen) 713-571-1973
 Norma Thronburg (Paul) 254-749-0957

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
 404 Russell Senate Office Building
 Washington, D.C. 20510
 202-224-5922

U.S. Rep. Pete Sessions
 2204 Rayburn Building
 Washington, D.C. 20515
 202-225-6105

USEFUL NUMBERS

MOAA Capital switchboard hotline 1-800 272-6622
 MOAA Membership 1-800 245-8762

Free Weekly E-mail Legislative Updates

Subscribe to MOAA's Free Weekly E-mail Legislative Updates:
[\(https://www.moaa.org/\)](https://www.moaa.org/) click on Legislative Action Center or call (800) 234-6622 (MOAA) to get the information.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN
DINNER MEETING FEBRUARY 18,
ENTERTAINMENT BY KEN RATAJCZAK
PERFORMING MUSIC BY JOHN DENVER
MEMBERSHIP CORNER -- FOCUS ON BILL
FERGUSON AND MEMBERSHIP INFO
NEW DOD SECRETARY AND MOAA PRIORITIES