



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

Volume MMXXII, Issue III

March 2022

Chapter Web Site: hotmoaa.org

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Greetings,

We had a tremendous turnout for our February dinner meeting at the Baylor Club. Special thanks go out to our guest speaker Mr. Paul Hubbard. Paul gave a dynamic and very informative presentation on Dr. Martin Luther King and the metaphorical techniques he used in the "I Have a Dream" speech.

We need another and even better turn-out to our March dinner meeting. Our guest speaker, sports personality Mr. Jim Haller, will be very entertaining. Jim is a former Baylor basketball head coach and color commentator for the Fox Sports Network. He now works for the ESPN+ Network. Get your sports questions ready! I hope to see you there.

Save the Date! June 10th is rapidly approaching and our fundraiser team needs your support as we strive to exceed our previous fundraising efforts. I hope you will volunteer and/or contribute to the program's success. It is critical that we support the best and brightest future leaders. Please contact one of our fundraising leads – Harold Refuse, Jimmy Hanes, Jim Milam, Vince Tobola or Gary Urban for more information on how you can help.

One of our smaller fundraising efforts is our HOT MOAA Challenge Coin. They make an excellent gift and are very reasonably priced at only \$15 per coin. Proceeds go toward our fundraising efforts. Time to pitch in! Pick up one or two at our next dinner meeting.

P.S. As former military members, you should never go to the bar without one – could be costly.

It has come to my attention that we have some members who have not paid their dues for this year. I trust you will quickly correct this oversight. We need your continued support to grow and support our ongoing charitable veterans programs.

I give a shout out to Kevin Davis, Baylor's VETS Program Manager. For the Kansas game, the Baylor VETS were named "Student Organization of the Game" and sat courtside under the basket opposite the student section to root the Bears to victory. CONGRATS to all members of the Baylor VETS program!!!

Finally, let's pray for our leaders, the people of Ukraine and the United States of America. They need our support.

Keep up the good work. I look forward to seeing all of you on March 17th and remember to wear "Green".

Duty, Honor, Country – Always Serving

v/r

Michael Slavens

MARCH SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION

Birthdays: Liz Arend, Doug Baldwin, Bill Bauer, Roland Duty, Michael Flynn, Jim Gompper, George Holmes, John Jacques, Sheila Lednicky, William Rogers, and James Wilson.

Anniversaries: George and Christine Brinegar, Roland and Mary Duty, and James and Shirley Wilson.

CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL

DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME STARTS
SUNDAY, MARCH 13TH.

Upcoming Events and Information Items

THURSDAY DINNER MEETING MARCH 17, 2022, AT MCLANE STADIUM – MEDIA ROOM, HOSTED BY THE BAYLOR CLUB.

Enter stadium parking lot thru gate 1, off of MLK Blvd and bear right. The media entrance is on the I-35 side of McLane Stadium and located before the Baylor Club entrance.

There will be Media Entrance sign above the inset double door entrance located near the white column. Go thru the doorway and take the elevator to the fifth floor.

You can park in any space; the numbered spaces for 160's and 170's are across from the Media Entrance with steps to get up to the walkway at the building.

DINNER SCHEDULE

**** 6:00 P.M. Social Hour**

**** 6:35 P.M. Call To Table**

**** 6:40 P.M. Intro & Announcements.**

**** 6:50 P.M. Dinner**

**** 7:50 P.M Drawing & Guest Speaker**

MENU: Fresh fruit salad, tossed salad, artisan bread, Marinated Sirloin Steak, Chicken Picatta, Medley Mixed Vegetables, Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Dessert, Fresh Brewed Iced Tea and water will be on the table.

GUEST SPEAKER, Jim Haller, speaking on his perspective on historical and current controversies involving amateur and professional status of college sports.

Please note 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, 10 March, 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. Dinner 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 slacks and ladies attire as desired.

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2022

Location and lunch or dinner venue are under review.

- **21 April**, Thursday, lunch or dinner and location under review, with guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.
- **19 May**, Thursday, lunch or dinner and location under review, with guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.
- **10 June**, **Annual fundraiser golf tournament, Friday lunch and afternoon at Cottonwood Creek Golf Course in Waco.**
- **21 July, Thursday**, lunch or dinner and location under review, with guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.
- **18 August, Thursday**, lunch or dinner and location under review, with guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.
- **22 September, Thursday**, lunch or dinner and location under review, with guest speaker or entertainment to be announced.

2022 CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES

Chapter member dues are \$25 for renewing members and are due starting January 1 and will be prorated for new members joining depending on when they join in the year. 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 Ken Ratajczak, 254-776-4804 or Vince Tobola, 254-709-5795 for chapter information and a membership application.

HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING UPDATE

The next Board meeting is planned for Tuesday, March 22, 2022; 5:00 p.m. at Uncle Dan's BBQ and located on Lake Air Drive near Valley Mills intersection.

THE CHAPTER WEB SITE

The chapter web site is active at **hotmoaa.org**. It includes information on the chapter, ongoing events and current and past newsletters. We are in the process of reviewing the website for updates and modifications. New golf fundraiser documents are forthcoming.

GUEST SPEAKER – JIM HALLER

Jim Haller is a graduate of Sam Houston State and has a Master's Degree from Texas A&M University. Jim is married to wife Judy and they have two daughters and five grandchildren. Paul came to Waco as Athletic Director and Head Basketball Coach at MCC before moving on to Baylor as First Assistant and then Head Coach. Jim was honored as Texas Junior College Coach of Year and then Southwest Conference Coach of Year.

After coaching, Jim became a Bank Executive and retired in 2015 as Executive Vice President of the First National Bank of Central Texas and still serves on the Bank Board. While banking, he also had a contract with the Fox Sports Network to work NBA and College Basketball Telecasts as a Color Commentator. Currently, he is working for the new ESPN + Network.

Jim has served in many civic leadership roles such as Chairman of the Board of the Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce, the Waco Boys & Girls Club, Heart of Texas Fair and Rodeo, Fuzzy Friends Rescue, and the Waco Foundation.

VETERANS LAND BOARD

The Veterans Land Board is set-up to serve Texas veterans. Benefits can be reviewed at website vlb.texas.gov. These services include assistance on home and home improvement loans, land purchase loans, information on military related items, Texas state cemeteries and Texas state homes.

RECAP ON THE MOAA ORGANIZATION

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is a nonprofit veterans' association dedicated to maintaining a strong national defense and ensuring our nation keeps its commitments to currently serving, retired, and former members of the uniformed services and their families and survivors.

Membership is open to those who hold or have ever held a warrant or commission in any component of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force Coast Guard, Public Health Service, National Oceanographic Administration, or Space Force and their surviving spouses.

The association is governed by a chair and member-elected board of directors consisting of 36 officers from the uniformed services. Contact with the board members can be made by emailing msc@moaa.org or calling 800-234-6622.

COMPREHENSIVE TOXIC EXPOSURE REFORM BILL

Comprehensive toxic exposure reform is needed to ensure we avoid the problems faced by Vietnam veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange. Omnibus bills have been introduced by both chambers of Congress to address this issue. The Senate's Cost of War Act and the House's Honoring our PACT Act provide the change we need to recognizing and caring for toxic exposures. Each of these bills includes the two key bills that MOAA supported with our Advocacy in Action campaign. In addition to supporting the comprehensive toxic exposure bills, we also encourage support for the following bills.

The Veterans Burn Pits Exposure Recognition Act introduced by Sens. Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska) and Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Reps. Elissa Slotkin (D-Mich.) and Peter Meijer (D-Mich.) supports veterans who were exposed to burn pits and other airborne hazards by conceding exposure based on location and time. If veterans file claims, the act also requires VA to help them receive a medical examination.

The Toxic Exposure in the American Military (TEAM) Act, introduced by Sens. Thom Tillis (R-N.C.) and Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.) and Rep. Mike Bost (R-Ill.) would create comprehensive toxic exposure reform to expand health care, improve the presumptive process, and ensure veteran input in the process about the critical conditions affecting the health and well-being of service members, veterans, families, survivors, and caregivers as a result of exposures while in service.

SAVE THE DATE - JUNE 10TH

The **June 10, 2022** annual scholarship golf fundraiser information will be added in the near future to the web site. This info will also be sent to the membership when available.

Also, forms will be able to be downloaded for golf registration and for donation/sponsorships. The golf fundraiser will be held on Friday, June 10th at Cottonwood Creek Golf Course. Registration starts at 11 a.m., lunch is available starting at 11:30 a.m. and player tee-off at 1 p.m.

Lunch is available to individuals for \$10.00. The golf fee is \$125 per player and includes golf fee, cart, range balls, lunch and a gift bag. More information details will be coming.

MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

There are continuing advances for women in different areas of the military.

U.S. Southern Command is now led by a female general; Lt. Gen. Laura Richardson is the first woman to head the command and only the second female four-star to head a U.S. geographic combatant command. The National Guards in Alabama, Utah and West Virginia all named their first female general over the last year. Enlisted women have graduated from Marine boot camp, the Navy's SEAL training course and the Army's sniper school. For the first time, an all-female crew guarded the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in September of 2021. Navy Lt. j.g. Suzelle Thomas is the first woman in that service to go directly from flight school to flying the F-35C Lightning II aircraft after earning her wings in October. These are a few of the recent firsts for female veterans.

VA TO OVERHAUL DISABILITY EVALUATIONS FOR MENTAL HEALTH, OTHER CONDITIONS

The Department of Veterans Affairs will change its disability ratings criteria for mental health conditions, sleep apnea and tinnitus, part of a major overhaul of the review process to ensure that compensation matches veterans' medical conditions and needs, department officials say.

The VA plans to update its Schedule for Rating Disabilities -- its guide for determining how it evaluates and provides benefits for service-connected disabilities -- for mental health conditions, to include their impact on veterans' lives, and abolish the "0%" disability rating for any service-connected mental health diagnosis in favor of a 10% minimum, according to a notice published recently in the Federal Register.

For tinnitus, the department will get rid of its stand-alone rating and consider the condition a symptom of whatever underlying disease is its cause. As for sleep apnea, ratings will be assessed based on the effectiveness of treatment and the condition's impact on "earning impairment," according to the notice.

Previously, most conditions were assessed on the number and severity of symptoms, but VA officials said the consideration of lost wages or productivity is needed to ensure that the department compensates veterans appropriately.

Officials say the changes, which would go into effect after a period for the public to comment and a final version is published, likely will result in higher disability ratings for veterans with mental health conditions, but fewer qualifying for disability compensation for tinnitus and sleep apnea.

Veterans already receiving disability for these conditions will not see their ratings downgraded by any changes, officials said.

MARCH DATES

- **March 2, the Texas Declaration of Independence was signed in 1836 at Washington-on-the-Brazos**
- **March 13, K-9 Veterans Day**
- **March 17, St. Patrick's Day**
- **March 25, Medal of Honor Day**
- **March 29, National Vietnam Veterans Day**

POSSIBLE GOLD STAR FAMILIES DAY

America recognizes troops' time in service each November on Veterans Day, but now a bipartisan group of senators wants to set aside a day for Gold Star Families each September to better honor their sacrifices. In early February, the lawmakers introduced the new Gold Star Families Day Act, which would make the last Monday in September — just about six weeks before Veterans Day — a federal holiday to recognize families who have lost a loved one while serving in the military.

"For the countless American families spanning generations who have given and sacrificed so much to defend our nation and protect our freedoms and way of life, our country is eternally grateful," said Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa and an Army National Guard veteran.

Ernst and Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., are leading the effort, which would establish a 12th federal holiday in honor of the families. Veterans Day (Nov. 11) and Memorial Day (the last Monday in May) are among the 11 existing ones.

Advocates have estimated as many as 3 million Americans may be related to service members who gave their life in the line of duty.

Before the new holiday can become law, the legislation must be approved by both the House and Senate. That could be a difficult task, given the long list of other priorities before both chambers and the shortened legislative schedule this year because of the November midterm elections.

MOAA SPRING ADVOCACY ISSUES

MOAA's annual Advocacy in Action (AiA) event is taking shape, and while there's more than a month until the official launch, there are several ways MOAA members can begin showing their support as the campaign draws closer.

First, the basics: The 2022 AiA event will be held virtually from April 1-29. Based on Capitol Hill security measures and nationwide health challenges, MOAA will again exercise appropriate measures of caution to bring our messages to legislators via virtual engagements. However, there may be opportunities for members to engage your legislators in person (safely) when they are home during Congress' spring break (April 11-22).

This year's advocacy topics:

- **Support the Major Richard Star Act (concurrent receipt for combat-injured service members)**
- **Reduce TRICARE Mental Health Copayments**
- **Enact a 4.6% Military Pay Raise in the FY 2023 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)**

LOCAL EVENTS

- Mar. 10-12, Spring at the Magnolia Silos, 601 Webster Avenue. Makers, artisans and vendors will usher in spring at the event at the Magnolia Silos. Live music will be performed on the lawn and a vendors' fair will be held. Food trucks will be on hand. The event is free. More info at magnolia.com.
- Mar. 19, Food Truck Showdown in downtown Waco in Heritage Square. Food trucks will compete with their signature dishes, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tickets are \$5 each for one four ounce sample of signature item from any food truck. Winners announced at 4:30 p.m. Food trucks reopen with full menu from 4 to 8 p.m. Kids zone and petting zoo among the activities. More info at thetexasfoodtruckshowdown.com.
- Mar. 20, Brotherwell Brewing, 400 E. Bridge Street, Waco. Phone number 254-301-7152. Each 3rd Sunday afternoon they host the Eastside Market in their courtyard area. It is free to attend.

COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE LOOK

The latest figures tracking consumer prices – numbers that determine the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for military retirees, disabled veterans, and many others – show an increase not seen in decades.

The last time these rates were recorded, legislation designed to right the federal budget nearly cost military retirees their COLA. Time will tell whether history repeats itself, and whether MOAA will again need to join with other advocacy groups to combat such proposals.

Each year's COLA increase comes from the average increase of the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) for July, August, and September of the previous year. The 2022 figure of 5.9% came from an average CPI-W of 268.421 for those months in 2021 compared with 253.412 in 2020, for example.

MOAA tracks the monthly release of CPI-W figures on its COAL Watch page. The January 2022 figures, which came out last week, offer more than just a jump on the COLA Watch chart – they represent the largest year-over-year increase for CPI-W to begin a calendar year *since 1983*.

While the January figures don't factor directly into the COLA calculation, each month's release provides a trend line toward those critical summer months. And the 8.23% increase from January 2021 to January 2022 stands out among recent data; no January number has been more than 5% above the previous January number since 1991.

NEW PROGRAMS FOR THE USAF

In 2022, the Air Force will reveal and fly the new B-21 Raider for the first time and launch new program starts for air combat. The B-21 is slated to take to the air in mid-year from Northrop Grumman's facilities at Air Force Plant 42 in Palmdale, CA to nearby Edwards AFB. Five additional aircraft are under construction, suggesting that additional test aircraft will take to the sky in quick order.

Other programs underway will be the re-engining of B-52 aircraft, improvements in F-35 aircraft operations, and a new replacement aircraft for T-38 trainer, more progress on hypersonic missile development and testing, and continuing efforts on maintaining existing aircraft systems for higher readiness levels.



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USEFUL NUMBERS

MOAA Capital switchboard hotline 1-800 272-6622

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