



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

Volume MMXXIII, Issue I

January 2023

Chapter Web Site: hotmoaa.org

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Happy New Year!!

As we strive for success in FY23, we should reflect on and be thankful for the blessings we have received over the past year. 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.

Let's not forget the progress and sacrifices made since the founding during the month of January. To name a few:

- Jan 1, 1963 – President Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation (195000+ African Americans served in Civil War, ~ 40,000 deaths from all causes)
- Jan 2, 1777 – George Washington's troops repulsed British attack at Assunpink Creek near Trenton (American casualties ~5)
- Jan 3, 1777 – George Washington's troops defeat Cornwallis at the Battle of Trenton (American casualties ~74)
- Jan 8, 1812 – Andrew Jackson led force defeat the British at New Orleans (American casualties~330)
- Jan 10, 1944 – GI Bill signed into law
- Jan 12, 1962 – Viet Nam – Operation Ranch Hand begins
- Jan 16, 1991 – Operation Desert Storm begins (~760 casualties)
- Jan 17, 1781 – American militia defeated British at Battle of Cowpens (~150 American casualties)
- Jan 20, 1981 – US Hostage crisis in Iran ends with release of 52 American hostages
- Jan 21, 1968 – Siege of Khe Sanh begins (~2,815 US casualties)
- Jan 22, 1944 – Battle of Anzio (Operation Shingle) begins (~ 43000 allied casualties)
- Jan 25, 1945 – Battle of the Bulge ends (US casualties~89,500)
- Jan 27, 1973 – Viet Nam War Cease Fire (~363,000 casualties)

- Jan 30, 1968 – Viet Cong launch Tet offensive (~12000+ US and South Vietnamese casualties)
- Jan 31, 1990 – Panama Campaign (Operation Just Cause) ends (~346 US casualties)

What does this mean? Our history and the sacrifices our brothers, sisters and citizens made since our founding must not be forgotten!

Last month's Dinner/Dance in the McLean Stadium President's Suite was a tremendous success -- fantastic turn out! The Morticians capped the event with nostalgic musical renditions. We also approved our slate of 2023 officers and Board of Directors who will be sworn in at this month's dinner meeting in the McLane Stadium Media Room. Be sure and attend.

At our **Jan 19th Dinner Meeting**, our guest speaker will be BJ Elliot Prior, a retired Continental Flight Attendant, who also flew with Military Airlift Command (MAC) transporting soldiers during the Viet Nam War. She will share her life and stories of heroes who served in Viet Nam. A must hear presentation!!!

Save the Date - 2023 Golf Fundraiser - supports our scholarship and veteran's support programs. Our golf tournament fundraising committee is actively planning this 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 a huge success. Please contact Vince Tobola to learn how you can help.

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

(Continue to next page.)

Upcoming Events and Information Items

As a reminder, HOT MOAA 2022 scholarship articles. Please see our HOT MOAA (<https://hotmoaa.org/>), the Texas Council of Chapters (<https://www.texas-moaa.org/>) and MOAA websites for articles on this year's scholarship winners. The article was included in National MOAA newsletter and may be viewed at <https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2022-news-articles/texas-chapter-continues-its-tradition-of-supporting-local-students/>

Save the Date - February 25, 2023 Freedom Ball. Our board of directors funded a "Bronze Table", 10 seats, to show case our HOT MOAA brand. Winners were chosen at our December 15th dinner/dance. Please turn out and represent our chapter at this event.

Challenge Coins. We still have HOT MOAA challenge coins available. These coins herald organization membership and show organizational camaraderie. As always, our Challenge Coins make excellent gifts 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 the luncheon registration table.

Finally, please continue to pray for our leaders to support and defend the Constitution and the United States of America. They need our support 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 January 19th dinner meeting - come out and enjoy!

Duty, Honor, Country – Always Serving

v/r

Michael Slavens

JANUARY SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION

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

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

CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL

THURSDAY DINNER MEETING JANUARY 19, 2023, IN THE MEDIA ROOM AT MCLANE STADIUM, 1001 S MARTIN LUTHER KING BLVD.

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

There will be a Media Entrance sign above the inset double door entrance located almost behind the white column at the stadium sidewalk and a placard sign at the column.

Go thru the doorway and take the elevator to the fifth floor.

You can park in any space; the numbered spaces for 1-160's and 1-170's are across from the Media Entrance. Look for a set of stairs and railings just past the Media Entrance to get up to the sidewalk at the stadium.

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 Drawings & Installation Ceremony for 2023 Chapter officers and directors & Guest Speaker Presentation – BJ Elliot Prior, Retired flight attendant who flew on Military Airlift Command Operations flights transporting soldiers during the Vietnam War.**

MENU: Fresh fruit salad, tossed salad with balsamic and ranch dressings, artisan bread, Salisbury Steak, Parmesan Crusted Chicken, Garlic Mashed Potatoes, Roasted Asparagus, and Desserts. Fresh Brewed Iced Tea, water and coffee.

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, 12 January Noon for sign-ups.

Early RSVP's are welcome and appreciated. After the 12th, please contact Vince Tobola as soon as possible if then 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, coat and tie and ladies attire as desired.

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2023

- **Feb 16, Thursday, Lunch in the President's Suite at McLane Stadium.** Guest speaker will be Mrs. Frank Gentsch, who will talk about her father who was a Medal of Honor recipient.
- **Mar 16, Thursday, Lunch or Dinner at McLane Stadium,** depending on guest speaker or entertainment.
- **Apr 20, Thursday, Lunch or Dinner at McLane Stadium,** depending on guest speaker or entertainment.
- **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.

FREE LEGAL ADVICE FOR VETERANS

There will be a free veteran's clinic by Baylor Law on Friday, January 13, 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. Contact for the program is Joshua Borderud.

HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING DATE

The next Board meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 24, 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.

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. This is also a magazine published quarterly.

2023 CHAPTER ELECTION WAS HELD

The chapter election for 2023 officers and directors was held at the December 15, 2022 dinner meeting. The slate was voted on and approved by acclamation. The elected slate plus appointed positions follow:

Officers

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

Directors

Joe Augeri
Jim Milam
Barbara Purselley
Don Speed
Norma Thronburg
Bill Easley
Beau Crosby
Bill Hulsey
Ennis Sullivan
Lew Arend
Carol McHaney
Gary Urban

Directors Emeritus

Jimmie Hanes (Appointed)
Harold Rafuse (Appointed)

STAMP PRICE INCREASE

On January 22, 2023, the new rates will include a three-cent increase in the price of a First-Class Mail Forever stamp from 60 cents to 63 cents. Cost of a domestic postcard stamp goes from 44 cents to 48 cents.



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GUEST SPEAKER – BJ ELLIOT PRIOR

BJ Elliot Prior is a retired flight attendant with 40 years of service with Continental Airlines. BJ flew Military Airlift Command (MAC) Operations, transporting soldiers in and out of Vietnam from 1969 – 1971.

BJ published her first book, Behind My Wings. The book is a tribute to those who served. She shares her life and stories of “men of valor”, covering episodes of highs and lows of each veteran she interviews and sharing the intensity they encountered during the war. .

BJ and her husband are actively involved with their church. They reside in the Dallas/Fort Worth.

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 MOAA National membership forms.

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

COST OF LIVING ALLOWANCE PAY RAISE 8.7% NOW EFFECTIVE

Military retirees, VA beneficiaries, Survivor Benefit Plan annuitants, and Social Security recipients will officially receive the highest cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) in over 40 years. The 8.7% increase means the average monthly Social Security check will increase by about \$144 in 2023, and a military retiree or annuitant will see an extra \$87 per \$1000 of pay each month.

LOCAL RESTAURANT

Pivovar is the name of Waco’s Czeck-inspired Hotel, restaurant, brewery, and bakery. It is located overlooking the Magnolia Silos in downtown Waco. The first floor has the hotel lobby for upper two floors of room, restaurant with windows looking into the brewery and the bakery. The main parking lot is located at the rear of the three story building. It is at 320 S. 8th Street, phone at 254-224-6552 and www.pivovar.com.

VETERANS IN CONGRESS

More veterans will hold seats in the 118th Congress than in the previous session, reversing a long-term decline in prior-service representation.

Of the 535 congressional seats in the new Congress, 97 of them will be filled by veterans – 80 in the House and 17 in the Senate. That’s up from 92 in the 117th Congress. Seven of those veterans are women – the most in congressional history, per a Military Times report.

Here’s a breakdown of those veterans:

Branch of Service:

- **Army/Army Reserve/Army National Guard:** 43 lawmakers (36 in the House, 7 in the Senate)
- **Navy/Navy Reserve:** 27 lawmakers (22 House, five Senate)
- **Air Force/Air Force Reserve/Air Force National Guard:** 15 lawmakers (13 House, 2 Senate)
- **Marine Corps/Marine Corps Reserve:** 15 lawmakers (11 House, 4 Senate)

Note: These figures count some members twice – Sen. Todd Young (R-Ind.) served in the Navy and Marine Corps, Rep. Brian Babin (R-Texas) served in the Army and Air Force, and Rep. Rich McCormick (R-Ga.) served in the Navy and Marine Corps.

Party Affiliation: Of the 80 veterans in the House, 62 are Republicans and 18 are Democrats. Of the 17 veterans in the Senate, 10 are Republicans and seven are Democrats.

Age Range: 3 of the veteran lawmakers are in their 80s, 14 in their 70s, 19 in their 60s, 31 in their 50s, 21 in their 40s, and 9 in their 30s.

Gender: All but seven of the 97 veteran lawmakers are men.

The unique challenges faced by service members, and their families, make them critical on Capitol Hill. Junior (and even some senior) elected officials without military experience rely on veteran lawmakers to educate them on how DOD and the VA operate.

Veteran lawmakers tend to be the fiercest advocates for the uniformed services and veteran communities in Congress, and as the federal legislature becomes more heterogeneous, their role in the legislative process will become even more critical. Fewer veteran lawmakers’ means elected officials will have less firsthand experience with currently serving and veteran issues. Advocates as MOAA are important to provide inputs for the military community.

WHAT A \$1.7 TRILLION FUNDING BILL MEANS TO SERVICE MEMBERS, VETERANS AND FAMILIES

The bill was passed and signed by the President. The \$1.7 trillion funding package will set many records, to include the largest-ever defense spending and a major jump to VA funding to help support the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act.

The bill would provide DOD with \$797.7 billion, a \$69.3 billion increase over FY 2022 levels. This would fund the MOAA-backed 4.6% pay increase for service members, as well as funds to offset inflation affecting key benefits for those in uniform, such as:

- \$1.2 billion for the Basic Allowance for Housing
- \$327.8 million for the Basic Allowance for Subsistence
- \$400 million for Defense Health Program cost index increases
- \$209.6 million to offset commissary prices for customers
- \$164 million for Temporary Lodging Expense
- \$12.1 million for the Basic Needs Allowance
- \$32.5 million for Child Development Center employee fee discounts
- \$23.5 million for the Dislocation Allowance
- \$500 million for targeted facility projects, such as those at barracks and services academies

This bill includes \$19 billion in spending for military construction and family housing this fiscal year, a \$4.1 billion increase from FY 2022.

The bill also includes funding for Arlington National Cemetery (ANC), which will receive \$93.4 million for operations costs (a \$6.4 million increase from last year) and \$62.5 million in funding for the Southern Expansion construction project and Memorial Avenue improvements.

VA has various items of interest. The PACT Act funding proved a major source of debate in the lead up to the final deal, which included \$135.2 billion in discretionary VA funding and \$168.6 billion in mandatory funding. The final has an 11.9% increase for the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) to support the influx of new claims, a 22% increase for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) to

support the expansion of health care to new veterans, and \$2 billion in funding for infrastructure developments.

These increases are critical given the demands being placed on the VA by the PACT Act, which expanded health care and benefits to 3.5 million veterans exposed to hazardous toxins during their service. They are now eligible for health care from the VA, and if ill from their exposures, could be eligible for additional benefits.

Along with the topline increases for VBA and VHA, the bill includes several important increases:

- \$493 million more for caregiver support than in FY 2022, bringing the total to \$1.9 billion. This is an important increase given our aging veteran population.
- \$541 million more than FY 2022 for homelessness prevention programs for veterans.
- \$744 million more for mental health care than in FY 2022, bringing the total to \$13.9 billion. This includes \$498 million for suicide prevention outreach.

Passage of this Omnibus Budget bill avoided delays in new funding if a Continuing Resolution had to be passed instead.

MOAA ANNOUNCES NEW PRESIDENT AND CEO

The Military Officers Association of America (MOAA) is proud to announce its new president and CEO, Lt. Gen. Brian T. Kelly, USAF (Ret), and new board chairman, Gen. Gary L. North, USAF (Ret), along with 12 newly elected members of its board of directors.

Kelly will become MOAA's President and CEO on Jan. 4, 2023, leading the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. Commissioned in 1988, Kelly concluded his military career this year after serving most recently as the Air Force deputy chief of staff of Manpower, Personnel and Services at the Pentagon.

Kelly succeeds Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret), who is retiring after serving in the position for seven years. *The Hill* named MOAA to its list of top lobbyists every year Atkins led MOAA.

"I'm extremely excited and proud," Kelly said. "It's a fantastic organization. What MOAA has been able to do in terms of legislative advocacy is really second to none."



Heart of Texas Chapter TX07, MOAA
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Address label

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

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

1st Vice President

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

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 Norma Thronburg 254-749-2146
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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

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