



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

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

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Greetings,

We continue to be plagued and badgered by information and misinformation about the COVID-19 pandemic, and the pandemic itself. I expect that to continue at least until we have a proven, effective vaccine, perhaps an oral vaccine akin to the Sabin oral polio vaccine that many of us took in younger years. Meanwhile, the frustrating conflicting information continues to fill the news media. I personally think, based on best evidence, albeit not so strong as we would like, that we need to continue to be cautious: I do not support widespread closure of businesses, but I believe right now we need to continue with hand washing (20 seconds with soap and water), mask wear when around other people not members of our households, and judicious social distancing. We will address these things in more detail when we resume our dinner meetings.

The hot summer of protest demonstrations, to wit riots, continues. We are an organization of patriotic Americans, so this issue is puzzling to most of us. Many things have changed since I was a youngster, and I have learned a lot about other ethnic groups; one of the most impressive things that I saw during my military service was that everyone in the service truly had an equal opportunity to serve and excel! Right now I think we need to stay safe by avoiding areas prone to such violent gatherings, and express our support for those leaders whom we believe can and will help to conserve and advance our people's principles. Further detailed discussion of staying safe and being supportive is planned when we resume dinner meetings.

I would like to introduce a brief time period for member questions and discussion at our dinner meetings. Not all of us gather all the information from this newsletter, so it would be good to allow for quick discussion and clarification of helpful topics. For example, I learned from another member that AAFES has a local outlet that allows us to pick up things ordered online such as formal dress uniforms, and that there are closer systems than those at Ft Hood (although I have found Ft Hood to be very helpful). So I urge all members to bring up very brief, concise topics at such a time period at our dinner meetings, while being mindful that the discussions must be limited by time.

Respectively,

William Milnor

### **AUGUST SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION**

**August Birthdays:** Wendy Adamo, Joan Alexander, Pike Anderson, Karen Augeri, Anne Bowman, Ron Dampier, Linda Day, Sally McErlean, Pete Patrick, Bobby Sammon, Pam Schreiber, and Lou Storm.

**August Anniversaries:** Charles and Wendy Adamo, Stan and Lori Brubaker, Bruce and Patsy Burdett, Beau Crosby and Kathy Endres, Lynn and Linda Day, Willie and Gloria DuBose, Henry and Hope Hacker, Bob and Penny Lull, Robert and Lyn Powers, and Tony and Claire Raineri.

### **CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL**

### **MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2020**

Monthly meetings are pending ongoing health safety measures and review of the ongoing COVID-19 scenario and health safety measures. There will be no dinner meeting in August. For now, we have the available schedule of dinners on 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays (September– November) and 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday in December.

# Upcoming Events and Information Items

## **2020 GENERAL ELECTION DATES INFO FOR TEXAS**

- October 5 is last day for voter registration.
- Early voting will start on Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup> and continue through Friday, October 30. The normal period has been extended a week.
- The general election will be held on Tuesday, November 3.

## **MCLENNAN COUNTY COVID-19 UPDATES**

For current information on the status of COVID-19 cases in McLennan County, go to web site: covidwaco.com

## **HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING**

Board meetings have been postponed until further notice due to current health safety measures.

## **WACO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

The HOT Chapter is a member of the Greater Waco Chamber of Commerce so chapter members can attend chamber events and not pay non-member costs. Web site is wacochamber.com for updates.

## **AUGUST REMEMBRANCE DATES**

- 4<sup>th</sup>, US Coast Guard (USCG) Birthday
- 10<sup>th</sup>, Purple Heart Day
- 10<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Department Of Defense Birthday
- 14<sup>th</sup>, Navajo Code Talkers Day
- 14<sup>th</sup>, President Roosevelt announced VJ (Victory of Japan) Day, Formal surrender ceremony occurred later, September 2, 1945, aboard the USS Missouri in Tokyo Bay
- 29<sup>th</sup>, Marine Corps Reserve Birthday

## **MULTIPLE VETERAN BILLS SENT TO PRESIDENT**

During the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of July, the House and Senate passed multiple bills supporting veterans. VFW-supported bills H.R. 3535, the *G.I. Bill Work Study Improvement Act of 2019*, H.R. 3504, the *Ryan Kules and Paul Benne Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act of 2019*, and S. 3637, to amend the *Service Members Civil Relief Act* and provide additional legal protections for service members impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. These three pieces of legislation now head to the White House.

## **ADDING AGENT ORANGE PRESUMPTIVES IN DEFENSE BILL**

A bipartisan amendment to the House version of the FY 2021 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) would match July's Senate NDAA amendment and provide more good news for Vietnam veterans suffering from bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinson's-like symptoms.

House Amendment 264, introduced by Rep. Josh Harder (D-Calif.), would add these conditions, which have been scientifically linked to Agent Orange exposure, to the list of Agent Orange presumptives. The amendment echoes S.A. 1972, which was introduced by Sen. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) last week and later approved by the Senate.

"I'm heartened to see that Congress is not forgetting our Vietnam veterans," MOAA President and CEO Lt. Gen. Dana T. Atkins, USAF (Ret), said. "As a nation, we must ensure all our veterans are taken care of when they experience negative health consequences like toxic exposures from their service. When illnesses like bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, and Parkinson's-like symptoms meet the scientific standards to be connected with Agent Orange, we must add them to the list of presumptives."

"Tens of thousands of veterans are suffering from these illnesses," Atkins said. "Congress can care for them by providing the benefits and compensation they deserve. I urge Congress to include Sen. Tester's and Rep. Harder's amendments and pass them in this year's NDAA." The cost of providing these benefits has held up this issue to date; the VA has the authority to add these diseases to the presumptive list unilaterally, but without the funding, VA officials indicate they will have to make hard choices in cutting benefits to veterans in other areas. It remains uncertain this will be VA's position should Congress approve what could be the agency's biggest budget ever.

This item will still need to be reconciled with the House version of the NDAA before possible approval of the overall final bill.

## **NO TRAVEL NEEDED TO VISIT MILITARY MONUMENTS AND MUSEUMS**

For access to the URLs of various websites, visit [www.moaa.org/virtual-tours](http://www.moaa.org/virtual-tours).

## **VA PROPOSED BOOST IN FUNDING**

In an unusual maneuver July 9, the House Appropriations Committee approved by a vote of 30-20 its fiscal year 2021 funding package for DoD military personnel and construction projects and VA health care and benefits programs, designating \$12.5 billion in emergency funding to avoid budget cap restrictions imposed in last year's budget agreement to ensure adequate resources for veterans health care in the community.

The VA and lawmakers have been wrestling with the rapidly growing costs of veterans' health care in recent years. These increases are due in part to the passage of the VA MISSION ACT in 2018 to address the long waiting lists for veterans seeking care in VA at the time. The FY 2021 funding boost in large part is to provide more funding for VA community care, which was expanded in the act.

"We have finally achieved consensus with the Senate that the cost of VA health care is growing exponentially and cannot remain within the budget caps," said Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), chair of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies. "For that reason, the \$12.5 billion within the total is designated as emergency funding to adequately fund VA health care."

The \$104.8 billion discretionary funding in the House bill for VA is \$12.3 billion above this year's spending levels but is \$35 million below the president's budget request. \$90 billion of the discretionary funding is for VA health care — in line with the president's request but \$9.8 billion above FY 2020 authorization.

Some of the VA provisions include:

- \$10.3 billion for mental health care and \$313 million for suicide prevention outreach.
- \$661 million in gender-specific care for women.
- \$1.9 billion for VA homeless assistance programs.
- \$504 million for opioid abuse prevention programs.
- \$300 million for rural health initiatives.
- Increase funding in medical and prosthetic research, implementation of VA's electronic health record system, and VA construction projects.

- \$3.2 billion for VA Benefits Administration operations to include processing of disability claims and appeals backlogs — \$62 million more than FY 2020.
- \$94.2 billion for advance FY 2022 funding for VA medical programs, and \$145.3 billion in advance mandatory funding for VA benefit programs to ensure continuity in veterans' health care and benefits in the event of continuing resolution or disruption to the funding.

House Appropriations Committee Chair Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.) stated, "This bill makes unprecedented investments in our veterans through our VA medical system to ensure that every veteran has access to the top-notch health care they deserve." The bill will now go to the full House for a vote.

## **AIR FORCE AND COVID-19**

From a report as of July 28, the total number of COVID-19 cases increased by more than 1,000 across the Department of the Air Force for the second week in a row, as bases across the military continue to increase health protection conditions amid the pandemic. On July 27, the Air Force reported 6,169 total cases, including 3,964 uniformed military members, 885 civilians, 981 dependents, and 339 contractors. There are 36,659 cumulative Defense Department cases as of July 27, and bases are responding by increasing restrictions. The Associated Press reported that as of July 24 more than 45 percent of total service installations around the world are at "Health Protection Condition Charlie," the second-highest level, which indicates substantial risk of sustained community transmission.

## **ENGINE UPGRADE FOR B-52 AIRCRAFT USE EXTENSION**

Rolls-Royce formally entered the competition to re-engine the B-52 as expected, offering its F130 engine already in use in some USAF aircraft to power the bomber. The Air Force on May 19 issued its request for proposals for the B-52 Commercial Engine Replacement Program, with responses due on July 22 and a contract award expected in June 2021. In addition to Rolls-Royce, GE Aviation and Raytheon Technologies' Pratt & Whitney will compete for the award. The service wants to buy 608 engines for 76 B-52s to keep the bomber flying through 2050. Aircraft production ended in 1962.

## **DELAY IN PROPOSED MEDICAL BILLETS REDUCTION**

The full House Appropriations Committee report for the FY 2021 House Defense Appropriations bill denies DOD's request for funding to replace uniformed medical providers with civilians/contractors. It also restores funding to support MTFs that had been proposed for downsizing and incorporates additional reporting requirements and congressional oversight.

The appropriations bill is separate from the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). It funds DOD, including operations and maintenance, readiness activities, research and development, equipment modernization, and health and quality of life programs for military members and their families.

The report from the full House Appropriations Committee expressed concerns about DoD's approach to MTF restructuring outlined in the February 2020 Section 703 report to Congress: *The Committee questions several of the assumptions made about the quality and accessibility of private sector care, the cost of changing the venue of care, and the relationship to other restructuring efforts, such as reducing the number of military medical billets.* The report also directs DOD to brief the congressional defense committees on the implementation plan to close or "descope" any MTFs including an update to the market analysis conducted, cost implications, timeline, impact on providers, and benefits or risks to the served population.

The administration's FY 2020 budget request included a proposal to decrease medical billets for the services to allow an increase in the number of operational billets needed for lethality, a request that was repeated this year. The committee report expresses concern about the ramifications of these cuts and DOD's inadequate responses to questions about beneficiary and readiness impacts:

In addition to denying DoD's request to fund civilian care transitioned away from uniformed providers, the committee directed DoD to re-evaluate the number of military medical personnel required to respond to all operational requirements, including in support of homeland defense missions, in light of lessons learned about the capacity and capability of both military and civilian medical care during the novel coronavirus pandemic.

## **MEMORIAM – KENNETH L. PEEK, JR**

Kenneth Leroy Peek, Jr., Lt. General, USAF (Retired), passed away on July 20, 2020. Visitation was held on Saturday, July 25, at Wilkerson-Hatch-Bailey Funeral Home. Burial will be at Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, Virginia, at a later date. Honorary pallbearers are Pat Adams, Leo Cutcliffe, Don Edwards, Buddy Haney, Doug Mang, Tony Raineri, Paul Sowada and Randy Wilson.

Born in Indianapolis, Indiana, Gen. Peek attended Ben Davis High School, Wabash College, and Indiana State University, before entering Air Force pilot training in 1953 at Bryan Field, Texas. He married Mary Eunice Hargett, his wife of 63 years, in 1955 upon graduating pilot training. During his extraordinary career, Gen. Peek flew nuclear missions in a B-47 bomber worldwide during the Cold War, 101 B-52 bombing missions over Vietnam, flew the Airborne Command Post, and ultimately the Sr-71 Blackbird (the world's fastest airplane in supersonic flight). Gen. Peek held several command positions in the Strategic Air Command at AF bases in Minot, North Dakota; Spokane Washington and Omaha, Nebraska. He served two tours in the Pentagon, and attained his master's degree while also attending the Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

To earn his first star, Gen. Peek successfully led the 5<sup>th</sup> Bomb Wing as Commander. By 1984, he had earned two more stars and had taken command of the Eight Air Force. Gen. Peek's final command position was in the Air Force as Vice-Commander of Strategic Air Command.

After his AF retirement, Ken developed a second career in Waco with Chrysler Technologies (Raytheon) as Vice-President, specializing in VIP aircraft modification. During this time, he was the project manager for airplane interiors with Boeing, the Saudi Royal Flight and the Sultan of Brunei. He concluded his business career in Waco with Profiles, Inc., which gave him and Mary further opportunities for extensive world travel. He was a member of Lambda Chi Alpha, the Daedalians, and the Military Officers of America Association. Mary and Ken were members of The First United Methodist Church of Waco.

Mary preceded Ken in death in 2018. Ken was also predeceased by his father, Kenneth L. Peek, and mother, Edna Mae Winterrowd Peek of Indianapolis, Indiana.



## **SELF-CARE AT HOME**

“Info from August issue of American Legion Magazine by James L. Greenstone, Professor of Disaster and Emergency Preparedness at Nova Southeastern University and Dr. Kiran C. Patel, College of Osteopathic Medicine.”

Even as states lift restrictions in the wake of COVID-19, Americans whose age or health conditions put them at particular risk may choose to stay close to home. While doing so, do not neglect your psychological well-being.

- Take care of yourself first, and then take care of the others around you. If you have what you need, you will be better able to provide for what loved ones and others may need.
- Make a to-do-list for every day. The goals must be reasonable and attainable. Routines promote time management and help lower anxiety and worry.
- Stick to your schedule as much as possible. Create achievable due dates for yourself, and stick to them as much as possible.
- Take small breaks throughout the day. Do something different during these times.
- Get your news from the most reliable sources available. Check at least two sources when trying to glean facts. Trust, then verify.
- Be careful about excesses of any kind. Too much news, TV, coffee, etc. should be avoided. Find other activities worth doing. Try anything else for a change that may give you pleasure as new hobby, new skill, art or other items.
- Find a way to talk to other people. Make use of Skype, Facebook, FaceTime, Zoom, telephone and other forms of staying in touch – whatever works for you. Even casual connections help you feel involved and vital.
- New routines may be necessary. Make them realistic and, where children or grandchildren are concerned, child friendly. Routines should be predictable and structured, to help deal with uncertainties and stress.
- Continue to follow pandemic guidelines with wearing a mask when indoors and around others, social distancing, wash hands frequently and stay home if not feeling well.

## **FOCUS ON NEW MEMBER, JOSHUA SCHNELLE**

Josh Schnelle enlisted in the Army Reserves and served as a Civil Affairs Specialist for almost three years before commissioning as a US Army Officer in 2012. After completing ROTC at Missouri State University he served four years as an Air Defense Artillery Officer in the US Army and was stationed at Ft. Sill, OK, Ft. Bragg, NC and Camp Carroll, South Korea. Josh is married to Amy Schnelle who is currently in her final year as a PhD Candidate in the Baylor Chemistry department. They have one son, Cooper, who is almost two years old.

Josh is currently serving as a Financial Planner at American Armed Forces Mutual Aid Association (AAFMAA) Wealth Management & Trust. It is AAFMAA's mission to be the premier provider of financial planning, investment management, and trust services to the American Armed Forces community. Prior to joining AAFMAA Wealth Management and Trust, he served as a Financial Advisor for Mutual of Omaha Advisors. He earned his Bachelors of Science from Southwest Baptist University and holds an MBA in Financial Planning from California Lutheran University.

In his free time, Josh enjoys reading and getting outdoors with his wife Amy and son Cooper, hiking, biking, and attending Baylor sporting events. He also enjoys serving in his church and local community.





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