



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

Volume MMXXIII, Issue V

May 2023

Chapter Website: hotmoaa.org

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Greetings

Remember the date – June 10, 2023! Our golf fundraising event will be here in a little more than a month and that time will go fast. I call upon each of **YOU** to help make our fundraising efforts a success through individual donations, by working with the Fundraising Team in soliciting donations from businesses and individuals, and/or volunteering at the golf tournament.

As of April 28st, 18 members have donated over \$10,000 to our fundraising effort. Other donations (businesses, golfers, etc.) included bring our total donations to over \$11, 800. If the rest of our regular members donated \$100 each, we would add over \$6,000 to this total. This would put us well on our way to exceeding last years' successful effort. We need to do more as we have 16 scholarship applicants this year, a fourfold increase over last year. Kudos to Harold Rafuse and the scholarships team! Please contact Vince Tobola to donate and for more details on soliciting donations and/or helping at the golf tournament. *Remember, a portion of our Chapter Coin sales go to our fundraising.*

Last month, our Board of Directors finalized our 2023 Foundation (Benevolence) Fund budget. This included a \$1,000 increase from \$12,000 to \$13,000 for our scholarship budget and \$3,650 in charitable donations as shown below.

- \$1,000 each to the Veterans One Stop, Baylor Vets, and Disabled American Veterans
- \$500 to the Stan Parker Foundation
- \$150 to the Special Forces Foundation

This represents a start to meeting our leadership team's 2023 Chapter/Foundation goals and objectives and is a significant commitment over previous years. We are on our way to becoming a

premier veteran's support organization. Our scholarship and grant programs help prepare those who will lead in the future. Our donations to local and national veteran support organizations will assist those who are serving, have honorably served our nation and their dependents.

Things to remember in May:

May 4: National Day of Prayer

May 4, 11, 18 & 25: Veterans One-Stop Breakfast for Veterans and their Families - 7:30 AM

May 6: Nurses Day

May 8: V-E Day Declared (1945)

May 12: Military Spouses Day

May 14: Mother's Day

May 15: Peace Officers Memorial Day

May 15: Women's Army Corps Founded (1942)

May 20: Armed Forces Day

May 22: National Maritime Day

A special thank you to our members who donated their time to present our 2023 JROTC/ROTC awards in person to all our award recipients. It makes a difference!

Duty/Honor/Country---Always Serving

v/r

Michael Slavens

MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONIES

- **26 May, Friday**, the Heart of Texas Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1012 will hold a Sunset Ceremony at the Waco Vietnam Veterans Memorial to honor the 83 local military members who did not return from Vietnam War. Veterans may honor Veterans from other wars if they wish. The ceremony will start at 6 p.m.
- **29 May, Monday**, there will be a Memorial Day remembrance ceremony by the McLennan County Veterans Association at Hewitt City Park, 801 S Hewitt Drive, starting at 9 a.m. The HOT Chapter MOAA will be providing a wreath in honor of Military Veterans.

Upcoming Events and Information Items

THURSDAY DINNER MEETING MAY 18, 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 is 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 should be 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

**** 5:00 P.M. Social Hour**

**** 5:35 P.M. Call to Table**

**** 5:40 P.M. Intro & Announcements.**

**** 5:50 P.M. Dinner**

**** 6:50 P.M Multiple Drawings & Guest Speaker Retired Deputy Police Chief Dennis Kruse of Whitney PD talking on practical self-defense, conflict resolution, use of weapons and Tasers, personal equipment and active shooter response.**

MENU: Fresh fruit salad, tossed salad with balsamic and ranch dressings, artisan bread, Dr. Pepper Pork Loin, Parmesan Crusted Chicken, Red Roasted Potatoes, Garlic Green Beans, and Desserts with Fresh Brewed Iced Tea, water and coffee. A bar will be available for purchase of drinks.

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, 11 May Noon for sign-ups.

Early RSVP's are welcome and appreciated. After the 11th, 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: Summer dress code will be in effect, gentlemen, collared shirts and pants, coat and/or tie optional and ladies attire as desired.

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 2023

- **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. Open to the public and all military. More info is on the website at hotmoaa.org. Golf documents also are on website, hotmoaa.org
- **July 20, Thursday, Lunch in President's Suite at McLane Stadium.** Guest Speaker will be Representative Charles "Doc" Anderson and presentation of educational awards. Registration table will open at 11 a.m.
- **17 August, Thursday, Dinner in the Media Room at McLane Stadium,** Guest speaker will be Waco Police Chief Sheryl Victorian. Registration table will open at 5 p.m.

HOT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING DATE

The next Board meeting will be held on **Tuesday, May 23 2023;** 5:00 p.m. at Uncle Dan's BBQ that is located at 1001 Lake Air Drive.

SAVE THE DATE - 2023 GOLF FUNDRAISER

– This event supports our scholarship and veteran's support programs. This is a **HOT MOAA team** event and volunteers are needed to assist with contacting businesses, players and at the event! Please be ready to assist us again in making our 2023 fundraiser a huge success by making a donation, soliciting business support and/or volunteering. Please contact Vince Tobola, 254-709-5795, to learn how you can help.

LOCAL EVENTS

- **May 5, Friday,** Cinco de Mayo will be celebrated at the second Brazos Night concerts of the season. La Fiera de Ojinaga will perform at 7 p.m. at Indian Spring Park, downtown Waco. More at: brazosnightswaco.com.
- **May 6, Saturday,** the Heart of Texas Sertoma Club holds its 15th annual kite festival, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Heart of Texas Miniature Aircraft Field. Food, contests, music and activities will be available. More info at wacosertoma.org. It is at 3400 Over Flow Road past the Speegleville Park entrance off of HWY 6 service road.

GUEST SPEAKER –DENNIS KRUSE

Dennis Kruse is a USAF veteran, a native Texan and he grew up on a farm. Dennis has a BS in Criminal Justice from the University of Texas, and is a graduate of Dallas County Sheriff's Police Academy.

He has 4,000+ training hours, 41 years of law enforcement experience in Texas, Nebraska and California. He commanded the DeSoto Swat Team and taught their firearms classes and retired in 1991. He spent 13 years with the Whitney Police Department, including as Deputy Chief. He has also taught law enforcement at East Texas and Southwest Texas State Universities plus teaching self-defense courses at various times and with different organizations.

He is very knowledgeable about practical side of self-defense, conflict resolution, the use of or not of weapons and Tasers, personal equipment and active shooter situation responses and more. He is a no nonsense speaker but has a sense of humor.

Dennis and spouse, Susanne, are members of the Our Lady of the Lake Anglican Church in Laguna Park.

2023 CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP DUES

Chapter member dues are still \$25 for renewing members. Member 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 plus copies of newsletters. Newsletters are sent to members monthly, by e-mail or regular mail.

There is a MOAA national membership form at the chapter website: hotmoaa.org. **Basic membership is free** and the form shows fees for annual and life memberships. Note: MOAA National is the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. The web address for MOAA's online legislative Take Action Center is www.moaa.org/takeaction.

GULF WAR SYNDROME STUDY

Veterans Affairs officials will launch a new five-year study into Gulf War Syndrome in an effort to better define and explain the symptoms for the mysterious illness.

It's a move that veterans groups say is overdue but also potentially beneficial to tens of thousands of Gulf War veterans. As many as 250,000 individuals who served in operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in the early 1990s have reported a series of problems including joint pain, fatigue, rashes, memory issues and digestive problems, with no clear cause.

The new study — a partnership with the National Institutes of Health — will involve about 75 veterans who agreed to be monitored at federal health facilities for two weeks. The goal is to “look at multiple body systems affected by Gulf War Illness and how these systems operate.”

The causes of the illness have been under debate for more than three decades.

Shane Liermann, deputy national legislative director at Disabled American Veterans, called the new study “significant” in potentially outlining clearer guidelines for filing those claims and seeking medical treatment for the illness.

The move also comes nine months after President Joe Biden signed into law the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxic Act, better known as the **PACT Act**. The legislation provides presumptive benefits for a host of unusual illnesses connected to burn pit exposure in Iraq and Afghanistan, Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam and radiation exposure at various military sites in the 1960s and 1970s. The law also reforms how VA handles other toxic exposure claims, with the goal of easing bureaucratic rules for recognizing new illnesses for medical care or disability payouts.

MAY SPECIAL DAY RECOGNITION

Birthdays: May Bouchard, Bob Corwin, Sandy Corwin, Robert Powers, Russell Swann, John Wells, and Sam Wright.

Anniversaries: Tim and Nancy Pfanner, and Doug and Pat Young.

CONGRATUATIONS TO ALL



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at every stage.

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APRIL 20TH LUNCHEON

Photo shows guest speaker, Brad Livingstone receiving MOAA pen and chapter coin from President Michael Slavens. Brad is a teacher, historian, and “First Gent” as spouse of Linda Livingstone, President of Baylor University.



From left to right, President Michael Slavens presents MOAA pen to Sydney King, 2022 General Goodall scholarship award winner. She visited the dinner to talk about the award value to her as she is a freshman at Baylor University and to offer thanks to the chapter and to the membership for their service.

HOT MOAA PRESIDENT PIN AWARDS AT APRIL 20TH LUNCHEON



Left to right, President Michael Slavens presented Past President Pins to Don Schreiber, Dennis DeGraff and Doug Young in recognition for their past service as chapter presidents and for their continuing support and participation in the chapter.

FREE LEGAL ADVICE FOR VETERANS

There will be a free veteran's clinic by Baylor Law on Friday, May 12, 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.

MIDWAY HS JROTC AWARD

April 26, 2023, Heart of Texas Chapter MOAA JROTC Award was presented to Cadet Ashlynn Cochran, Midway High School. Though only a junior, Ashlynn plans to enroll in a ROTC program at the collegiate level.

Pictured left to right below: MSGT Dustin Garig, Cadet Ashlynn Cochran, Michael Slavens, Jake Urban, and LtCol USMC (ret.) Senior USMC Instructor.



UPDATE ON VA CAREGIVER PROGRAM

President Joe Biden at end of April signed a new executive order promising to expand caregiver services for veterans, but some advocates say the move does not clear up uncertainty surrounding Veterans Affairs' long term-support for those families..

During a White House ceremony on April 18, Biden said the new order on caregiver services included 50 separate actions by federal agencies designed to aid “childcare workers, nurses, home care workers and family caregivers.”

Nationwide, an estimated 5.5 million individuals are providing caregiver services to injured service members and veterans, often giving up their own careers to provide around-the-clock medical and emotional support. Biden said his new order would “cut red tape and give veterans who need assistance at home more flexibility to pick their own caregivers.”

It also includes instructions for VA to develop a pilot program to provide psychotherapy support via video telehealth for caregivers of seriously ill or injured veterans. In a statement, VA officials said the moves are already underway at the department, and the new order would help strengthen and improve the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

Steve Schwab, CEO of the Elizabeth Dole Foundation — an influential policy voice on veterans caregiver issues — said the executive actions “have the potential to provide relief in some of the areas of greatest need for military caregivers,” including expanded respite care services, better mental health support and improved financial support for veterans in need.

But the moves do not include a new timeline for new rules regarding VA caregiver support eligibility, an issue that has been looming over the program for more than a year.

The program provides stipends to family members of some veterans with service-connected injuries that limit their ability to live independently. The payouts generally hover around \$3,000 a month for the most severely wounded individuals and about \$1,800 for others with less catastrophic injuries.

About 30,000 families receive benefits through the program. Last March, amid a review of participant eligibility that threatened to change benefits for up to 90% of enrolled veterans, VA Secretary Denis McDonough announced a halt to

any dismissals from the program and vowed to rewrite program rules.

Last September, with details of those looming changes still unclear, department leaders announced that “legacy” participants of the VA caregiver program would remain eligible for benefits through September 2025, except in select cases such as fraud or caregiver changes.

Following the White House announcement, VA Press Secretary Terrence Hayes said that the ongoing caregiver program review is “coming to a conclusion” and “based on the outcome of [that] review, we will determine whether proposed changes through rule-making are necessary.”

The executive order instructs VA officials to “consider” making those decisions by the end of the current fiscal year, on Sept. 30.

Holly Ferrell, executive director of Veteran Warriors — whose members include more than 3,500 caregivers in the VA program — said the continued questions about that review overshadow the potential benefits of the new presidential order. “These services are either starting to expand or are slated for expansion,” she said. But caregivers she speaks with are less concerned with improvements to the program than with wholesale eligibility changes in the future that could boot them from receiving any support.

DEFENSE BUDGET HEARINGS HELD IN EARLY APRIL

The House and Senate Committees on Armed Services held hearings on the DOD budget request for fiscal year 2024. In addition to outlining how the budget would enable the U.S. to counter growing international threats, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Mark Milley both emphasized the need to take care of the military’s people with funding for initiatives like the requested 5.2 percent military pay raise, which would be the largest in more than two decades.

Additional areas of discussion included DOD’s progress on implementing Uniform Code of Military Justice reforms to eliminate military sexual assault and harassment, the ongoing recruiting crisis, and the critical issues of food insecurity, mental health care access, and suicide prevention.

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