



Houston Area  
PO Box 1082  
Houston, TX 77251-1082  
[www.moahahoustonarea.com](http://www.moahahoustonarea.com)

February 2021 Issue – Newsletter to Members

## President's Message...

Dear MOAA HA Members,

As my first message to you in 2021 I'm feeling optimistic about the upcoming year. The vaccination campaign against COVID-19 is well underway and although the virus will not magically disappear, I think we will slowly and cautiously begin to return to some sense of normalcy. At the very least, I hope to see us as a MOAA chapter once again gather in friendship, doing fun things, and enjoying our ability to connect with each other. So, hang in there friends – I think we are heading down the home stretch. It's been a very tough and challenging year for the MOAA HA Chapter, but let's get through the next few months together and remain optimistic that 2021 will be a good year for all of us!



Speaking of us gathering as a MOAA chapter, the past two months we've met virtually as a chapter via Zoom. In December, we were fortunate to host CAPT Howard Reese (Ret.), the Director of the Arctic Submarine Laboratory. CAPT Reese provided chapter members a very interesting brief on the lab's important mission to improve the US Navy's submarine force ability to operate and win in the unique Arctic Ocean environment.

The last Saturday in January, Ms. Myrna Saldana-Trevino, the Community Outreach Coordinator from

*(Continued on Page 3)*

### In this issue >>>

- *President's Message, Joseph C. Willoughby, Lt Col, USAF (Ret.)*
- *February 2021 Chapter Events*
- *Read MOAA's Letter to President Joe Biden*
- *MOAA's 2021 Legislative Priorities*
- *January Financial Statement*
- *MOAA HA January Financial Statement*
- *Here's How to Avoid COVID-19 Vaccine Scams*
- *Surviving Spouse Corner*
- *UH Students Enter Directly Into US Space Force*
- *Chaplain's Corner*
- *Membership Application/Renewal Form*

### February...

#### Upcoming Chapter Events:

##### Tuesday, February 23, 2021 @ noon

MOAA HA BOD Meeting  
Rudi Lechner's German Restaurant  
2503 S Gessner Rd  
Houston, TX 77063

##### Saturday, February 27th, 2021 @ noon

MOAA HA Chapter Luncheon  
Kelley's Country Cookin'  
11555 W Airport Blvd  
Meadow Place, TX 77477

*See Page 4 for Guest Speaker Details...*

# Read MOAA's Letter to President Joe Biden January 20, 2021

By MOAA Staff



The first 100 days of a president's term is a time where the new administration considers the top issues it wants to tackle through either executive orders, legislation, or policy changes. Based on meetings with the transition teams of then-President-Elect Joe Biden and then-Vice President-Elect Kamala Harris, it is

clear the new administration is keenly interested in doing all it can to help improve the quality of life and protect service-earned benefits for all our uniformed servicemembers and veterans, their families, retirees, caregivers, and survivors.

The new administration is **expected to move quickly**. MOAA sent a Jan. 20 letter to the president asking for swift action in many areas. In it, MOAA urges the incoming administration to consider taking up several issues and working with military and veterans service organizations in a collaborative manner to affect these important changes. MOAA looks forward to helping the administration during the transition by providing the necessary background information support needed to successfully achieve its goals moving forward.

You can access a PDF version of the letter **at this link**.



## MOAA's 2021 Legislative Priorities

By: MOAA Government Relations Staff

Here are MOAA's priorities for advocacy as the 117th Congress begins its work. Our focus remains on all eight of the uniformed services and their service-earned entitlements.

As protecting health care and service-earned benefits continues to be a challenge, MOAA will press forward in engaging Congress to shape outcomes in these vital areas.

There are steep hills before us. Our nation has a rising debt of more than \$27 trillion, and a deficit of more than \$3 trillion. In view of this, MOAA anticipates robust attempts to control federal budgets, reduce or eliminate unprogrammed expenditures, and reduce entitlements.

Please follow the link below to get a more in-depth explanation.

<https://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2020-news-articles/advocacy/moaas-2021-legislative-priorities/?ite=2154&ito=2538&itq=93f61d7e-61bc-4791-8583-1f51084ffd91&itx%5Bidio%5D=17976>

US Family Health Plan, discussed with chapter members via Zoom some of the recent changes to Tricare and Tricare For Life, as well as how to ensure optimal health care for military retirees and their spouses using Tricare for Life and Medicare.

On Saturday, February 27th, the chapter will meet in person for lunch at Kelly's Country Cookin' in Meadows Place (SW Houston). We are honored to have for our guest speaker Brigadier General Joe Ramirez, USA (Ret.), a native Houstonian who is the current Commandant of Cadets at Texas A&M University.

In closing, this is my last message to you as the MOAA HA President. As many of you know, COL Rob Ritchie and I switched places as MOAA HA Chapter officers. Rob will now serve as Chapter President, and I will dutifully serve as the Chapter Vice President. Although we face challenges during the upcoming year, we are excited about resuming in-person chapter activities and look forward to seeing each one of you at an upcoming chapter event.

Respectfully,

Joseph C. Willoughby, Lt Col, USAF (Ret.)  
MOAA HA Vice President



**MOAA HA Chapter Financial Statement  
January 1 – 31, 2021**

<b>Starting Balance (as of Jan 1 2021)</b>		<b>\$ 4,040.13</b>
<b>Revenue</b>		<b>\$ 320.00</b>
Memberships* (6 each)	\$ 320.00	
<b>Gross Operating Income</b>		<b>\$ 4,360.13</b>
<b>Expenses (Jan 1-26, 2021)</b>		<b>(\$ 0.00)</b>
<b>Operating Income</b>		<b>\$ 4,360.13</b>
<b>Total Withhold</b>		<b>(\$ 2,161.71)</b>
ROTC Withhold	(\$ 1,961.71)	
"Impact A Hero" Foundation Withhold	(\$ 200.00)	
<b>Available Operating Income**</b>		<b>\$ 2,198.42</b>

# February Luncheon Guest Speaker...

**Saturday, February 27th, 2021 @ noon**

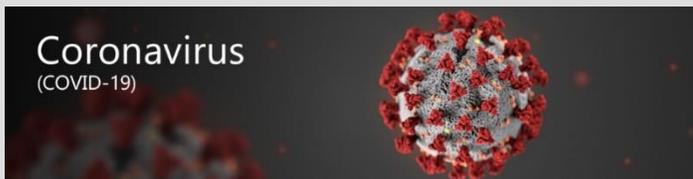
MOAA HA Chapter Luncheon  
Kelley's Country Cookin'  
11555 W Airport Blvd  
Meadow Place, TX 77477

Brigadier General Joe Ramirez is a native of Houston, Texas and is a graduate of Texas A&M University, where he was a member of the Texas Aggie Band in the Corps of Cadets. He received his commission in the United States Army Field Artillery from Texas A&M in 1979 as a Distinguished Military Graduate.



**Joe E. Ramirez, Brigadier General USA (Ret.)  
Commandant, Texas A&M Corps of Cadets**

During his 31 years of military service, General Ramirez commanded soldiers around the world and served in leadership positions in various joint and operational commands. He was the Deputy Chief of Staff for United States Central Command during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, and was the Deputy Division Commander for the 2nd Infantry Division in the Republic of Korea. His most recent assignment was Deputy Director for Strategy, Plans, and Policy for US European Command in Stuttgart, Germany.



## **Here's How to Avoid COVID-19 Vaccine Scams**

By: Shane Ostrom

Now that the coronavirus vaccine is being deployed to the public, you will need reliable sources of information to stay up to speed on the relevant issues. It's too much to cover in one article, so this article includes links to the most comprehensive information regarding insurance coverage as well as vaccine procedures and timelines. And remember, scams are rampant — beware of criminals. Medicare and TRICARE cover the vaccine at no cost to you, so if anyone asks you to share your private health care information or pay for access to the vaccine, it's a scam.

### **Things to know about scams:**

- You can't pay to put your name on a list to get the vaccine.
- You can't pay to get early access to a vaccine.
- Don't share your personal or financial information with anyone who calls, texts, or emails you promising anything related to the vaccine or health care.
- Hang up the phone or delete any emails or texts that ask you to do anything. Do not click on any attachments or links in emails or texts. Nothing is as it seems. Scam attempts look very real.

### **Use only reliable sources to get information about the vaccine, like:**

- [Medicare](http://www.medicare.gov/medicare-coronavirus) (www.medicare.gov/medicare-coronavirus)
- [TRICARE](http://tricare.mil/HealthWellness/HealthyLiving/Coronavirus/COVID-Vaccine) (For TRICARE information specifically regarding vaccines, go [here](http://tricare.mil/HealthWellness/HealthyLiving/Coronavirus/COVID-Vaccine), [tricare.mil/HealthWellness/HealthyLiving/Coronavirus/COVID-Vaccine](http://tricare.mil/HealthWellness/HealthyLiving/Coronavirus/COVID-Vaccine). For one-stop-shop TRICARE information regarding coronavirus, go [here](http://tricare.mil/HealthWellness/HealthyLiving/Coronavirus/Coronavirus-Articles), [tricare.mil/HealthWellness/HealthyLiving/Coronavirus/Coronavirus-Articles](http://tricare.mil/HealthWellness/HealthyLiving/Coronavirus/Coronavirus-Articles).)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov/library/researchguides/2019novelcoronavirus/websites.html) (www.cdc.gov/library/researchguides/2019novelcoronavirus/websites.html)
- [National Institutes of Health](http://covid19.nih.gov) (covid19.nih.gov)
- [MOAA](http://www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2020-news-articles/rollout-report-the-covid-19-vaccine-and-dod,-va,-medicare,-and-more/) (www.moaa.org/content/publications-and-media/news-articles/2020-news-articles/rollout-report-the-covid-19-vaccine-and-dod,-va,-medicare,-and-more/)

## 2021 Officers

### President

Robin P. Ritchie, COL, USA (Ret.)  
713.818.0408  
[rpritchie@earthlink.net](mailto:rpritchie@earthlink.net)

### Vice President

#### (and Immediate Past President)

Joseph C. Willoughby, Lt Col USAF (Ret.)  
713.569.6700  
[joe.willoughby@gmail.com](mailto:joe.willoughby@gmail.com)

### Treasurer/Secretary

Frank A. Tricomi, COL, USA (Ret.)  
314.330.6936  
[ftricomi@earthlink.net](mailto:ftricomi@earthlink.net)

### Military Organizations Liaison

Eugene Tulich, Captain USCG (Ret.)  
281.376.0061  
[gene42@flash.net](mailto:gene42@flash.net)

### Chaplain

Kerry Magee, Captain USN (Ret.)  
H 979.964.3236  
C 979.236.2415  
[Kerry.ann828@brazoriainet.com](mailto:Kerry.ann828@brazoriainet.com)

### ROTC/ROTC Affairs Liaison

Rollins J. Collins, LTC USA (Ret.)  
704.213.2334  
[rollins.collins93@gmail.com](mailto:rollins.collins93@gmail.com)

### Surviving Spouse MOAA Liason

Judith Thomas  
(formerly Mrs. Billy Thomas, LTG USA (Ret))  
719.331.8485  
[jthomas482@aol.com](mailto:jthomas482@aol.com)

### Chapter Representative to TCC

Daniel M. Gutierrez, MAJ USA (Ret.)  
281.543.1527  
[danielgutierrez1751@gmail.com](mailto:danielgutierrez1751@gmail.com)

### Editor

Kathy Frank  
713.203.5058  
[kathyfrank23@gmail.com](mailto:kathyfrank23@gmail.com)



## Surviving Spouse Corner

Judith Thomas  
Surviving Spouse MOAA Liaison  
[jthomas482@aol.com](mailto:jthomas482@aol.com)

### MOAA Surviving Spouses and Friends Facebook Page

Are you wondering where to go to get information about issues affecting surviving spouses and families? Are you looking for a supportive, nonjudgmental group to assist you in learning and keeping up to date on benefits and legislation impacting our surviving families? Need a pick-me-up or to connect with others who share similar interests as you? Join the [MOAA Surviving Spouses and Friends Facebook page!](#)

### Who can join?

We have recently expanded our membership to include not only surviving spouses but also our families, military spouses, council and chapter surviving spouse liaisons, advocates, and others with an interest in issues that impact the survivor community, regardless of MOAA membership. Particularly in these times of COVID-19 restrictions, we all need a way to connect with others whom which we have common interests.

### Is this a public or private group?

This is a private group, and there are no fees or dues. You are required to answer a couple of brief questions and be approved by the administrators of the group to join. These questions are designed to ensure we provide a safe place to share information and connect with other like-minded people as well as protect the group from those who do not have a legitimate interest in our issues.

### Surviving Spouse Virtual Chapter

Membership continues to grow, with 134 members from 30 states. It is open to any surviving spouse of an officer of any U.S. uniformed service across the country. The chapter meets quarterly on the third Tuesday of January, April, July, and October at 1 p.m., Eastern Time. The 2020 July and October meetings took place via Zoom. If you are interested in joining, please send an email to [mssvco2@gmail.com](mailto:mssvco2@gmail.com) or go to the [surviving spouse section of MOAA.org.](#)

# Two University of Houston Students Enter Directly into the US Space Force

HOUSTON – Two University of Houston students are making history as they enter directly into the United States Space Force (USSF).

According to an announcement made by UH, the university Air Force ROTC cadets are the first members of Detachment 003 to directly enter into USSF. Lieutenants Christopher Williams and Mitchell Montalvo will serve in the newest branch of the U.S. Armed Forces.

According to UH, Williams, who graduated in December with a Bachelor of Science in chemistry, originally wanted to be a chemist in the Air Force. “During my time in the Air Force ROTC program, I did an internship at NASA and that’s when I shifted by focus to space operations,” Williams said. “I definitely think this is the right fit for me.”



**Lt. Christopher Williams**

As a part of the Space Force, Williams will be responsible for directing space surveillance, assisting third-party companies with launches, monitoring space warnings and satellite command and control.



**Lt. Mitchell Montalvo**

Like Williams, Montalvo also had plans to join the Air Force, but redirected his sights on the USSF after realizing opportunities to make an impact in the new military organization.

According to UH, Montalvo will be assigned to various jobs such as missile detection, satellite command and control or examining orbital debris.

Both UH graduates will begin basic training as space operations officers at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California; however, their entrance is delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

## Chaplain's Corner

Kerry Magee, CAPT USN (Ret.)  
MOAA HA Chaplain

# Who Packs Your Parachute?



Charlie Plumb graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1964. He earned his Navy Wings of Gold in 1966 and went on to fly the F-4 Phantom jet with fighter squadron VF-114. He was assigned to the aircraft carrier USS Kitty Hawk and flew 74 successful combat missions over Vietnam. On his 75th mission, with five days before he was to return home, his plane was shot down by a surface-to-air missile. Plum ejected and parachuted down and into enemy hands, resulting in his capture and torture. He spent six years as a POW in North Vietnamese prison camps. He survived the ordeal and now lectures on lessons learned from that experience.

One day, when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant, a man at another table came up and said, "You're Plumb! You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down." "How in the world do you know that?" asked Plumb. "I packed your parachute," the man replied. Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said, "I guess it worked!" Plum assured him, "It sure did. If your chute hadn't worked, I wouldn't be here today."

Plumb couldn't sleep that night, thinking about that man. Plumb says, "I kept wondering what he had looked like in a Navy uniform; a white hat; a bib in the back; and bell-bottom trousers. I wonder how many times I might have seen him and not even said "Good morning, how are you?" or anything because you see, I was a fighter pilot and he was just a sailor. Plumb thought of the many hours the sailor had spent at a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship, carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time the fate of someone he didn't know. Now, Plumb asks his audience, "Who's packing your parachute?" Everyone has someone who provides what they need to make it through the day. He also points out that he needed many kinds of parachutes when his plane was shot down over enemy territory – he needed his physical parachute, his mental parachute, his emotional parachute, and his spiritual parachute.

He called on all these supports before reaching safety. Sometimes in the daily challenges that life gives us, we miss what is really important. We may fail to say hello, please or thank you, congratulate someone on something wonderful that has happened to them, give a compliment, or just say something nice for no reason. As you go through this week, this month, this year, recognize people who pack your parachute.

– Author Unknown –

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION / RENEWAL FORM

### Military Officers Association of America – Houston Area

Membership is available to Officers who have held a Federal Warrant or Commission in any of the seven uniformed services of the United States or to the surviving spouse of such a person. Please use this form for application for membership, renewal or changes to the current directory of members.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please print)                      Last                                      First                                      Initial                                      Rank

Branch \_\_\_\_\_ Status \_\_\_\_\_ MOAA Nat'l ID \_\_\_\_\_ \*

Spouse's First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. for Directory \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Dues:** Regular Membership – \$30 first year; annual renewal \$30 (Discount for multiple years if paid with renewal: \$20 for each addt'l. year **paid with renewal**)  
Surviving Spouse – \$15 first year; annual renewal \$10 (same discount for multiple years)

Make check payable to MOAA-HA and mail to:

MOAA-HA  
PO Box 1082  
Houston, TX 77251-1082



For more information, call COL Joe Willoughby, 713.569.6700

*\*If not a MOAA national member, another benefit of chapter membership is the opportunity to become a national MOAA member at the BASIC LEVEL for free! If you would like to do so, please indicate here:*

YES       NO

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_