



HOUSTON AREA
 PO BOX 1082
 HOUSTON TX 77251-1082
 www.moaahoustonarea.com



Newsletter to Members

Vol. LVII No. 3

March 2020

NEXT MEETING SATURDAY, March 28, 2020 BRAEBURN COUNTRY CLUB

President's Message

Dear HOAA-HA Members:

“MOAA’s greatest mission is to improve the lives of those who serve and their families, which is achieved largely through the tireless advocacy efforts taking place in our nation’s capital. MOAA’s experts in Washington are there to support legislation that benefits the military community and are equally vigilant when fighting to stop legislation that threatens our livelihood. The larger our numbers, the greater our voice.” I borrowed this quote from the MOAA website “Why Join MOAA” tab. As MOAA members, I believe this statement gives us two challenges. First, stay active in supporting legislation that affects our servicemembers and veterans, and secondly, ask that you remain active with our local Houston Area Chapter. Regarding the first challenge, when you have the opportunity, please go to the **Act Now** tab on the MOAA website or magazine and let our Texas congressional representatives know what you support. Attend events or meetings with our congressional members and let them know you are an active MOAA member. See the Legislative update for the latest MOAA legislative victory.



Joe Willoughby

As far as the local chapter events, in February we had another excellent meeting! Our guest speaker was **LTC Travis Sept** from the 48th Transportation Battalion out of Fort Hood, Texas. For the month of March, our speaker will be a USAF officer recruiter from the 341st Recruiting Squadron out of San Antonio, Texas. As soon as I receive the officer’s name and biography, I will disseminate it to chapter members via email. For the month of April we are looking forward to hosting **Colonel Buddy Grantham**, Chief of Staff of the Texas State Guard Army Component Command and retired U.S Army. We continue to work on filling the 2020 speaker schedule.

(Continued on p. 3)

2020 Officers

President

Joseph C. Willoughby, LtCol USAF (Ret.) 713.569.6700
 joe.willoughby@gmail.com

Vice President

Robin P. Ritchie, COL, USA (Ret.) 713.818.0408
 RPRitchie@earthlink.net

Secretary (VACANT)

Treasurer

Frank A. Tricomi, COL, USA (Ret.) 314.330.6936
 ftricoli@earthlink.net

Organizations Liaison Eugene Tulich
 CDR USCG (Ret.) 281.376.0061
 gene42@flash.net

Chaplain Kerry Magee CAPT USN (Ret.) 979.964.3236h 979.236.2415c
 usnr06ret@brazoria.net

JROTC

Rollins J. Collins LTC USA (Ret) 704. 213.2334
 rollins.collins93@gmail.com

Surviving Spouse MOAA Liaison

Judith Thomas 719.331.8485
 jthomas482@aol.com

Immediate Past President

Daniel M. Gutierrez, MAJ USA (Ret.) 281.543.1257
 danielgutierrez1751@gmail.com

Editor Carol Ann Wilson

Reservations

281..642.4050 cell
 carolwilson@earthlink.net



MOAA Houston Area Board Meetings

March 24, Lunch at Noon
Meeting at Rudi Lechner's
2503 S. Gessner Rd
Houston, TX 77063
(713) 782-1180

Future Board Meetings

4/21 5/19 6/23 7/21 8/25
9/22 10/27 11/24

All members are welcome.

MOAA Houston Area MEETING

**Saturday
March 28, 2020**

**11:30 Fellowship
12 Noon Luncheon**

BraeBurn Country Club
8101 Bissonnet
713.774.2586

MENU

Spinach Salad

Trout Almandine
OR
Chicken w/Artichoke Hrts

Seasonal Vegetables
Mashes Potatoes

Warmed Rolls, Butter
Coffee or Tea

Carrot Cake

\$30

Complimentary Valet Parking

Reservations by Wed.
Feb. 26 to Carol Wilson,
281.642.4050

(Note: We need 18 attendees to break even)

Future 2020 Monthly Meetings

4/25 May 18 is Military Ball
6/27 7/25 8/29 9/26 10/31
11/19 (w/MOWA)

Military Officers Wives Association

MOWA

**Thursday, March 19
11:30 Fellowship
Luncheon at Noon**

**Rudi Lechner's
2503 S. Gessner**

**Order off the Menu
and Pay Individually**

**RSVP to Phyllis Ottis,
713.774.2282,
by Mon. 3/16, 10 a.m.**

**See you there for the
First Day of Spring!**

MOAA-HA

\$ Treasurer's Report, February 29, 2020

Receipts \$510.00
Expenses \$ 0
Balance \$ 3,587.11
*Award Fund Reserve \$2,232.78
Operational Balance \$1,354.33

NOTE: Braeburn receipts and expenses from 2/29 meeting to be included next month.

*Frank Tricomi, 2020 Treasurer
COL USA Ret.*

**LAST CALL FOR DUES
SO YOU WILL BE
INCLUDED IN ANNUAL**

**DIRECTORY TO BE
PUBLISHED IN
APRIL. MAKE
SURE YOU ARE IN
GOOD STANDING.**

Chaplain's Message

**SHALOM!
PEACE BE
WITH YOU!**



Shalom!
Peace be with
you!

Kerry Magee
CAPT USN (Ret.)

Dear Friends,

Lately I have been reading about MIRACLES because I need one so badly in my life.

The following is from the *Reader's Digest* October 2019 issue entitled, "The bus crash angel" in the section, "Everyday Miracles."

"The phone rings. I wait for the answering machine to get it but, for some reason, it" not picking up.

"I exhaled, annoyed, because I know the call is either going to be for my wife, Susan (she's the only one who receives calls on the home line, and she left to take Alyce to school ten minutes ago), or it's the latest of 300 attempts to sell me something I have absolutely no interest in.

"Hello," I say, an edge in my voice. 'Daddy, it's me.' It's Alyce. my 12-year old daughter. 'Mommy was just in a car accident.'"

"My heart stops and then begins pounding. 'Are you all right?' 'Yes.' 'Is Mommy?'"

– ‘I don’t know. I don’t think so. Come quick.’

“I sprint a few blocks to what looks like a shoot for a disaster movie. Fire engines, police cars, and ambulances are randomly parked in the street; helicopters circle. A city bus is on the wrong side of the road. In front of it are the smashed remains of Susan’s car.

“Susan is pinned under the dashboard. There is no front windshield—no front end, for that matter. Alyce is standing on the corner crying, covered in tiny shards of glass but uninjured. Inconceivable.

“Susan is not so lucky, but she is alive. It turns out she has broken nearly every bone in her body, and she will spend almost three months in the hospital.

“More than two years later, Susan and I were at an event at our synagogue celebrating Martin Luther King Jr. Our Temple’s Cantor and Musical Director, Danny, rushed up to us. He said excitedly, ‘There is a woman here tonight from one of the church choirs whom you have to meet!’ He returned with an African-American woman with a bright, glowing smile.

“She told us she lived in the apartment building by where the wreck had happened. That morning, she had rushed to the street, still in her bathrobe, and seen Alyce standing by the side of the wrecked car, crying. She approached her, asking, ‘Is that your mom in there?’ Alyce nodded, and the woman said, ‘Let’s pray together.’ Sweet, innocent Alyce looked at this woman

wearing a cross around her neck and said. ‘Okay, but you should know I’m Jewish.’ The woman smiled. She took Alyce’s hand, held it to her chest, and said, ‘That’s okay; in here we’re all the same.’

“Alyce told her that she needed to call me, but her backpack with her phone was trapped inside the crushed vehicle. So the woman lent Alyce her phone.

“After the accident, she said she had continued to pray for our family. We had our picture taken together and, as we were saying goodbye, she hugged us all warmly. We realized we had never been formally introduced, so she said to me, ‘I’m sorry, I never got your name.’ I told her it was Doug, and she paused as if maybe she hadn’t heard me. I repeated, ‘Doug, like Douglas.’ The woman put her hand over her heart. ‘Oh my goodness,’ she said. ‘My name is Susan Douglas.’”

Lately, have you had any miracles in your life? Maybe we have had one or more and just didn’t recognize them.. We’ll talk about that subject at a later time.

Let me close by sharing a couple of quotations with you:

“Leadership is not a position nor a title. Leadership is action followed by example.” (Great proofs in the military!)

“Time is a scarce and most precious commodity of all. Spend it wisely.” (After all, each of us gets the same 24 hours!)

Humbly submitted,

God bless you all!

Humbly submitted by

***CAPT Kerry B. Magee USNR-RET
Chaplain/Past President***

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

(Cont’d from p. 1)

If you have a speaker or a topic that you would like to see included, please let me know. Also, if you have any suggestions regarding the conduct of the meetings or the luncheon menu (we are very limited in that area), please contact us! As I mentioned during the February luncheon, we are hoping to have a summer meeting in the Pearland or Clear Lake area. Have a great March and I hope to talk to many of you at the chapter meeting. Thank you for your continued participation and support.

Sincerely,

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

It’s not what we don’t know that harms us; it’s what we do know that ain’t so.

--Mark Twain

Endowment Fund & Houston Corps of Cadets

Well, here it is already almost the spring of 2020. If you can make it for your charitable giving this year, we hope you will donate a gift of any size to The Houston Corps of Cadets at The University of Houston. This is one way we can help a worthy Cadet at the U of H. Any amount is helpful plus it is tax deductible. Form is at end of this newsletter.

Bill
William Taylor
Cpt. USA Ret

**REPORT:
FEBRUARY 29
MEETING AND
SPEAKER**

We were glad to have some special guests at our February 29 meeting. **COL Jimmy Mitchell, USMCR** (Ret.) joined us as representative of **LCDR Eugene Tulich, USCG (Ret.)** and the Houston Military Affairs Committee. He reminded us that the Military Ball will be held Saturday May 16 at the Marriott Westchase, honoring ALL branches of service. We have taken an ad in the program on behalf of the chapter and hope to have a full table of 10 at the Ball! Please let President Joe know if you can attend (713.569.6700). COL Mitchell also asked that we let our members know of plans for a **Texas Veterans Museum**, –which is planned to be a 24-hour museum!. Please visit their Website, www.texasveteransmuseum.org, for more information. You may also contact COL Mitchell by email to Jmitchell@texasveteransmuseum.org. We also got to meet **Kirk Lane**, who is a partner with COL Buddy Grantham in several ventures of interest to the military. He had been with a group of veterans earlier that day for the Houston Rodeo parade.

VP **COL Rob Ritchie, USA** (Ret.) Spoke to us about **Impact a Hero**, after President Joe read his thank-you note for the chapter's \$500 donation. They have

several events coming up, including a 5K run that begins at Skeeter Stadium, and a Crawfish Boil. He announced that **CAPT Rick Miller, USN** (Ret.) will be joining the Impact a Hero board next month. CAPT Miller renewed his chapter membership at the meeting, after an absence of several years while he has been serving in the Texas legislature.

MAJ Frank Urbanic, USAF (Ret.) spoke to the members with a few suggestions, the first being a request that if we have any members who are attorneys, will they offer their services to MOAA members at a discount? The MOAA national Website has such a category, and under Texas, it says “none available.”

Our speaker was **LTC Travis Sept**, Commander of the 49th Transportation Battalion of Fort Hood, who came down from Fort Hood to step in for Brigadier General **Darren L. Werner**, who was called to Europe for the special exercises going on there. He gave a very informative and interesting talk, and there was a good bit of audience participation with questions.

COL Sept has about 400 in his Movement Control Battalion, “America’s Armored Corps.” They move equipment from Fort Hood to Europe by air, land, and sea and provides in-transit visibility. “We have pre-position ships all over the U.S.,” he said. “We never know where the next war will break out.” His command sends equipment for deployed units, and they have people in Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Romania, etc., all ready for service. They track their equipment all the way with RFID tags, and they manage host nation assets. He gave an example of how in Afghanistan, for example, we contract with Afghans to move our equipment into place once it’s delivered, and we pay them. This ensures that they won’t have any EIDs planted along the way, as they have done when we did it ourselves. (But we don’t allow them to transport our weapons.)

U. S. Transcom governs the choice and use of ports. When the U. S. military is present, “we take over a port, so we try not to tie up every port,” COL Sept told us. Concluding his remarks, COL Sept said, “Our motto is ‘We Never Sleep.’” And “nothing happens till something moves.

A very interesting Q&A with our members followed, and he was very impressive, indeed. We are sorry for those who missed this fine speaker.

**PHOTOS FROM
FEBRUARY 29**

Many thanks again to COL **Andy Parsons**, Past-President of MOAA-HA, our ace photographer! (*Also see p. 7.*)



President Joe presents certificate to Speaker LTC Travis Sept



LTC Eugene Vecera, USA (Ret.) Receives winnings from President Joe. And he donated it back to the scholarship fund!

“Learn and live. If you don't, you won't.”

--Army training film, WW II



Stancie Chamberlain and Immediate Past-President MAJ Daniel Gutierrez, USA (Ret.)



VP COL Robin Ritchie, USA (Ret.), and CAPT Rick Miller, USN (Ret.)

Summary of Benefits Forecast for 2020

MOAA's excellent Website (www.moaa.org) currently has a news article about expected changes in benefits for 2020, and we would like to summarize a few here. (First remember that elections could shake up congressional committees.)

Increase in premiums for TRICARE beneficiaries enrolled in FEDVIP (Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Benefits program). Average dental plan premium would jump 5.6%; average vision plan premium to see a 1.5% bump. TRICARE pharmacy rates could increase for prescriptions from non-DoD treatment facilities; retail and mail-in prescription drug costs will continue to increase for 7 years, with biggest increases in generic drugs.

Agent Orange Disability Claims: veterans who served near Vietnam and have serious illnesses believed to be caused by Agent Orange can now file disability claims with the VA under the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019, which went into effect Jan. 1. Veterans who served on vessels operating within 12 nautical miles of Vietnam and Cambodia who are now suffering from one of 14 illnesses believed to be tied to a dangerous herbicide used between Jan. 9, 1962, and May 7, 1975, could qualify for benefits.

Commissary benefits expand. Your local commissary could get a bit more crowded in 2020 as about 3 million more people get access to the stores starting Jan. 1. All service--connected disabled veterans, Purple Heart recipients, caregivers, and former POWs are now allowed to shop at military exchanges and commissaries. The change was included in the 2019 Defense Authorization Act. The Coast Guard Exchange System also recently opened to all civil-service employees with any Department of Homeland Security agency.

Summary of Military Forecast for 2020

New promotion rules for Air Force officers. The May Air Force lieutenant colonel promotion board will be the first to use six new officer-development groupings. Based on feedback from thousands of airmen, the Air Force established six new promotion categories, replacing the longstanding single Line of the Air Force category. The new categories include air operations and special warfare, nuclear and missile operations, space operations, information warfare, combat support, and force modernization. The move will allow officers to compete for promotion against others in similar career fields. It's meant to "allow each career field the freedom and agility to better tailor officer development to meet job demands

without compromising competitive position at a promotion board," a release announcing the change states. The new categories mark the biggest-ever change to the officer promotion system.

Stronger Pacific presence. As tensions with China heat up, more troops will spend time in the Asia-Pacific region. The Marine Corps is preparing for more naval operations in the Pacific. The Army will test its ability to rapidly deploy up to 10,000 soldiers from the U.S. to locations throughout Asia-Pacific region, including areas near the South China Sea, where it's likely to send a big signal to China. Both the Army and Marine Corps are investing in improved long-range precision fire capabilities in case they're called on to defend ships or attack enemy vessels from ashore.

Defender Europe. Massive spring exercise that will take place across 10 European countries and involve 37,000 U.S., allied, and partner nations' militaries. Exercise Defender Europe will mark the largest deployment of U.S.-based land forces to Europe for a training event in 25 years. More than half of NATO's member states are scheduled to participate, which is likely to catch Russia's attention. *[We learned about this at our February 29 meeting. -Ed.]*

Going unmanned. All the services have invested in unmanned technology over the years, but the Navy and Marine Corps have big plans to leverage medium and large unmanned surface vessels. The Navy last year sent a 132-foot unmanned ship from

California to Hawaii and back again with hardly anyone spending time aboard the vessel. The Marine Corps also recently tested a 40-foot self-driving boat that's equipped with a Longbow Hellfire Missile Launcher and .50-caliber machine gun

on a remote weapon station. Naval leaders, who want \$2.7 billion to build 10 large unmanned surface vessels in coming years, have kept plans for the new ghost fleet under wraps. But they say the ships could be used to move gear and respond to threats in contested environments without putting Marines and sailors at risk.

“The person who says it cannot be done should not interfere with the person who is doing it.”

—Chinese Proverb

More Photos From February 29 Meeting



Capt Kevin Abreu, USAF (Ret.)



Judith Thomas, SS Liaison with MOAA, SS Member



Capt Bill Humphries, USAF (Ret.)



Glora DeValcourt, SS Member, with cousin LCDR Vern Gillette, USN (Ret.)



Past-President LTC Eugene Vecera, USA (Ret.), and Phyllis Ottis, SS Member



Maj Frank A. Urbanic Jr., USAF (Ret.)



Col Jimmy Mitchell, USMC (Ret.), on behalf of LCDR Eugene Tulich of Houston Military Affairs Committee



COL Robin P. Ritchie, USA (Ret.), current VP, MOAA-HA



Hon. Member Carol Ann Wilson, Editor, Reservations, Membership Database

There is enough in the world for everyone's need, but not enough for everyone's greed.

--Mahatma Gandhi

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: _____

E-mail: _____

Dues: Regular Membership \$30 first year; annual renewal \$30

(Discount for multiple years if paid with renewal: \$20 for each addn'l year *pd w/renewal*)

Surviving Spouse \$15 first year; annual renewal \$10 (same discount for multiple years)

Make check payable to MOAA,HA and send 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: _____



Now and Always We'll be There.



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MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Houston Military Affairs Committee
presents the
2020 Armed Forces Military Ball

Saturday, May 16
Houston Marriott Westchase Hotel (2900 Briar Park, 77042)

Contact President Joe Willoughby if you can attend and reserve your space at our table(s)
(details at www.houstonmilitaryaffairscommittee.com)

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, HOUSTON AREA
Houston Corps of Cadets ROTC Endowment Fund–The University of Houston
(Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force)

Please Print Donor name: _____
Mailing Address _____

Phone: Day _____ Evening _____ e-mail _____

My pledge of \$ _____ should be designed to support MOAA,HA Houston Corps of Cadets
My gift will be made with installments of \$ _____ to be paid _____ monthly _____ quarterly _____ annually _____.
Beginning date: _____ The Office of Stewardship will send reminders.)
____ Enclosed is a check (made payable to University of Houston) for the first pledge payable.

Please charge my credit card for the amount of my gift, as scheduled above:
____ Visa ____ Mastercard ____ American Express ____ Discover
Account Number _____ Expiration date: _____
Name as it appears on card: _____

Signature: _____
____ I would like to be contacted about fulfilling my pledge with a gift of appreciated securities.
My pledge payment will be matched by: _____
(Please specify company for our records)

Donor signature: _____ date _____
Donor Signature: _____ date _____

Thank you for your support of the MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, HOUSTON AREA, HOUSTON CORPS OF CADETS ROTC ENDOWMENT FUND, THE UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON

Send completed form : Univ. of Houston; Advancement Svcs; P.O. Box 867; Houston TX 77001-0867

**We will see you at our next monthly membership meeting,
Saturday, March 28, 2020, at BraeBurn Country Club
Fellowship at 11:30; Luncheon at 12 noon**