



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

Newsletter to Members

Vol. LIII No. 5

May 2016

MILITARY BALL MAY 21

NEXT MONTHLY MEETING JUNE 24

President's Message

"Earn It!"

That iconic and closing line from the movie, *Saving Private Ryan* truly sets the theme for Memorial Day. In this month of May we reflect on how our actions still count in helping to shake up a slumbering America. An America that is spending beyond its means, but cutting its military budgets. An America that is awash in the pursuit of pleasure, but rarely takes the time to attend a Memorial Day service. An America in search of leadership at the national level, but barely recognizes the talents of its military Veterans.

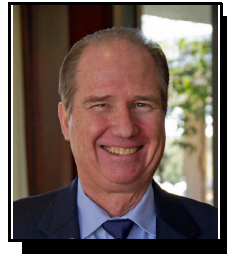
We members of MOAA, who are born of battle, have the challenge before us to wake up Americans to their responsibility to "Earn" Freedom by investing in their Nation in unselfish service. To accomplish this end, however, requires that we Lead from the front.

Therefore, I invite you to join with your fellow members of the Houston Chapter by participating in the **Houston Military Ball** (May 21—Armed Forces Day); and again on Memorial Day (May 30) by participating in the ceremony at the National Cemetery here in Houston.

We must never forget the unbelievable sacrifices of those who have given all for Freedom, both from our generations, and from that most recent great generation of OEF/OIF Vets. Lastly, let us also extol the most current generation of warfighters who stand "on-point" for us all. To this roster, I offer the example of my own Son—a USAF Fighter Pilot—who will be deploying to Afghanistan this year on the day after July 4th.

So for Americans, for all those eras of Servicemembers, past and present, deceased and living; and for our Houston MOAA Chapter, let's achieve a world record in doing what we can to help them all "**Earn It!**"

Respectfully,
LTC Eugene Vecera, USA, President



Eugene A. Vecera,
LTC USA

Officers

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MOAA Houston Area Board Meeting

Tuesday before Monthly Luncheon Meeting

**Tues., May 24
11:30**

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

2016 Meetings Left

6/21 7/26 8/22
9/20 10/24 11/15

No mtg in Dec unless called
All members are welcome.

MOAA Houston Area Monthly Meeting and Luncheon

NO
MONTHLY
MEETING
IN
MAY

MILITARY BALL
MAY 21

***NEXT MEETING
JUNE 24
BRAEBURN CC***

2016 MOAA-HA Meetings Left

6/25 7/30 8/27 9/24
10/29 11/17 (with MOWA)
12/3 Christmas Party

**May 21
Military Ball**

**May 30
Memorial Day**

Military Officers Wives Association

MOWA

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

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

**Order off the Menu
and Pay Individually**

**RSVP to Bobbye Parsons,
713.541.3143,
by Mon. 5/16, 10 a.m.**

See you there!

MOAA-HA

\$ Treasurer's Report May 1, 2016

Receipts	\$1,265.00
Expenses	\$1,801.56
Balance	\$6 288.17

Significant disbursements, in addition to the April meeting, include \$305 directory printing costs, \$224 for reimbursement to LTC McConico for mailing costs for ROTC awards, and \$500 to USAF ROTC UH Endowment Fund.

*Don L. Couch, Treasurer
LTC USA Ret.*

WELCOME NEW MEMBER!

L.S. Jeb Strickland
Maj. USMCR (ret)
Spouse: Judy
12226 Burgoyne Dr.
Houston TX 77077-5926
713-300-0200
jeb-1@earthlink.net

Chaplain's Message



Kerry B. Magee,
CAPT USNR-
Ret.

**SHALOM!
PEACE BE
WITH YOU!**

About 18 million American Veterans are living today. Many of these courageous men and women, like those who went before them, have faced death and suffered unimaginable hardships while fighting to protect our freedoms and safeguard our inalienable rights of "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

From the shores of Omaha Beach and the jungles of Vietnam, to the sands of the Persian Gulf, the mountains of Afghanistan and Iraq, and many other harsh battlefields around the world, these American heroes have protected our homeland and liberated millions in foreign lands. America's greatness is endowed by our Creator and preserved because of the heroes who serve every day, whether in the Military or in Public Service. They all answer the highest call by regularly placing their lives at risk for others. We, the American people, owe a deep debt of gratitude to all those who've accepted the highest call.

To those of you who bear scars, seen and unseen, to your families who equally sacrificed, and to the fallen who gave the "greatest love," we salute you! (From the booklet, *The Highest Call: Resolve in the Midst of Sacrifice*, Elm Hill Books.)

“Duty is the sublimest word in our language. Do your duty in all things. You cannot do more, you should never do less.” GEN Robert E. Lee, CSA.

Only two defining forces have ever offered to die for you: Jesus Christ and the American Military man/-woman. One died for your Soul, the other died for your Freedom. LEST WE FORGET! *LEST WE EVER FORGET!*

TAPS: *Day is done, gone the Sun, from the hills, from the lake, from the sky. All is well, safely rest, God in nigh.*

May God bless you and keep you and yours!

God bless you all!

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

Endowment Fund and Houston Corps of Cadets

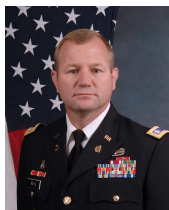
Can you believe we are almost halfway through the year of 2016? I am sure you are busy planning a lot of summer activities. I also know with no COLAs for the last year make things are a little tighter financially.

However, please do what you can to support the Houston Corps of Cadets at the University of Houston. If you noticed in my last report, the funds actually shrank a little due to market conditions. So far this year the market is up, and things are looking up. Please continue to contribute

whatever you can—any amount will be greatly appreciated. Our goal is \$200,000, and the form is in this newsletter.

*William Taylor
Cpt. USA Ret.*

REPORT: APRIL 30 SPEAKER



What a fantastic speaker! We are sorry for those who missed our April meeting.

LTC Trever Nehls, Constable, Pct. 4, Fort Bend County, treated us to the most up-to-date information on the “Threats to Our National Interest.” Nehls is ALSO the Commander of the 490th Civilian Affairs Battalion, an active member of the Army National Guard and Army Reserve, and recent graduate of the US Army War College with a Master’s Degree in Strategic Studies. He served in both Iraq and Afghanistan and was awarded three Bronze Stars. So he knows what he is talking about.

LTC Nehls reported to us on a recent meeting of the War College, with our current defense posture as related by **Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter** and the **Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Gen. Joseph F. Dunford, Jr.** Here is a summary.

We noted with interest that the 3-star General told the War College group that “Global Warming Is the #1 Threat to National Security[!].” Really?

After our audience (and our speaker) categorized that remark where it belonged, the speaker continued with his important message, explaining that both Carter and Dunford agreed on the Five Strategic Challenges to the United States of America.

Strategic Challenges Facing America

Russia
China
North Korea
Iran
VEOs*

Both China and Russia are Masters of Cyber. Cyber warfare looms every day. Putin is a master of Nationalism, and many say that he is a “loose cannon.”

Seven of the TEN largest armies in the world are in the Asian Pacific. Freedom of Navigation is affected by China’s building of new “islands” in the Pacific and claiming them as their sovereign territory.

China has become heavily involved in Africa while we have been involved in the Middle East. Russia’s military is the greater threat, and it is improving its sophistication in the military and in doctrine. “Russia is the only actor that can project power in multiple regions simultaneously,” per Gen. Dunford. And China is quickly closing the gap militarily with the U.S.

North Korea has ballistic, nuclear, and cyber capabilities. Iran is the greatest threat to the U.S. in the Mideast and North Africa.

BUT the good news is this: VEOs do NOT pose an immediate and long-term threat to the United States.

Accompanying LTC Nehls was his TWIN brother Troy Nehls, who is Sheriff of Fort Bend County, and his son.

*Violent Extremist
Organizations

**REPORT:
APRIL 30 MEETING
ANNOUNCEMENTS**

President Vecera encouraged all to attend the important May events that will preclude our regular monthly meeting. The Military Ball is May 21 at the Marriott on the Gulf Freeway, and our chapter table is filled! So we will be well represented for the Gala Event. Featured speakers will be Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, Rep. Brian Babin (TX-36), Military Guest of Honor Major General Jimmie Jaye Wells, and Colonel Karel Schuch, Attache, Embassy of Czech Republic. Army is the sponsoring service.

On Memorial Day our chapter will be putting flags on graves at Houston's National Cemetery, working with Wounded Warriors and the Lone Star Veterans organization. Chapel ceremony begins around 10:30, and we will have our chapter flag there.

Houston is one of 3 cities in the nation with a Combined Arms Center being built. The \$2M building is being constructed near Minute Maid Park. This will be a great benefit to our military representatives and veterans.

Houston is also home to the NUMBER ONE of 36 universities with ROTC programs: U of H! Sixteen UH cadets will be participating in MOAA's Gold Bar program for graduating seniors, who receive a one-year MOAA membership.

COL **Andy Parsons** attended the Awards Ceremony at the U of H and presented our scholarship as well as his and Bobby's personal presentation to the Cougar Battalion. Both **LTC Vecera** and **MAJ McConico** have traveled extensively to present awards to high school ROTC recipients. We have been well represented!

And we learned sadly that **Wayne & Dottie Ritter** will soon be moving to Biloxi to be closer to their kids. We will MISS THEM!

The cadet who received our MOAA award is:

Cadet Major Katherine Garcia,
Reagan HS JROTC Battalion
Executive Officer



LTC Vecera presenting award to
Cadet Major Katherine Garcia

CONGRATULATIONS!

**Military Order of
World Wars**

Meets the 4th Thursday
for Luncheons at
Rudi Lechner's Restaurant,
2503 S. Gessner.
Our members are invited to attend.

Did You Know?

Only about one-sixth of all MOAA
national members belong to MOAA
chapters.

OOPS!

For some unexplainable reason, we have an omission of a new member from our 2016 Membership Directory. Please add to your directory as you receive it (they are being mailed to members who were not able to pick them up at our April meeting). His information appeared in our November newsletter:

MAJ Daniel M. Gutierrez
USA (Ret.)
6035 Moss Boulder Dr.
Houston TX 77084-6623
daniel1751@att.net
281.543.1257

**Photos
From Our
Meeting**

Thanks to the ever-faithful **Andy Parsons** for more great photos!



Don Wallin presents
certificate to Trevor Nehls



Sheriff Troy Nehls with
nephew Teagen Nehls



Wayne & Dottie Ritter at
last meeting before
moving to Biloxi



Dan Gutierrez, new member,
with Stancie Chamberlain



Col. McDowell, 101
and going strong!



Sisy & EdFitz



Pat & Secy Rollins Collins,
back from long trip around
South America



Phyllis & Robert Ottis



Bruna Couch,
back from Italy

MEMORABLE QUOTE

“Whoever is careless with the truth in small matters cannot be trusted in large matters.”

–*Albert Einstein*

Pentagon Story

Have you heard this among any of the news and other stories from that horrible day, September 11, 2001? These are the kinds of stories we need to hear over and over again.

A daycare facility inside the Pentagon had many children, including infants who were in heavy cribs. The daycare supervisor, looking at all the children they needed to evacuate, was in a panic over what they could do. There were many children, mostly toddlers, as well as the infants, who would need to be taken out with the cribs. There was no time to try to bundle them into carriers and strollers.

Just then a young Marine came running into the center and asked what they needed. After hearing what the center director was trying to do, he ran back out into the hallway and disappeared. The director thought, "Well, here we are, on our own." About two minutes later, that Marine returned with 40 other Marines in tow. Each of them grabbed a crib with a child, and the rest started gathering up toddlers. The director and her staff then helped them take all the children out of the center and down toward the park near the Potomac.

Once they got almost a mile outside the building, the Marines stopped in the park, and then did a fabulous thing: they formed a circle with the cribs, which were quite sturdy and

heavy, like the covered wagons in the Old West. Inside this circle of cribs, they put the toddlers, to keep them from wandering off. Outside this circle were the 40 Marines, forming a perimeter around the children and waiting for instructions. There they remained until the parents could be notified and come get their children.

The witness who told this story then said, “I don't think any of us saw nor heard of this on any of the news stories of the day. It was an incredible story of our men there.” There wasn't a dry eye in the room.

The thought of those Marines and what they did and how fast they reacted reminds us: could we expect any less from them? Because we are also reminded of this: It's the Military, not the politicians, that ensures our right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. It's the Military who salutes the flag, who serves beneath the flag, and whose coffin is draped by the flag.

BENGHAZI

Air Force expert on Benghazi "Hands" Handley is a well-respected USAF fighter pilot. **Colonel Phil “Hands” Handley** is credited with the highest speed air-to-air gun kill in the history of aerial combat. He flew operationally for all but 11 months of a 26-year career, in aircraft such as the F-86 Sabre, F-15 Eagle, and the C-130A Hercules. He also flew 275 combat missions during two tours in Southeast Asia in the F-4D and F-4E. His awards include 21 Air Medals, 3

Distinguished Flying
Crosses, and the Silver Star.

Here is what Col. Handley
wrote in response to Panetta
and Dempsey's claims that
there was no time to send
help to Benghazi. *[We have
checked this with Snopes.]*

May 30, 2013
Betrayal in Benghazi
Phil "Hands" Handley
Colonel, USAF (Ret.)

The combat code of the US
Military is that we don't
abandon our dead or
wounded on the battlefield.
In U.S. Air Force lingo,
fighter pilots don't run off
and leave their wingmen. If
one of our own is shot down,
still alive and not yet in
enemy captivity, we will
either come to get him or die
trying. Among America's
fighting forces, the calm,
sure knowledge that such an
irrevocable bond exists is
priceless. Along with
individual faith and personal
grit, it is a sacred trust that
has often sustained hope in
the face of terribly long odds.

The disgraceful abandonment
of our Ambassador and those
brave ex-SEALs who fought
to their deaths to save others
in that compound is nothing
short of dereliction of duty.
Additionally, the patently
absurd cover-up scenario that
was fabricated later was an
outright lie in an attempt to
shield the President and the
Secretary of State from
responsibility.

It has been over eight months
since the attack on our com-
pound in Benghazi. The
White House strategy, with
the aid of a "lap dog" press
has been to run out the clock
before the truth is
forthcoming. The recent

testimonies of the three "whistle
blowers" have reopened the subject
and hopefully will lead to exposure
and disgrace of those responsible for
this embarrassing debacle. The
closest asset was not halfway around
the world, but as near as Aviano Air
Base, Italy, where two squadrons of
F-16Cs are based.

Consider the following scenario (all
times Benghazi local): When Hicks
in Tripoli receives a call at 9:40 p.m.
from Ambassador Stevens informing
him, "Greg, we are under attack!",
Hicks immediately notifies all
agencies and prepares for the
immediate initiation of an existing
"Emergency Response Plan."

At AFRICON, General Carter Ham
attempts to mount a rescue effort, but
is told to "stand down." By 10:30
p.m. an unarmed drone is overhead
the compound and streaming live
feed to various "Command and
Control Agencies," so everyone
watching that feed knew what was
going on. At 11:30 p.m. Woods,
Doherty, and five others leave
Tripoli, arriving in Benghazi at 1:30
a.m. Wed. morning, where they hold
off the attacking mob from the roof
of the compound until they are killed
by a mortar direct hit at 4 a.m.

So nothing could have been done?
Nonsense. If one assumes that tanker
support really "was not available,"
what about this: When at 10 p.m.
AFRICON alerts the 31st TFW
Command Post in Aviano Air Base,
Italy, of the attack, the Wing
Commander orders preparation for
the launch of two F-16s, and advises
the Command Post at NAS Sigonella
to prepare for hot pit refueling and
quick turn of the jets. By 11:30 p.m.
two F-16Cs with drop tanks and each
armed with five hundred 20 MM
rounds are airborne. Flying at 0.92
mach they will cover the 522 nautical
miles directly to NAS Sigonella in
1.08 hours. While en-route, the flight
lead is informed of the tactical
situation, rules of engagement, and
radio frequencies to use.

The jets depart Sigonella at 1:10
a.m. with full fuel load and
cover the 377 nautical miles
directly to Benghazi in 0.8
hours, arriving at 1:50 a.m.,
which would be 20 minutes
after the arrival of Woods,
Doherty, and their team. A
few well placed strafing runs
on targets of opportunity
would assuredly do the trick.

Were the F-16s' fuel state
insufficient to return to
Sigonella after jettisoning
their external drop tanks, they
could easily do so at Tripoli
International Airport, only 30
minutes away. As for those
hand-wringing naysayers who
would worry about IFR
clearances, border crossing
authority, collateral damage,
landing rights, political
correctness, and dozens of
other reasons not to act—it is
time our "leadership" got its
priorities straight and put
America's interests first.

The end result would be that
Woods and Doherty would be
alive. and a clear message
would have been sent to the
next terrorist contemplating
an attack on Americans that it
is not really a good idea to
"tug" on Superman's cape.

Ultimately it comes down to
the question of who gave that
order to stand down?
Whoever that coward turns
out to be should be exposed,
removed from office, and face
criminal charges for
dereliction of duty. The
combat forces of the United
States of America deserve
leadership that really does
"have their back" when the
chips are down.

We can only add:
AMEN! And AMEN!!!!
-Ed.

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: _____

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Donor signature: _____ date _____

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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

University of Houston; Advancement Services; P.O. Box 867; Houston TX 77001-0867
Attn: Nancy V. Clark E-mail: uh.edu/giving

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 Grade Service
Branch _____

Spouse's first name: _____ Tel. For Directory _____

Home address: _____

Civilian Occupation: _____

Business Firm _____ Business phone _____

E-mail: _____

Dues: Regular Membership \$30 first year; annual renewal \$30 (\$20 for each add'n'l year pd w/renewal)

Auxiliary (spouse of deceased officer) \$15 (\$10 for each add'n'l year pd w/renewal)

WOULD YOU SERVE ON A COMMITTEE? _____

Comments _____

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PO Box 1082 Houston TX 77251-1082
For more information, call Rollins Collins 704.213.2334

