



Houston Area
PO Box 1082
Houston, TX 77251-1082
www.moaahoustonarea.com

October 2020 Issue – Newsletter to Members

President's Message...

Greetings!



A warm hello to all our MOAA Houston Area Chapter members and those reading our monthly newsletter. As we enter the Fall season I hope that all of you and your families are doing very well. I also pray that you have established routines that have enabled you to successfully navigate the disruptions and distractions confronting our communities, states, nation, and world. Despite all the commotion, MOAA's direction, both locally and nationally, has been forward leaning, on target, and consistently effective.

Does anyone know where the year has gone? I feel as if the past nine months have whisked by. I take this time to remind all of you to remain careful and to cautiously navigate the changes induced by the COVID-19 pandemic. We should maintain our efforts to protect ourselves and as well as those we love and care for; adhere to the public health guidance and stay socially connected, yet physically distant as much as possible.

As we approach the end of the year. I would like to take a moment to emphasize the importance of renewing your Chapter membership.

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Mark Your Calendars! >>>

OCTOBER CHAPTER EVENTS

MOAA Houston Area Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, October 27th, 1200-1300

Rudi Lechner's Restaurant
(You can also participate via Zoom)

MOAA Houston Area Chapter Luncheon

Saturday, October 31st, 1200-1330

Lone Star Flight Museum

11551 Aerospace Ave.

Houston, TX 77034

Luncheon Price: \$10.00 Per Person; Includes box lunch and museum admission.



Guest Speaker:
Lt Gen Doug Owens, USAF (Ret.)
CEO, Lone Star Flight Museum

It's that time of year...

Both the VA and TRICARE offer programs designed to ease access to no-cost flu shots for beneficiaries. Below, you'll find details, links, and other resources for each; learn more about the immunization itself **at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website**.

VA Flu Shots

Where: Participating retail pharmacies (Walgreens) and urgent care locations within VA's network, as well as walk-in VA flu stations. Patients admitted to a VA facility may be able to receive the vaccine during a scheduled VA appointment. Use **the VA's online locator** to find in-network pharmacies and urgent care providers.

Eligibility: Veterans must be enrolled in the VA health care system to receive the vaccine at participating retail pharmacies. To receive the vaccine from participating urgent care locations, they must be enrolled and have received care from a VA provider or in-network community provider in the last 24 months. Check eligibility with your local VA medical facility or call 844-MyVA311 (844-698-2311) and select option 1, then select option 1 again.

What Else You Should Know:

- Eligible veterans can receive the standard or high-dose flu shot.
- Call the provider before your visit to ensure vaccine availability.
- Vaccines are not available to beneficiaries at urgent care providers in VA Community Care Region 4 (Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington and Wyoming) until Sept. 30. Vaccines are not available to beneficiaries in Alaska at retail pharmacies. Beneficiaries in VA Region 6 (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands) can receive free vaccines at VA health care facilities.

Learn More:

Visit VA's website for answers to frequently asked questions, points of contact, and other resources.



TRICARE Flu Shots

Where: A military hospital or clinic, participating network pharmacy (see note below), or TRICARE-authorized provider (visit may require a co-pay or cost share). **TRICARE's flu vaccine webpage** includes links to find these locations.

Eligibility: All TRICARE plans cover the vaccine.

What Else You Should Know:

- Eligible beneficiaries can receive the standard or high-dose flu shot.
- Call the provider before your visit to ensure vaccine availability.
- When contacting pharmacies, ensure the vaccine will be given by a pharmacist. If it's being administered by an on-site provider or via an in-house medical clinic, it may not be covered by TRICARE.
- Active duty members, as well as National Guard and Reserve members, must get the flu vaccine. They have priority at military hospitals and clinics.

Learn more: **TRICARE.mil/Flu** includes links to plan details, contact information, and guidance on flu symptoms and prevention.

President's Message... (continued from Page 1)

As a former Pentagon staff officer, I'll use the oft-used acronym BLUF (Bottom Line Up Front)—the survival of the chapter depends on each and everyone's continued membership. At the end of the newsletter is a membership renewal form. Please take a moment to complete your renewal and send it off to the Chapter PO Box address.

Staying engaged...we have continued as a Chapter to meet virtually and have had great success doing so. We have received very positive feedback regarding the Zoom meetings and moving forward, we are considering the idea of scheduling a virtual Zoom luncheon each quarter. One of the benefits of the virtual chapter meetings is that we can attract some interesting speakers, that would otherwise be unavailable due to their busy schedules. Another advantage is that the virtual meetings facilitate the participation of Chapter members that would otherwise not attend our face-to-face monthly luncheons. For those interested, we continue to hold our Chapter board meetings in person at Rudi Lechner's, with an option to participate via Zoom as well. Anyone is welcome to participate in the Chapter BOD meetings as well.

In September, we had a virtual luncheon via Zoom and we were privileged to have Major General Rich Staats, from the US Army's 75th Innovation Command as our monthly speaker. MG Staats was a fantastic speaker and provided our Chapter participants some insight into the unique missions of Army Futures Command, the Army's newest MACOM headquartered in Austin, TX, and the 75th Innovation Command, a Houston-based USAR unit in direct support of the command. We are excited to see the consistent growth in attendees and look forward to expanding the luncheon audience even more. In October, we plan to meet at the Lone Star Flight Museum located at Ellington Field. Our guest speaker will be the President of the Museum, Lt Gen Owens, USAF (Ret.). The cost to attend the event is \$10 and it includes museum admission and a catered box lunch. For our November luncheon meeting, we have scheduled a Thanksgiving meal at the Golfcrest Country Club in Pearland, TX. So, we hope to see you there!

In closing, thanks for the opportunity and privilege to serve you. Please remain vigilant amidst the continued evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic, stay connected socially, and plan to attend our upcoming chapter events.

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

Chapter Financial Statement September 1 - 30, 2020		
Starting Balance (as of September 1, 2020)		\$ 3,416.30
Revenue	\$ -	
Gross Operating Income		\$ 3,416.30
Expenses		
Expenses (September 1-30, 2020)		
Total September Expenses	\$ -	
Operating Income		\$ 3,416.30
Total ROTC Withhold		\$ (1,961.71)
Withhold to sponsor "Impact a Hero" Foundation		\$ (200.00)
Available Operating Income		\$ 1,254.59



Senators Push to Extend Care to 34,000 More Veterans for Agent Orange Diseases

Author: Patricia Kime

Senators have ramped up efforts to add three new diseases to the Department of Veterans Affairs' list of Agent Orange-related diseases, pressing the House and Senate Armed Services Committees to include them in the final version of the national defense policy bill.

Sen. Jon Tester, D-Mont., and 45 other senators sent letters Tuesday to leaders of the committees, imploring them to amend the fiscal 2021 National Defense Authorization Act to add bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism to the VA's list of conditions linked to herbicide exposure in Vietnam and elsewhere.

The bipartisan group, including four Republicans, said an amendment is needed to support 34,000 "frustrated and desperate veterans living and dying from these health conditions."

"Tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans suffer from these three conditions due to their military service, yet these veterans continue to be denied the care and benefits they have earned and desperately need," they wrote.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine in 2016 deemed the three illnesses to be associated with exposure to defoliants used during the war.

But VA officials have not added them to the list, saying they are waiting for the results of two studies -- the Vietnam Era Health Retrospective Observational Study, or VE-HEROeS, and the Vietnam Era Mortality Study -- to be reviewed for publication before announcing a decision on whether to broaden the presumptive list.

VA spokeswoman Christina Noel said Tuesday that the department continues to wait for the study results that will "guide decisions on this issue."

"VA has no announcements on changes to the list of Agent Orange-related presumptive conditions," Noel said. "VA is committed to regular review of all emerging evidence of adverse impacts to Veterans from Agent Orange, but the department will not be announcing new presumptive conditions until this additional research is complete to support an informed decision."

The academies also linked hypertension to Agent Orange in 2018, but the amendment sent to the Armed Services committees does not include the condition, which also is among the most common diseases that affect the elderly.

The department estimates that providing disability compensation and benefits to veterans affected by any of the four conditions, including hypertension, would run between \$11.2 billion and \$15.2 billion, depending on interpretations of a court ruling.

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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
ftricomi@earthlink.net

Organizations Liaison

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

Chaplain

Kerry Magee, CAPT USN (Ret.)
H 979.964.3236
C 979.236.2415
Kerry.ann828@brazoriainet.com

JROTC

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

Surviving Spouse MOAA Liason

Judith Thomas
719.331.8485
jthomas482@aol.com

Immediate Past President

Daniel M. Gutierrez, MAJ USA (Ret.)
281.543.1527
danielgutierrez1751@gmail.com

Editor

Kathy Frank
713.203.5058
kathyfrank23@gmail.com



Burial at Sea: A time-Honored Tradition

By Jim Absher

Most people think a burial at sea is something that happens only in the movies, but it's an option that is still widely used today. For many Sailors and Marines, there



is no more honored choice for their mortal remains than burial at sea. Since the burial is from an active military ship, family members are not able to attend the ceremony in person. However, some family members choose to observe the ceremony from a civilian ship that is positioned nearby. For families who want to attend the service, civilian organizations offer burial at sea from a civilian vessel.

Who Is Eligible

While anyone can have their remains buried at sea, burial at sea from a U.S. military vessel is limited to:

1. active duty military;
2. retirees and veterans who were honorably discharged.
3. civilian personnel of the Military Sealift Command; and
4. dependents of active duty members, retirees, and veterans.

The commanding officer of the ship conducting the burial at sea will send the family a personal letter describing the exact date and time of the ceremony, the burial flag, pictures or video of the ceremony, and a chart showing the longitude and latitude where the service was performed.

The family may provide a burial flag, which will be flown at half-mast on the ship during the committal service, and then returned to them. If they don't provide a flag, the Navy will provide one, but won't return it to the family after the ceremony.

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Burial at Sea: A time-Honored Tradition (Continued from Page 5)

Application Process

After the eligible person dies, the next-of-kin, or authorized individual (relative, clergy, funeral director, etc.) should contact the Navy and Marine Corps Mortuary Affairs office at 866-787-0081 to request a packet and for additional information.

The request must include:

- a photocopy of the death certificate
- the burial transit permit or the cremation certificate
- a copy of the DD Form 214, discharge certificate, or retirement order.

[For more information see the Navy website](#) or call 866-787-0081.

Important Air Force Events in the month of October

4–15 October 1962 The Cuban missile crisis began when Major Richard S. Heyser and Major Rudolf Anderson, Jr., U-2 pilots flying reconnaissance

missions over Cuba, proved that Soviet missile sites were under construction there. On 18 October, eight Air Force Reserve troop-carrier wings and six aerial-port squadrons were mobilized. On a similar mission two weeks later, Major Anderson was killed by a surface-to-air missile.



14 October – 14 November 1973 "The Airlift That Saved Israel." Military Airlift Command conducted Operation NICKEL GRASS, delivering over 22,000 tons of materiel to Israel during the 1973 "Yom Kippur War." MAC completed this 30-day airlift, with a one-way distance of 6,450 miles by flying 567 missions with C-5 and C-141 aircraft. MAC and the USAF got no help from either U.S. civil aviation or the nations in Europe except for Portugal, which made a critical decision to allow the MAC aircraft to stage out of Lajes Field in the Azores. The MAC crews had to navigate carefully through the Straits of Gibraltar and across the length of the Mediterranean Sea. Air cover and navigational aids were provided by the U.S. Navy's 6th Fleet for most of the route and by Israel during the final portion of the flight.



17 Oct 2014 The U.S. Air Force's unmanned X-37B spaceplane landed at Vandenberg AFB, California after 674 days in space – the longest continuous spaceplane mission (photos here). The concept of a reusable spaceplane has always been a part of the global space age.

*We need YOU...
to remain a MOAA HA Member!*



Debating whether to renew your chapter membership?

Talking to a potential new member?

Benefits to belonging to a chapter:

- **Camaraderie and Connections:** when you attend chapter functions, actively serve on a committee, or take a prominent leadership role, you forge lasting ties with other MOAA members.
- **Community Involvement:** Membership provide opportunities to contribute to your community in a variety of ways, from providing scholarships to local students, to supporting causes that support wounded warriors and their families.
- **Legislative Advocacy:** We advocate for the entire military community-all ranks. Members play a critical role in advancing legislation in both Austin and Washington, D.C. This grassroots advocacy is key to MOAA achieving its legislative goals.

Chapter dues reminders will be emailed/sent out in November to those members needing renewal. We are on a calendar year for our chapter dues.

Annual renewal is \$30 for one year, \$20 for each additional year paid with renewal.
Surviving Spouse \$15 initial membership; \$10 annual renewal.

Membership Application on the last page!

NOVEMBER CHAPTER EVENTS

MOAA Houston Area Chapter Luncheon
Saturday, November 21st 1200-1330
Thanksgiving Lunch at the Golfcrest Country Club

Golfcrest
COUNTRY CLUB

2509 Country Club Drive
Pearland, TX 77581



Turkey, cornbread dressing, green beans, gravy, cranberry sauce, yeast rolls, and pumpkin pie. Includes: iced tea and coffee.

Luncheon Price: \$15.00

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NOVEMBER CHAPTER EVENTS >>> *Continued from Page 7*

**MOAA Houston Area Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday, November 24th, 1200-1300
Rudi Lechner's Restaurant
(You can also participate via Zoom)**

**Please RSVP to Joe Willoughby to attend any chapter events.
Email: joe.willoughby@gmail.com
Phone: 713.569.6700**

Chaplain's Corner

The past six months have been difficult for the world, our nation, and for us as families and individuals. Dealing with the COVID19 pandemic and its fallout of unprecedented deaths, job loss, business failure, financial hardship, education interruption, quarantining, mask wearing, social distancing, and changes to our daily routines has affected the mental and physical health and well-being of many.

In the midst of my personal feelings about the pandemic the words of the Serenity Prayer have come into my thoughts many times. The date and author of the prayer remains a mystery with some tracing its origin back to a philosopher in 500 CE and others claiming its author to be an English poet or even American naval officer. In 1941, it found a home as a key spiritual tool for Alcoholic Anonymous and other 12-step recovery groups.

Regardless of its date of origin or its author, we all can claim it as a source of peace, strength, and wisdom coming from a power beyond ourselves, God. The "serenity" or "peace" for which we pray is not the absence of conflict. It is, from the Hebrew word, "shalom," the sense of wholeness, completeness, the absence of agitation or discord, a state of calm without anxiety or stress. This peace goes beyond our human understanding; it is not only known in our minds, it is experienced in our hearts. Use this full Serenity Prayer daily or several times a day and be open to receive that for which you have prayed.

God,

*Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*

Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time;

Accepting hardship as the pathway to peace.

Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it.

Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will;

That I may be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely happy with Him forever in the next.

Amen

Senators Push to Extend Care to 34,000 More Veterans for Agent Orange Diseases (Continued from Page 4)

But the VA has not released an estimate for covering the roughly 34,000 veterans for the three conditions listed in the proposed amendment.

The House and Senate have both passed their versions of the fiscal 2021 defense bill and a group of members from both chambers is supposed to meet to confer on a final draft. However, the conferees have not been named and a date has not been announced for the conference, making it unlikely that a vote will occur before the Nov. 3 election.

The amendment named in the letter, S.A. 1972, passed the Senate with 94 votes. A similar amendment was introduced in the House by Rep. Josh Harder, D-Calif. Thirty veterans groups and military groups support the proposals.

Many of the senators who signed the letter have constituents affected by at least one of the three conditions. Tester has pressed the VA for years to announce a decision.

"The truth is that more and more veterans are dying every single day because this administration refuses to do the right thing and pay for the cost of war. I'll be continuing to fight tooth and nail until we push this bill across the finish line," Tester said.

<< Long-Awaited VA Caregiver Program Launches >>

*By: René Campos
October 01, 2020*

After a yearlong delay, the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) launched its new Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) on Oct. 1, starting the clock for expanding the program to veterans of all eras as mandated in the [VA MISSION Act](#), which took effect in June 2019.

VA will roll out the program in two phases. October starts the first phase for [eligible veterans](#) who served before May 7, 1975. The second phase goes into effect two years later, capturing the remaining eligible veterans.

The old PCAFC program was open only to caregivers caring for post-9/11 veterans who sustained a serious injury as a result of their service – an injury limiting the veteran's ability to perform regular activities of daily living.

The new program is expected to provide more standardization and transparency for those applying for or enrolled in the program. One of the most significant changes to the program is the definition of eligibility for veterans: The [new regulation](#) expands PCAFC eligibility to include veterans with a 70% or higher disability rating assigned by VA that involves either a single or combined service-connected rating, no matter what the service-connected injury, illness, or disease.

[APPLY NOW: [PCAFC Online Application](#)]

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 add'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: _____