

MOAA REPORTER

MOAA Greater Dallas & North Texas Chapter

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General Membership Meeting 6 June 2020

Save the date! Our next general membership meeting is scheduled for 6 June 2020 which happens to be the 76th anniversary of D-Day. The meeting date is subject to change due to the current COVID-19 crisis; visit our website www.moaanorthtexas.org for the latest meeting status. The meeting will be held at the Gleneagles Country Club. A plated lunch will be served and our guest speaker will be COL JP Hogan USA (Retired). COL Hogan is a leading expert on the Allied invasion on D-Day and how it

led to Victory in Europe on 8 May 1945 (VE Day). He is active in AUSA having served as President of the AUSA 4th Region and Board member of the local Audie Murphy Chapter. COL Hogan has developed several leadership programs for university ROTC cadets and has taken many of them on trips to Normandy, France to see firsthand the challenges of the Allied forces on that memorable day. We will provide additional information in the May newsletter and keep you posted of any last minute changes.

Official COVID-19 Information



Information about the Coronavirus changes daily if not hourly. The chapter website www.moaanorthtexas.org has links to official government, DoD, VA and MOAA websites. Use these websites to get the latest information about the virus and how to best protect yourself against infection.

Chapter Steps Up During the COVID-19 Crisis



The chapter, working in conjunction with the Veterans Center of North Texas (VCONT), has continued to help North Texas veterans during this crisis. After VCONT was forced to close its doors for face-to-face contacts with veterans, chapter members Axel Anaruk, Chuck Kelley, Paul Hendricks and Dave Schafer volunteered to help veterans in need using telephone, email, text and FAX services. Their efforts have made a difference. They helped two unemployed veterans get jobs with Trusted World, a non-profit that provides meals to needy families. They also identified 12 veteran families needing food during the crisis and worked with Trusted World to provide food packages to each family. Each package contained enough food to feed a family of four for a week. Three of the families were not able to pick up their food packages due to self-quarantine or transportation issues. The chapter, using funds provided by the MOAA Foundation Grant, paid a delivery service to deliver the food to the veteran's home. Finally, the chapter used MOAA Foundation Grant to pay the water and electric bills for an unemployed, single-father veteran with two small children. The chapter will continue to embrace MOAA's motto of "Never Stop Serving" throughout this emergency. Contact Dave Schafer at 214-577-4107 if you would like to help.

"Storm the Hill" Cancelled



MOAA National cancelled the 2020 "Storm the Hill" event due to the COVID-19 crisis. MOAA National has asked Congress to immediately address 3 issues where the COVID-19 crisis is impacting military families: 1) temporarily suspend TRICARE pharmacy copays, 2) halt plans to cut uniformed medical personnel, and 3) fast track \$1,200 recovery payments. MOAA has asked all members to contact their elected representatives to help in this effort. To help go to <http://takeaction.moaa.org/?5>

and send an email to your Congressional representatives. While there you can also send emails to support MOAA's "Storm the Hill" initiatives.

MOAA States Its Priority List for Congressional Action



While the Nation and MOAA are focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to not lose sight of MOAA's 2020 priority issues. On 3 March, MOAA testified before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, stating that MOAA's top three legislative priorities related to VA programs are the following: 1) expand suicide prevention and mental health care, 2) help those exposed to environmental hazards, and 3) improve care for women veterans.

A Synchronized Approach to Suicide Prevention

Fighting veteran suicide has long been an important issue for MOAA. MOAA has met with the head of the President's Roadmap to Empower Veterans and End a National Tragedy of Suicides (PREVENTS), a task force formed in 2019. Since then, the VA has made substantial progress to enhance suicide prevention and mental health programs, but finding the proper resources can be a confusing process. MOAA wants suicide prevention programs to be synchronized to ease a veteran's path through the system. MOAA is supportive of several bills to target suicide prevention and mental health care. Among them: 1) the Improve Well-Being for Veterans Act (which boasts more than 253 House cosponsors), 2) the Commander John Scott Hannon Veterans Mental Health Care Improvement Act (with 45 Senate cosponsors), and 3) the Veterans Acute Crisis Care for Emergent Suicide Symptoms Act, which was introduced in the House on 28 Jan..

Battling Toxic Exposure

Another of MOAA's top priorities is taking care of veterans who have been exposed to environmental hazards from burn pits in combat zones to contaminated water and to chemicals in military housing. In February, MOAA joined other veteran groups to send a letter to the president asking him to add four scientifically connected presumptive diseases to the list of veterans' diseases associated with Agent Orange. The four presumptive diseases are bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, Parkinson-like symptoms, and hypertension, which could affect as many as 83,000 veterans.

Women's Issues

MOAA said that the VA must do more to eliminate barriers and strengthen care and support services for women veterans. This can be achieved by:

- Enacting the Deborah Sampson Act and a number of other House and Senate bill provisions that would provide equal access to earned benefits and care for women veterans, including enhancing access to and availability of gender-specific programs to serve women.
- Funding for infertility services.
- Research funding for women veterans with catastrophic health conditions.
- Ending sexual harassment in VA medical facilities.

MOAA has also pledged to push for implementing the VA MISSION Act and preserve VA burial benefits.

Potpourri

Employment Webinar



Congressman Van Taylor and State Representative Matt Shaheen will conduct an employment webinar on at 12PM on Monday, 13 April. The webinar will provide guidance to those who have been laid off, furloughed, ordered to self-quarantine, or are experiencing reduced working hours due to COVID-19. You must register in advance. After registering you will be sent an email with instructions on how to participate in the webinar. Use the

following link to register: <https://vantaylor.house.gov/forms/form/?ID=22&Preview=true>

ID Cards and COVID-19

DoD has made changes to policy and waivers for some expired ID cards. Note: This information was compiled by MOAA on April 8, and DoD policies related to the COVID-19 pandemic have changed rapidly; get the latest ID card guidance, instructions, and forms at www.cac.mil/Coronavirus.

- If your Uniformed Services ID Card (USID) has an expiration date between Jan. 1, 2020, and today, and your affiliation/status has not changed, *you may still use it to receive benefits*. This rule is in effect through Sept. 30, 2020.
- DoD has expanded availability of off-site ID renewals and reissuances. You'll be able to enroll new family members and update some of your information via mail or fax. More information, including where to send the required documents, is available at CAC.mil and under the "Service Specifics" header below. You also can contact your nearest Real-Time Automated Personnel Identification System (RAPIDS) location for more details; find yours [here](#).
- Remotely issued cards will expire no more than a year after they are issued.
- The minimum age for dependents to require an ID has been raised from 10 to 14.

Golf Tournament Rescheduled



The Veterans Center of North Texas 2020 Veterans Golf Scramble has been rescheduled for Friday, September 18th. With more and more veterans being drawn to the North Texas booming economy, this event helps them transition from military to civilian life. Last year 52 veterans got the opportunity to network with North Texas business and community leaders. Sign up now to play, register a foursome, or sponsor a veteran. Don't delay – the Scramble is limited to 144 players. Go to www.vcont.org to register.

Have Some Free Time on Your Hands?

The Chapter is looking for volunteers to work with the Board of Directors and Committee Chairs on projects that are important to both MOAA and the Chapter. We have volunteer opportunities ranging from one-time events such as legislative visits to recurring support for committee activities. You can choose to support legislative, membership, JROTC, membership, personal affairs, or community outreach activities. If you would like to help, contact Dave Schafer or at moaschafer@att.net.