

THE[®] BORDER BULLETIN

El Paso Chapter of Military Officers Association of America

★★★★★ A NATIONALLY RANKED FIVE-STAR CHAPTER ★★★★★

A MOAA affiliate from January 23, 1956 - El Paso Chapter of Military Officers Association of America - Our 54th Year



Mayor John Cook, City of El Paso, Major General Dana Pittard, Senior Commander, Fort Bliss, and Colonel Michael Kuhn, Commander German Air Force Command USA/Canada inspect the troops during the ceremony celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the German Reunification on October 4, 2010.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



It is hard to believe, but December is upon us once again. With the end of the year comes numerous key legislative issues, and none is more important than the Defense Bill delay that arose in November.

Before adjourning for the November elections, the Senate failed to act on the FY2011 Defense Authorization Act (S. 3454). Failure to finalize the bill jeopardized the 1.9% pay raise proposed in the House version of the bill. Instead, current-serving service members would receive the administration-proposed 1.4% pay raise on 1 January. It would seem counterintuitive to impose "the smallest pay raise since the creation of the all-volunteer force", while the nation continues to deploy soldiers to Iraq and Afghanistan, but it appears very possible.

It should also be noted that most accession, retention, enlistment, and reenlistment bonuses will also expire on December 31. If the defense bill is not passed then the services lose the authority to pay for those bonuses, effective 1 January.

The full impact upon Reservists remains to be seen, however it appears that transportation and travel allowances would also be impacted as of 31 December for service members performing inactive duty training outside their normal commuting distance from their homes.

The new defense bill also includes a variety of new authorities including, "school funding for military children, extension of children's TRICARE coverage until age 26, increases to Family Separation Allowance and Hostile Fire Pay, and upgraded protections for wounded warrior caregivers, to name just a few."

These are exactly the kinds of issues that MOAA exists to address. Your El Paso Chapter will continue to provide updates on this and other similar issues affecting its active duty and retired members.

During the past year your El Paso Chapter of MOAA earned another Five Star rating in 2010 and continues to seek opportunities to support Active Duty events. This past November we continued our support to the UTEP ROTC program by supporting the team's participation in the Army Ten Miler in Washington DC. In October we collaborated with AUSA and supported the Ft Bliss Commander's Senior Leader Update and Social Call. The Chapter successfully hosted the Retiree Appreciation Dinner in September as well as hosting the guest speaker

for the Retiree Appreciation weekend conference. The Chapter also automated accounting procedures for the budget, ensuring transparency and more accurate and timely accounting of MOAA finances. The Chapter made huge strides in automating online registration for social events, and we're continuing to set the conditions for online membership registration. Bill Moore has taken the MOAA website to an entirely new level earning National recognition for his web design efforts. Ed Stone and Bill McKinney also received National recognition for their efforts in supporting MOAA members.

This past year four local students received MOAA Scholarships from the National board. Angel Lara received the COL Joseph Rodriguez Medal Of Honor Scholarship. Reena Barnett, Cm Vigil April, Crystal Burton and Angel Lara, each received the MOAA Education Assistance Scholarship. We need your help in getting the word out that the registration period for MOAA scholarships is from 1 November to 1 March. We also need to continue to highlight new Scholarship opportunities such as the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program. This program is designed to encourage students to participate in the Reserve Officer's Training (ROTC) Program at Texas higher education institutions. For students willing to commit to follow-on Texas Army National Guard, or the Texas Air Force National Guard, or a commission in any branch of the armed services, this represents a great opportunity. The scholarship is in the amount of \$10,000 and depending upon available future funding, students may be eligible to receive four years of scholarship awards. The Governor can appoint two awards, and each State Senator and each State Representative may appoint one student to receive the scholarship. For more information go to, <http://www.collegefortexans.com/apps/financialaid/tofa2.cfm?ID=581>.

I want to remind members of the 4 December MOAA luncheon. We are returning to the Centennial for this event. I want to encourage you to submit your reservation online at the El Paso Chapter website. Additionally, do not forget that on 11 December Army beats Navy. We'll be celebrating at the Centennial. Enjoy a safe holiday season.



Forrest E. Smith
Colonel, USA
President 2010

Guest Speaker - 4 December 2010


COL Joseph Simonelli, Jr

MEMBERSHIP MEETING PROGRAM

Saturday, December 4th, 2010
Centennial Club

1100 - 1200	SOCIAL HOUR
1200 - 1215	OPENING CEREMONY VOTE FOR AND INSTALL 2011 BOD
1215 - 1300	MEAL SERVICE
1300 - 1335	PROGRAM
1335 - 1355	DOOR PRIZE DRAWING
1355 - 1400	CLOSING
1400	ADJOURNMENT

December Luncheon Menu

- ♦ Coconut Caribbean Chicken
- ♦ Sauteed Broccoli Almondine
- ♦ Tossed Green Salad w/dressing
- ♦ Roll and Butter
- ♦ Coffee and Iced Tea

Colonel Joseph A. Simonelli, Jr Biography

Colonel Joseph A. Simonelli, Jr. hails from Verona, NJ where he graduated from Verona High School. He was appointed to the United States Military Academy (USMA) at West Point and was commissioned in the Air Defense Artillery with the USMA Class of 1987.

COL Simonelli held a variety of operational assignments from small unit to Service & Joint staffs during his twenty two years of service. These assignments include Platoon Leader, Executive Officer and Assistant S-3, 1st BN, 1st ADA (HAWK), Spangdahlem, Germany; Assistant S-3, Bravo Battery Commander, and Headquarters and Headquarters Battery Commander, 3rd BN, 43rd ADA (PATRIOT) where he deployed twice to Southwest Asia, once as an Assistant S-3 and once as a Battery Commander; Personnel Distribution Officer, US Total Army Personnel Command (PERSCOM), Alexandria, VA; Battalion S-3 and XO for 6th BN, 52th ADA (PATRIOT), Ansbach, Germany where he deployed to Incirlik, Turkey as the PATRIOT Task Force Commander; Brigade S3, 69th ADA Brigade, Germany; THAAD Synchronization Staff Officer and Executive Officer, Air and Missile Defense & Space Division, Deputy Chief of Staff, Army G8; Air Defense Colonel's Assignment Officer, Human

Resources Command, Alexandria, VA; Battalion Commander 5th BN, 52nd ADA (PATRIOT), Fort Bliss, Texas; The Joint Staff, Pentagon first as a Missile Defense Planner in the J5 culminating as Executive Assistant to the Vice Director of the Joint Staff. His most recent assignment was the Director of Operations, J3, for the Multi-National Security Transition Command in Iraq. COL Simonelli assumed command of Fort Bliss Garrison on March 25, 2010.

COL Simonelli holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science from West Point, a Master of Arts degree in Human Resources from Webster University, and a Master of Science Degree in National Security Strategies from the National Defense University, National War College. His awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (5 Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Commendation Medal (6 Oak Leaf Clusters), Army Achievement Medal (3 Oak Leaf Clusters), National Defense Service Medal with bronze star, Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Southwest Asia Service Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Overseas Service Ribbon (with 2 numerals), and the Kuwaiti Liberation Medal.

**Please submit your Luncheon
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Friday, 26 November**

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**REMITTANCE
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Secretary: MOAA
PO Box 6144
El Paso, TX 79906-0144



CDR Katherine O'Neill Tracy receives a Certificate of Appreciation from COL Forrest Smith at the RAD Reception, 24 September 2010

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**2010 EL PASO CHAPTER, MOAA
EVENTS SCHEDULE**

November 24, 2010	Retirement Ceremony
November 25, 2010	Sun Bowl Parade
November 27, 2010	November Board Meeting
December 4, 2010	December Member Meeting and Luncheon
December 11, 2010	Army-Navy Football Game
December 18, 2010	December Board Meeting
December 31, 2010	76th Sun Bowl Game

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**Input for
February 2011 BULLETIN
by 3 January 2011**

~ TAPS ~

Mary Ann Stewart born December 21, 1931 in Glendale, West Virginia to French and Mary Elizabeth Steele. She died on September 11, 2010. She is survived and will be missed greatly by those that remain here, daughters, Cheri (Gene) Love, Lori (Victor) Sustaita, Paula (Glenn) Cook, grandchildren Alana (Brent) Lambert, James Love, Brian Love, Trevor Love, Palmer (fiancé Mary Greer) Love, Lance (Amy) Sustaita, Logan Sustaita, Jeff (Karla) Wheeler, great-grandchildren, twins Noah and Sydney Lambert. She was buried with her husband at the Fort Bliss Cemetery on September 14, 2010.

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EL PASO CHAPTER AWARDS

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2008 & 2009**

**Category 1 "Print Newsletter" WINNER in 2004; Runner-up
2008 & 2009; 2008 & 2009 Best Legislative Coverage
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**2007 Special Communications Award
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Cancer Support Groups

By Colonel Lennie Enzel, USA, Retired

We know that the diagnosis of cancer will change your life forever. It touches every aspect of living -- your relationship with family, children, friends, coworkers and healthcare workers. It influences how you work, go to school, do housework, and how you play. Fear of losing relationships, work, abilities and security lurk in the recesses of the mind. And even if you are years post diagnosis, there is always the all powerful and scary "What if it comes back?"

People diagnosed with cancer and their families face many challenges that may leave them feeling overwhelmed, afraid, and alone. It can be difficult to cope with these challenges or to talk to even the most supportive family members and friends. Cancer patients may find they need help coping with the emotional as well as the practical aspects of their disease. Often, support groups can help people affected by cancer feel less alone and can improve their ability to deal with the uncertainties and challenges that cancer brings. Support groups give people who are affected by similar diseases an opportunity to meet and discuss ways to cope with the illness.

There's no escaping the fact that being diagnosed with cancer is one of the hardest experiences that anyone will have to face in life. There are a lot of ways to find support and hope to get through this difficult time, and many people find that joining a support group is a big help.

Support groups let you know you are not alone. They offer both practical and emotional support, and can be helpful at all stages of cancer. Being part of a support group provides opportunities to share information, experiences and feelings with people who understand what you are going through. Support group members include people with cancer, their families and friends.

People who have been diagnosed with cancer sometimes find they need assistance coping with the emotional as well as the practical aspects of their disease. For us healthcare workers, attention to the emotional burden of cancer is definitely part of the treatment plan. Cancer support groups are designed to provide a confidential atmosphere where cancer patients or cancer survivors can discuss the challenges that accompany the illness with others who may have experienced the same challenges. It's a time for you to gather to discuss the emotional needs created by cancer, to exchange information about their disease—including practical problems such as managing side effects or returning to work after treatment—and to share their feelings. Many groups have an educational element where they talk about specific diseases, specific treatments, available resources, etc. Support groups have helped thousands of people cope with cancer and other situations.

Going to a support group for the first time can be a little daunting - it's not unusual for people to feel unsure at first. You may find that the first group you try isn't really for you - don't give up - try another group. It's important to have good group facilitators that can handle the emotions that may reveal themselves in a cancer support group. This is an emotionally

charged time and people enter into it in various stages of underlying mental health. Many people are extremely angry. Many are severely depressed.

Most support groups meet face to face, however telephone and online support groups are gaining in popularity. This is a good option for people who live in remote areas, are isolated by their cancer, or prefer not to meet face to face.

Apart from various improvements in confidence, well-being, stress, and interpersonal comfort, cancer support groups are being studied for their direct effects on improving health of people who attend them. Some small-scale studies have compared members of a breast cancer support group at Stanford against a control group and found significant benefits associated with group membership. These studies are currently being repeated on a larger scale. Some theories about these benefits ascribe health improvements to reduced stress from talking about emotional issues as well as learning about treatment options through interaction with others with common issues.

Support groups can help people feel less isolated and distressed, and improve the quality of their lives.

Research shows that the following things influence adjustment after breast cancer:

- having a good support system
- having financial resources
- having roles to fill – a job, cooking for your family, etc.
- having a good relationship with your treatment team
- having realistic expectations and satisfaction with the treatment

Support groups can be uplifting, informative and social. Many people find that hearing about how other people are coping with cancer, helps them to deal with their own situation much more easily. A support group is a place where people come together to share coping strategies, discuss feelings and make new friends. It is a place to come where you can express your:

- Need to be heard "Tell my story"
- Need for validation "I didn't do anything to deserve this"
- Need for reassurance "I'm doing everything I can"
- Need for problem solving "How do you usually handle...?" "I can't find a bra that doesn't hurt!"
- Need for control "I need to understand exactly what is happening from a patient's point of view"

Support groups offer a safe and caring environment strengthened by the kind of understanding that can only come from those who are sharing the same sort of experience.

Through actively participating in a support group, you can find out about:

- Coping with cancer diagnosis and treatment
- Living with cancer and the changes to your everyday life
- Practical tips to help you along the way
- Dealing with your emotions, and the emotions of your family
- Enjoying life after cancer

Chaplain Corner

Chaplain Tom Phelan



The months of December and January mark the winter solstice and the new year, and include a familiar holiday season. The Christian Advent Season actually begins with the

first Sunday of Advent on November 28th, and continues through the four Sundays of Advent until Christmas Sunday. Advent is a time when we remember the expectation and waiting for the birth of the Messiah many years ago, and candles are lit, and prayers and songs refer to this hope.

At sundown on December 1, the Jewish observance of Hanukkah or Chanukah begins, and lasts for 8 days. This commemorates the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem at the time of Maccabean revolt in 2nd century BC, during the time between the Hebrew Bible (Christian Old Testament) and the Christian New Testament. It took a week to purify oil for Temple

use, and there was only enough for one day. The one-day supply lasted eight days, though, so the Temple lamps never went out. Therefore it is also known as the Festival of Lights. Jewish people practice many of the activities that have become associated with Christmas (gift giving, etc) at Hanukkah.

December 7 is the date of National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, which commemorates the attack on Pearl Harbor, in Hawaii, which brought the United States into World War II. Many American service men and women lost their lives or were injured on this date in 1941. December 8 is observed as Bodhi Day by Buddhists, the date in 596 BC when it is celebrated that their leader attained enlightenment. Although not a holiday, December 11 will be a very special occasion this year, when the Army Navy game will be played. December 16 is an Islamic holiday of some concern for Muslims. Tradition states that Muhammad, the founder of Islam fasted on this day and asked other people to fast. But it is commemorated by Shia Muslims (one of the two world divisions of Muslims) as a day of mourning in that the

grandson of the Muhammad, Husayn ibn Ali was killed on that date in 680 AD by military forces of the Sunni Muslims (the other major division of Islam). Muslim officials exercise care to avoid violence on this day.

December 21 is the date of the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere. On that day, due to the earth's tilt on its axis, the daytime hours are at a minimum in the Northern hemisphere, and night time is at a maximum (in the Southern Hemisphere, the winter and summer solstices are reversed). People of numerous religious faiths throughout the world observe many seasonal days of celebration and religious holy days linked to the winter solstice. Perhaps the oldest observance is called Yule, and many of its practices such as the Yule log and mistletoe have been included in Christian Christmas holiday observances. For people of nearly any religious background, the time of the winter solstice is a time to gather with family and loved ones.

December 25 is Christmas Day, a holiday observed to commemorate the birth of Jesus, the central figure of Christianity. The

Cont'd on page 13

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Fort Bliss Soldiers focus on sniper training

Sgt. Mark Miranda, 4th Bde. 1st Armored Div.

4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division hosted the U.S. Army Sniper School Mobile Training Team at Fort Bliss, with the final phases culminating in a graduation ceremony Friday (Oct. 15).

With the bulk of instruction held at Dona Ana range, the school utilizes cadre from Fort Benning, Ga., and trains soldiers in marksmanship, sniper equipment and tactics, collection of battlefield intelligence, stalking and other sniper-related skills.

The primary mission of the sniper is to deliver long range, precision fire. Their secondary mission is the collecting and reporting of battlefield information. Soldiers are taught how to blend in with the surrounding environment by wearing a ghillie suit.

“Some of the other pre-requisites for the course include a 110 GT score, good performance record and of course qualifying expert to get the recommendation from unit commanders,” said Spc. Andrew Latham of 4th Bn., 6th Infantry Regt.



Sniper students at Fort Bliss dressed in ghillie suits listen to instruction before conducting the stalking lane exercise.

Other requirements include vision of, or correctable to 20/20, excellent physical condition (with a score of 70 or more in each Army Physical Fitness event), minimum one year retainability, and students must pass psychological evaluation conducted under the direction of a qualified psychologist. Aside from Soldiers with a special forces enlistment option, only infantrymen and cavalry scouts can attend the U.S. Army sniper school.

Near the end of the four-week instruction they must go through a course where they come within 300 meters of spotters in a small tower and take a shot at a target without being noticed. Students are trained on the M24 Sniper Weapon System, M107 rifle, and the M110 Semi-Automatic Sniper System.

“The ‘stalking lanes’ are an accumulation of all



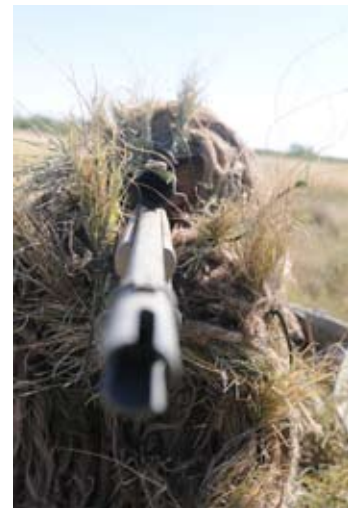
Sgt. Clifton Whaley, an infantryman from Williamsport, Pa. assigned to 1st Bn. 77th Armor Regt. finds a “loop hole” in concealment through which he can fire while conducting the stalking lane.

events – target detection, range estimation, shooting and utilizing cover and concealment,” said Sgt. Clifton Whaley an infantryman from Williamsport, Pa. assigned to 1st Bn., 77th Armor Regt.

“You have a couple more attempts at the stalking lanes if you’re not a first-time ‘Go.’ If the spotters see you, they can decide on the spot that you’re done; but if you’re using the vegetation in your suit and surrounding areas, keeping to shadows, making slow deliberate movements – everything that’s been taught, the instructors may leave you alone,” said Spc. Jess Schultz, an infantryman from Spring Lake Park, Minn. Assigned to 1st Bn. 77th Infantry Regt.

Students are also taught a variety of different firing techniques utilizing different positions, stances and means of support to allow themselves to use their cover and concealment to maximum effectiveness.

There are four record qualifications, with the first including targets at 300-800 meters. A second one utilizes moving targets, and another with moving targets at night. Qualification includes a record fire with the M107 .50 caliber rifle.



Spc. Jess Schultz, an infantryman in 4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division, from Spring Lake Park, Minn. takes up a position in the “stalking lane” at Dona Ana Range.



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Personal Affairs

Jose Luis Hernandez
Personal Affairs Chairman



ACTIVE DUTY, This one is for you -and, everyone else, too!

Guest Contributor: Major Edwin S. Stone, III, USA, Retired, MOAA 2010 – 2011 Texas Council of Chapters President, <http://www.exas-moaa.org>

Somewhere along the stream of consciousness in taking care of one's personal affairs, letting your legislators know how you feel about military personnel issues effecting you is a personal responsibility – no one else can speak for you but you. One might say this short note on personal affairs crosses over into legislative affairs and membership...and, it does. Nonetheless, you've got to let them know where you as a constituent stands on matters important to your well being.

One does not need to be a MOAA member to be heard by using the TAKE ACTION tab at <http://moaa.org>. Enlisted, Officer, Veteran, Surviving Spouse irrespective of service or component, Guard, Active, Reserve...sign in as a friend of MOAA, use your Home of Record or the place of domicile for voting when expressing your views through capwiz.

When Congress reconvenes after the November Recess, it should take up the 2011 National Defense Authorization Act. If it fails to act, it will impact many issues important to all.

One can more quickly cut to the chase by going to the chapter website, elpasomoaa.org, and accessing a Capwiz note posted under the Team Bliss Logo, Act Now! -- Defense Bill Delay Joepardizes Pay, and sending the suggested MOAA national email message if you agree. There is a list of the 2011 MOAA NDAA Issues at the link below Act Now! Go to MOAA 2011 Defense Authorization Act Key Issues to review them.

Besides pay, there are added issues at the bottom of the page with fact sheets...they are: 1. **Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP)** Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) is expected to introduce an amendment to the FY 2011 Defense Authorization Bill that would repeal the deduction of VA survivor benefits from military survivors' SBP annuities...Fact Sheet 2. **Concurrent**

Receipt Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV) is expected to introduce an amendment to the FY2011 Defense bill that would phase out the VA disability offset to military retired pay for severely disabled medical (Chapter 61) retirees...Fact Sheet 3. **Guard/ Reserve Retirement** Senator John Kerry (D-MA) is expected to introduce an amendment to the FY2011 Defense bill that would provide retroactive reserve retirement age credit for all active service since Sept. 11, 2001 (vs current law, which credits only service since Jan. 28, 2008)...Fact Sheet

We need to help each other so please don't pass up the chance to make yourself heard. And, pass this message on to anyone that will help us help ourselves.

H. V. WHITEHILL, D.D.S, M.S.

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How do you communicate? It probably depends on the situation. Most use communication methods such as face-to-face engagements, telephone calls, letters, e-mail, text messaging and other internet programs. MOAA uses multiple methods to share pertinent member information regarding programs and events. The Border Bulletin is one method the El Paso MOAA Chapter uses

to provide relevant member information. The Border Bulletin is printed and mailed (both by hard copy and electronic format) bimonthly to the El Paso MOAA Chapter members. Additional copies of the Border Bulletin are delivered to each major command on Fort Bliss and additional copies are provided to the Centennial Club. Future Border Bulletin's

will feature a Fort Bliss unit and a junior leader. To nominate a unit or junior leader please contact one of the members of the MOAA Board of Directors. If you would like to assist in distributing the Border Bulletins, have ideas on ways to improve communication or are not receiving the border bulletin in the format you prefer please give me or LTC (R)) Bill Moore a call.

Please continue to share with prospective members' information found in the Border Bulletin and the Military Officer (The Official Magazine of MOAA). Better yet after you read the bulletin or the magazine pass along your copy to someone who would like to become a member. I am thrilled to see copies of the Border Bulletin on coffee tables in our BCT HQs but without your assistance those who have a voice in the organization's future will not participate. Thank you as collectively we will continue to communicate MOAA's message with *One Powerful Voice*.



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Cont'd from page 6

There are general support groups like the one at WBAMC and some support groups that are for specific diseases such as prostate or breast cancer and some are geared towards specific groups such as teens or children.

Family and friends are affected when cancer touches someone they love, and they may need help in dealing with stresses such as family disruptions, financial worries, and changing roles within relationships. To help meet these needs, some support groups are designed just for family members of people diagnosed with cancer; other groups encourage families and friends to participate along with the cancer patient or cancer survivor. The newspaper has a list of where to find various support groups.

A support group is a formal support network that can influence how its members cope with the disease and treatment, interact with others, and perform their daily tasks through sharing and role modeling.

It is important that your support group be a warm, non-judgmental atmosphere where members can talk about life's challenges without embarrassment as well as give support and encouragement to each other.

Like any group, very member has a role. What is your role? The role of a support group member is:

- To hear what is being said.
 - To validate another's feelings by offering understanding or their own experience.
 - To acknowledge and accept what other support group members have to offer.
 - To seek knowledge of the disease knowing that it gives power
 - To be active in the fight against the disease
- People with cancer have been through a tremendous life-altering experience. It is helpful if they will reach out to the others on this path and invite them in. Show them how to cope. How to fight. How to survive. Welcome them into your midst. Provide support, listen, validate, reassure, help them problem-solve. You are the role models - you are the survivors!
- The people who do the best in the fight against this disease are:
- those who educate themselves about the disease - the fight. You are Soldiers - you may not wear a uniform, but make no mistake - you are in a war against cancer.
 - those who reach out to others, help others, educate others
 - those who utilize their support systems-

Support and education. Giving and getting. That's a Support Group. That's You!

Legislative

John B. McKinney - Legislative Chairman



In my last column I started by writing that Congress was on its August vacation and would resume work when it returned in September. That work period lasted about a week and a half before a vote was taken to take another vacation in October (until as late as mid-November) for political reasons. The amendments to take this absence passed in the House by a single vote and a larger margin in the Senate. I also wrote that upon return after the August recess work would be taken on the 2011 National Defense Authorization Act. I was wrong. There was no action on it nor any of the federal appropriations bills needed to provide Fiscal Year 2011 funds. Congress, instead, passed a Continuing Resolution to keep the federal government operating at Fiscal Year 2010 funding levels until December 1. Members of Congress get paid an annual salary of over \$170,000.00 to do the work expected of them yet can decide when and how often they actually do the work they are elected to do. Not many salaried individuals have this same luxury. Add this to the fact that some not reelected in November will not return to Washington, D.C. for what is called a "lame duck" session.

The NDAA was not the only significant piece of legislation impacting on Americans for which no action has been taken, but deferred until a later time. The Medicare "doctor fix" expires on November 30; this extended the reimbursement rate cut of 21 percent that was to take place on January 1, 2010 and added an increase of 2.5 percent to existing rates. Unless action is taken to further extend the rate cut beyond November 30, a 23.5 percent cut will occur. Add to this an additional 6.1 percent cut programmed for January 1, 2011. Fighting for Medicare changes means fighting for Tricare also.

The SBP-DIC offset issue, a priority concern for MOAA, may be added to the NDAA as an amendment. I have addressed this in the past and the explanation that Congress argues that since the increased amount is considered a mandatory expenditure, funds must be taken from someplace else to pay for it. Congress did, however, recently pass legislation to provide funding for free monitoring and health care for people with medical conditions related to the 9/11 attacks; this is also mandatory funding and the funds, equivalent to the SBP-DIC offset figure, were taken from other sources. The House bill for doing away with the SBP-

DIC offset had 347 co-sponsors and was not brought to a vote while the 9/11 bill had only 268. You decide where congressional priorities are

Another issue not addressed before Congress vacated Washington is that of the expiration of the Bush tax cuts due to expire on January 1, 2011. Contentious as the argument is whether to let the cuts go into effect, let only the cuts on the "rich" go into effect, or extend the period for the cuts for everyone for possibly 2 more years, it seems it is easier to not be committal before an election than accept the responsibility that there is a serious job to do, whatever the outcome.

The November elections will determine the composition of the 112th Congress which convenes in January, 2011. Legislation introduced but not voted on in the House and Senate during the 111th Congress will disappear. Many issues will resurface as new bills and some may not appear at all, depending on the will of our elected officials. Consider that with each new Congress the members who are veterans declines and new members come into session with their own agendas, not necessarily those of the active military or veterans. The battles for our priorities will continue. Couple these with similar issues surfaced and supported by other military and veterans service organizations which warrant equal time with Members of Congress and the stark realization that these same members are more concerned with their own constituents and not others, it is all the more important that our congressional district representatives and state senators hear from us. As I have noted before, telephone calls and e-mails receive faster attention than letters, which can take 2-3 months to be received.

As a reminder to our Texas members, the state legislature convenes in January for its biennial session. I'll try and cover issues of concern to us in that body also. There will be some.



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December 25 has been a federal holiday in the United States since 1870. December 26 this year is Christmas Sunday, the primary date of religious observance in the Christmas season.

December 26 is also the date that Kwanzaa begins. Unlike many holidays, Kwanzaa is recent in origin, invented in the United States by Ron Karenga and first observed from December 26, 1966 to January 1, 1967. It is a weeklong celebration held in the United States honoring African heritage and culture, marked by activities such as the participants lighting candles, which culminate in a feast and gift giving.

The evening of December 31 is New Year's Eve, the last day of the calendar year, observed around the globe. Celebrations on this night typically include going to parties or gathering in public places. One of the most famous gatherings occurs at Times Square in New York City.

New Year's Day on January 1 will officially begin the year 2011. New Year's Day is a time of high hopes for the new year, and celebrated as an occasion when many people embark on "New Year resolutions" of self-improvement.

The evening of January 5 is sometimes called "Twelfth Night," a festival observed by many Christians that concludes the "Twelve Days of Christmas" leading up to Epiphany on January 6. William Shakespeare provides a historic observance of the jovial festivities of "Twelfth Night" in his comedy by that same name. Epiphany commemorates the first manifestation of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles (peoples other than the Jewish nation) in the persons of the Magi, also known as the three wise men. It officially concludes the Christian season.

January 15 and 17 are the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King, and the federal holiday named in his honor, celebrating his life and achievements as an influential Christian minister and American civil rights leader. He is famous for his campaigns to end racial segregation and ensure racial equality in the United States.

Perhaps the single most significant part of the winter holidays is love for others expressed through giving. This includes the giving of gifts at Hanukkah, Christmas or Kwanzaa, or the giving of oneself for a cause such as at Pearl Harbor or in the example of Dr. King. Yet the greatest of all gifts was when God the Father gave Christ Jesus to the world, which we celebrate at Christmas. For by faith in Him alone we may have eternal life. And the gift that God asks from us at Christmas is to give him our heart. May God bless your holiday season.

Cont'd from page 7

actual day he was born is not known, and December 25 was chosen as the date to honor his birth. Christmas Day begins the Christmas holiday season, also known as Christmastide, lasting twelve days. The Christmas season is both a sacred religious holiday and a worldwide cultural and commercial phenomenon. For two thousand years, people around the world have been observing it with traditions and practices that are both religious and secular in nature. Christians celebrate Christmas Day as the anniversary of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah and Son of God. Popular customs include exchanging gifts, decorating Christmas trees, attending church, sharing meals with family and friends and, of course, waiting for the mythical figure Santa Claus to arrive. Christmas day on

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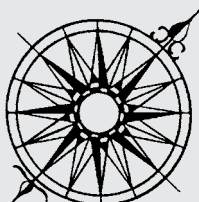
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Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program

Program Purpose

The 81st Texas Legislature created the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program through the approval of HB 3452 to encourage students to participate in Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs at Texas higher education institutions. A student must meet specific eligibility criteria in order to receive an initial scholarship award. In addition to the eligibility criteria, a student must enter into an agreement requiring a four-year commitment as a member of the Texas Army National Guard or the Texas Air Force National Guard, or a commissioned officer in any branch of the armed services of the United States. If the conditions of the scholarship agreement are not met, the scholarship must be repaid.

Annually, the governor and the lieutenant governor may each appoint two students, and each state senator and each state representative may appoint one student to receive a conditional Texas Armed Services Scholarship. A maximum of 185 students may be appointed statewide. For the 2010-2011 academic year, a student may receive up to \$10,000 and dependent on available future funding, students may receive up to four years of scholarship awards.

Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility for Nomination

In order to be considered for a conditional Texas Armed Services Scholarship, a student must meet two of the following four academic criteria at the time of application:

- ✓ Is on track to graduate high school with the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) or the International Baccalaureate Program (IB);
- ✓ Has a current high school GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale;
- ✓ Achieve a college readiness score on the SAT (1590) or ACT (23);
- ✓ Is currently ranked in the top one-third of the prospective high school graduating class.

Eligibility for Receipt of Initial Scholarship

To receive an initial conditional scholarship award through the Texas Armed Services Scholarship, a selected student must:

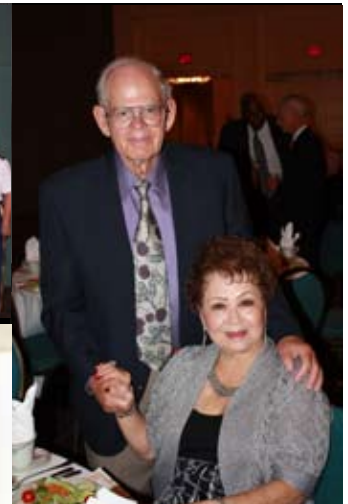
- ✓ Be a freshman at a private or public institution of higher education;
- ✓ Be a member in good standing of the ROTC;
- ✓ Meet all prescreening requirements of the Texas Army or Air Force National Guard or other branches of the armed services;
- ✓ Enter into a written agreement with the Coordinating Board agreeing to:
 - Complete four years of ROTC training;
 - Graduate no later than five years after the date the student first registers at an institution of higher education;
 - No later than six months after graduation, provide the Coordinating Board with verification of:
 - (i) A four-year commitment to be a member of the Texas Army or Air Force National Guard; or
 - (ii) A contract to serve as a commissioned officer in any branch of the armed services of the United States;
 - Repay the scholarship if the student fails to meet the agreement requirements for obtaining the scholarship.

Eligibility for Continued Scholarship Awards (as funds are available)

Dependent upon future funding available, a student may continue to receive an annual conditional Texas Armed Services Scholarship if the student:

- ✓ Maintains satisfactory academic progress as determined by the institution of higher education in which the student is enrolled;
- ✓ Continues to be a member of a ROTC program; and
- ✓ Has not earned a baccalaureate degree or a cumulative total of 150 credit hours, including transferred hours.





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