

Military Officers Association of America
El Paso Chapter



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
January 2018

A meeting of the El Paso Chapter of the Military Officers Association (MOAA) was held on 27 January 2018 at the Candlewood Suites, El Paso Texas.

Attendance:

President: COL (RET) Forrest Smith
Secretary: Col (RET) Steve Barrett
Treasurer: Ms. Elma Smith
Immediate Past President/Legislative Liaison: COL (RET) Lennie Enzel
Programs: Col (RET) Bob Pitt
Publications/Newsletter Editor: LTC (RET) Bill Moore
Membership: CPT (RET) Steve Mendoza
Auxiliary Liaison: Ms. Connie Sullivan
El Paso Chapter Outreach Foundation: BG (RET) Jack Kotter

1. Administrative: The meeting was called to order at 0805.
2. President's Remarks: COL (RET) Forrest Smith welcomed everyone and asked everyone to review the 4-page handout from last week's Texas Council of Chapters (TCC) meeting. He also shared a handout highlighting MOAA's 2018 Top Ten Goals.
3. Old Business:
 - A. Secretary: Col (RET) Steve Barrett provided a copy of the December 2017 BOD minutes which were approved with one correction.
 - B. Treasurer: Ms. Elma Smith provided a review of the December 2017 Balance Sheet and Profit/Loss statement. The Chapter had a net income of \$741.20 last month and ended 2017 with an annual net income of \$1,775.12.
 - C. Immediate Past President: COL (RET) Lennie Enzel had NSTR.
 - D. Membership: CPT (RET) Steve Mendoza had NSTR.
 - E. Honor Flight. Mr. Kirby Puckett from Honor Flight of Southern New Mexico provided an in depth briefing of the Honor Flight Program. Mr. Puckett shared their Honor Flight hub supports one flight annually to Washington D.C with World War II vets getting the highest priority followed by Korean War veterans; Vietnam vets could be selected if space is available. There are multiple hubs in Texas however none of them support El Paso so their Southern NM unit began doing so in 2014. Since then, over 60 El Paso based vets have taken the 2-day trip. Since the Southern New Mexico hub stood up, they have taken nearly 400 vets on the Honor Flights and nationally over 200,000 vets have taken Honor Flights since the program began.
 - 1) On the trip they visit the WWII, Korea, and Vietnam Memorials as well as Arlington National Cemetery---last year they were able to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

- 2) The trip is cost free for the veterans and each veteran has a guardian to support the veteran; depending on the health and mobility of the vets, a guardian could support multiple veterans. The trip cost for a guardian is \$1,000.
- 3) Southwest Airlines supports the flights and has been an absolute stellar partner in the Honor Flight program across the country.
- 4) Participants stay at a Hilton Hotel in D.C or Baltimore and have a full escort for every portion of their visit. A videographer accompanies the group and produces a CD of the entire trip for all vets and their guardian.
- 5) The program evolves each year to include additional stops or activities.
- 6) Mr. Puckett highlighted funds were required to support the veterans however the hub tries to emphasize the value of the program vice emphasizing the fundraising aspect which is an ongoing process. A donation of \$1,000 will support the full trip costs for one veteran honoree.
- 7) Mr. Puckett also highlighted their unit has had a very difficult time getting support from the El Paso area—they know there are a lot of qualified vets in the area, but it has been a struggle to get any financial or personnel support from El Paso and it has also been a challenge to identify WWII and Korea vets who would like to take the trip.
- 8) COL (RET) Enzel told Mr. Puckett that there were between 75,000-80,000 veterans in the local VA catchment area and she offered to get together with Mr. Puckett to help identify local eligible veterans and to possibly set up a link on FACEBOOK.
- 9) The Southern New Mexico annual Honor Flight is usually conducted the first week in October with an 0300 departure from Las Cruces enroute to El Paso International Airport. They usually have a connecting flight to Washington D.C. however Southwest Airlines often allows the vets to remain on the same plane and Southwest just changes the flight number to better accommodate the veterans. A hero's welcome is always enjoyed at each airport.
- 10) A veteran's application was shared with those in attendance and the BoD shared their desire to support the program moving forward.
- 11) Mr. Puckett and 2 veteran guests of his choice were invited to join us at the February luncheon and to provide a similar introductory briefing about Honor Flight to Chapter members.

F. Programs: Col (RET) Bob Pitt discussed the upcoming luncheon on 10 February 2018 at the Underwood Golf Course. The guest speaker will be Judge Angie Barill, 346th State District Court.

- 1) Judge Barill will bring her spouse as well as 3 additional guests. Judge Barill was advised there would be no cost for her guests and this comment sparked a lively discussion on what the appropriate number of guests is that the Chapter should pay for associated with a guest speaker.
 - i. The majority opinion was the Chapter should pay for the guest speaker and their guest and if there were multiple guest speakers (or a group) then the Chapter should pay for those invited participants and 1 accompanying guest each.
- 2) For the upcoming luncheon, Colonels (RET) Smith, Barrett and Pitt will pay for the additional 3 guests Judge Barill is bringing.
- 3) Col (RET) Pitt reported the Golf Course was not available for the June luncheon so he would reserve a room at the Centennial Club; he will also reserve a room there for our December luncheon (to be held the first week in December).

G. Legislative Liaison: COL (RET) Lennie Enzel has NSTR.

H. Publications/Webmaster: LTC (RET) Bill Moore reported that the February Border Bulletin had been mailed. He is pursuing two potential advertisers—Border Therapy and First Command Financial Services. Additionally, he confirmed the Chapter had received a \$300 grant from USAA.

- 1) LTC (Ret) Moore worked with LTC (RET) Martha Caldwell to get public service announcements into the Ft Bliss paper and will try to do the same with El Paso Inc.
- 2) LTC (Ret) Moore stated response times have become extremely slow from MOAA National

- I. Public Relations: NSTR, LTC (RET) Caldwell was absent to attend her mother's funeral; the BoD expressed sympathy with additional thoughts and prayers extended to the Martha and her family.
- J. JROTC/ROTC: NSTR, LTC (RET) Dave Powell was absent.
- K. Auxiliary/Surviving Spouse Liaison: Ms. Connie Sullivan reported she had talked to LTC (RET) Caldwell and she was doing well given the circumstances. Ms. Sullivan also shared that she:
 - 1) Attended the funeral for COL (RET) Delaney this month;
 - 2) Is trying to sponsor young military members from her church; and
 - 3) Will represent MOAA and be performing for the SMW luncheon next Thursday.
- L. Door Prizes: NSTR, LTC (RET) Caldwell was absent.

4. New Business:

- 1) MOAA National BOD Openings: COL (RET) Smith indicated the suspense for nominations is 31 March 2018.
- 2) February 2018 Meeting: LTC (RET) Moore requested MOAA national send out an electronic support message/invitation to all MOAA local non-chapter members however he is unsure if MOAA national did indeed send out the invitations as requested.
 - i. COL (RET) Smith indicated he would invite AUSA and El Paso Chamber of Commerce representatives to the luncheon with hopes of making a joint sponsorship presentation to Honor Flight.
 - ii. COL (RET) Smith indicated he would pass the Honor Flight sponsorship request and potential infrastructure support request for further exploration.
 - iii. A discussion was held reference the idea of making future guest speakers "honorary members" of the Chapter and possibly presenting a certificate in addition to a MOAA pin or the Chapter coin. Consensus was we should consider each guest speaker on a case by case basis.
- 3) EPISD Bataan Memorial Death March Sponsorship: No additional requests for support have been received. As documented last month, the Chapter will sponsor one of the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) JROTC unit's participation.
- 4) Levels of Excellence Awards: Submission deadline is 1 May 2018.
- 5) TCC Meeting: COL (RET) Smith went thru Tabs A thru F that were shared in conjunction with last week's meeting. The BOD reviewed each and specifically discussed the proposal to extend property tax relief exemption to veterans with 80-90% disability ratings.

5. The meeting was adjourned at 0940.

Respectfully submitted by:
Col (RET) Steve Barrett, Secretary

FORREST SMITH
COL, USA, Retired
MOAA President, El Paso Chapter