

Military Officers Association of America
El Paso Chapter



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
October 2020

A meeting of the El Paso Chapter of the Military Officers Association (MOAA) was held 31 October 2020 via conference call.

Attendance:

President: COL (RET) Mike Hester
Secretary: Col (RET) Steve Barrett
Chaplain/Surviving Spouse Liaison: Ms. Connie Sullivan
Legislative Liaison: CW2 (RET) Dave Garcia
Programs: Col (RET) Bob Pitt
Public Relations/Door Prizes: LTC (RET) Martha Caldwell
Membership Chairman: CPT (RET) Steve Mendoza
Chapter Staff Emeritus: COL (RET) Lennie Enzel
Outreach Foundation Vice-President: LTC (RET) John Robbins

1. Administrative: The meeting was called to order at 0803.
2. President's Remarks: COL (RET) Mike Hester asked if anyone had an update of CPT (RET) Dave Thackston. No one had a status updated from the past couple of days so COL (RET) Lennie Enzel indicated she would reach out to try and get updated words. COL (RET) Hester shared that he and his family were dealing with COVID, so he apologized to those who participated in last month's call if he sounded a bit out of sorts.
3. Old Business:
 - A. Secretary: Col (RET) Steve Barrett, who was absent last month due to his hospitalization, provided minutes from the Aug 2020 BOD meeting which were approved as written. Given his health status, COL (RET) Hester advised he forgot to assign someone to take notes in lieu of Col (Ret) Barrett's absence so there will be no formal minutes published from the September BOD meeting.
 - B. Treasurer: LTC (RET) Dave Powell was absent as he supported the ongoing election; anticipate he will share financial data via email next week.
 - C. Immediate Past President: No report, COL (RET) Forrest Smith was absent.
 - D. Membership: CPT (RET) Steve Mendoza reported that the tentative April 2021 Honor Flight is now officially in a TBD status until COVID vaccine availability and distribution plans are determined. The flight could be rescheduled so stay tuned for future updates.
 1. CPT (RET) Mendoza also advised he still has not been able to review all the information on the MOAA National website; he will try to review it in detail this week.
 2. CPT (RET) Mendoza also asked if COL (RET) Hester had emailed him additional membership information as discussed during recent BOD meetings. COL (RET) had been emailing information however it was going to an email address CPT (RET) Mendoza no longer uses; his updated email address was shared and COL (RET) Hester will resend the prior emails.

- E. Programs: Col (RET) Bob Pitt reported the Underwood Golf Course is now closed for the next two weeks but they anticipate they could be open to host our December Luncheon. COL (RET) Hester reported the results of the survey sent to many Chapter members and the majority of the members indicated they were tired of virtual gatherings and did not want to hold a virtual meeting via ZOOM or any other technological means—if an in-person luncheon cannot be held, they do not want to participate. With that, the BOD assessed the recent spike in COVID activity and local restrictions do not provide much hope for the potential opportunity to host larger group gatherings so the December Luncheon was cancelled and future meetings will be discussed in the coming months.
- F. Legislative Liaison: CW2 (RET) Dave Garcia discussed compensation and pension exams and his concern about the potential impact on veteran disability claims. He will continue to monitor and relay the status of the status of all ongoing legislative efforts. He closed his comments by noting that Congresswoman Escobar’s team has seemingly stopped communicating with local VSOs—it could be due to election activities, but the lack of communications is concerning.
- G. Publications/Webmaster: No report, COL (RET) Bill Oseles was absent.
- H. Public Relations: LTC (RET) Martha Caldwell advised no PR announcements have been submitted since all luncheons have been cancelled until further notice.
- I. JROTC/ROTC: LTC (RET) Dave Powell was absent. (NSTR).
- J. Auxiliary/Surviving Spouse Liaison: Ms. Sullivan had nothing significant to report.
- K. Door Prizes: LTC (RET) Caldwell reported no change in status due to the COVID-related cancellation of luncheons.
- L. Marketing: No report, CPT (RET) Dave Thackston was absent.
- M. EP MOAA Outreach Foundation Update: LTC (RET) Robbins provided the following updates:
 - 1. Giving Day is Tuesday, December 1st and the Foundation will send out letters to all Chapter members next week seeking donations.
 - 2. He will also have a detailed Giving Day article in the December Border Bulletin which will be published and mailed early to ensure everyone receives it prior to Giving Day.
 - 3. A final email seeking support will be sent to members right before Giving Day.
 - 4. In response to previous inputs that donating via the webpage was sometimes a difficult task, LTC (RET) Bill Moore has added an “easy” DONATE button right near the President’s article on the Chapter website.
 - 5. LTC (RET) Robbins also reported the Foundation BOD did approve some COVID related support requests; specific amounts and details will be finalized at their meeting later this morning.

4. New Business:

- A. COVID-19 and VA Medical Updates: COL (RET) Enzel reported local numbers have begun to rise again and staff at both WBAMC and the VA have had positive cases. WBAMC has once again shutdown all elective surgeries to provide additional COVID support. In another step to provide increased space and resources to support COVID cases, WBAMC has also sent some non-COVID patients to the Joint San Antonio Medical Center for inpatient care. She also the reality that COVID has become very political and that is having a less than desired impact on national, state, and local actions. News regarding potential vaccines are encouraging and distribution is likely to be allocated first to medical personnel/health providers and first responders followed by vaccines for the high-risk and vulnerable population and then finally to the general public. COL (RET) Enzel closed her

comments by encouraging everyone to get their Flu Shots if they have not already done so. The southern hemisphere has already had their winter season and the witnessed a much milder flu season this year so there is hope for a similar result in the northern hemisphere.

- B. ZOOM PRO Discussion: Topic was tabled due to the lack of interest from the Chapter majority.
 - C. Ft Bliss Torch Week: 1st Armored Division leadership started Torch Week a few years ago to help celebrate Veterans and have various competitions. The Chapter was invited to participate this year however the “in-person” events have now been cancelled due to the recent increase in COVID cases. LTC (RET) Robbins will put together a packet of info for the organizers to include in their virtual “Torch Week” distribution; he will discuss contents of the packet with COL (RET) Hester during the Foundation BOD meeting today.
 - D. 2021 BOD Slate: All current BOD members except for Col (RET) Barrett volunteered to remain in their current positions for 2021. Col (RET) Barrett indicated he would remain an active Chapter member but will step aside in December after 10 years on the BOD. Ms. Connie Sullivan also indicated she would relinquish her Surviving Spouse Liaison position if another volunteer was interested in the position; if no one volunteers, she will continue to serve that role as well as continue in her role as Chapter Chaplain. The proposed slate will be included in the December Border Bulletin.
 - E. Alibis: None.
- 5. President’s Closing Remarks: COL (RET) Hester shared a mea culpa that the October Border Bulleting included his same article for July—the one that hit a nerve with some Chapter members. He immediately had the proper October article posted online and will include it in the December Border Bulletin as well.
 - 6. Chapter Chaplain Connie Sullivan provided the Benediction.
 - 7. The meeting adjourned at 0848.

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

MIKE HESTER
COL, USA, Retired
MOAA President, El Paso Chapter