

Military Officers Association of America
El Paso Chapter



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
July 2020

A meeting of the El Paso Chapter of the Military Officers Association (MOAA) was held 25 July 2020 via conference call.

Attendance:

President: COL (RET) Mike Hester
Secretary: Col (RET) Steve Barrett
Treasurer: ROTC/JROTC: LTC (RET) Dave Powell
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. Chapter Chaplain Ms. Connie Sullivan provided the invocation.
2. President's Remarks: COL (RET) Mike Hester indicated he would make comments later in the agenda.
3. Old Business:
 - A. Secretary: Col (RET) Steve Barrett provided minutes from the June 2020 BOD meeting which were approved as written.
 - B. Treasurer: LTC (RET) Dave Powell provided the following updates:
 1. Similar to previous months, the Chapter had extremely limited income due to COVID-related cancellations of Chapter activities; the only reason for the net income of \$97.23 for the month was due to the liability insurance reimbursement paid by the Outreach Foundation.
 2. There will be approximately \$2,500 in expenses over the next month for printing/mailing and other items; LTC (RET) Powell may need to transfer funds from the savings account to cover the bill payments.
 3. The new Chapter account at GECU is fully set up so LTC (RET) Powell has requested former Chapter Treasurer Ms. Elma Smith proceed with closing out most of the First Light Credit Union accounts and transferring those funds to GECU; the checking account will remain open until the payment options on the Chapter's website are fully linked to the new account.
 4. In response to a question from COL (RET) Hester, LTC (RET) Powell confirmed one additional advertising payment has been received but additional advertising is desperately needed. The topic of ads on the website was raised and all were reminded that Arteflame and AmazonSmile were currently on the website; everyone who orders items on Amazon were encouraged to use AmazonSmile and designate the Chapter as their charitable organization—doing so will result in a percentage of each order being contributed back to the Chapter.
 5. The BOD approved the treasurer reports as submitted.

C. Immediate Past President: No report, COL (RET) Forrest Smith was absent.

D. Membership: CPT (RET) Steve Mendoza again thanked LTC (RET) Powell for bringing the membership materials to him and he in turn mailed those materials and personal letters out to individuals he is hoping to recruit.

1. CPT (RET) Mendoza shared that he had looked at MOAA National websites but is still looking for more information to copy and send out with his personal mailings. Several BOD members told him there was a significant amount of information on those websites, much more than he could print and mail. He indicated he had reviewed some of those materials however he desires a more personal approach, so he prefers to send out letters with handwritten or printed information vice sending website links.
2. LTC (RET) John Robbins asked COL (RET) Hester or CPT (RET) Mendoza if they had seen the list of National members who are not a member of the Chapter. He stated both, as President and Membership Chairman, should have special access to see the list. CPT (Ret) Mendoza was unaware of such a list however COL (RET) Hester confirmed he has access so he will send the information to CPR (RET) Mendoza. COL (RET) Hester's quick scan of the list identified an initial 18 names that are not members of our local Chapter.
3. Col (RET) Robbins also asked if CPT (RET) Mendoza was aware of the Committee Module Resources on the MOAA National website and more specifically, the Chapter Recruiting Resources. CPT (RET) Mendoza was not familiar with those resources and will review them.

E. Programs: Col (RET) Bob Pitt reported the Underwood Golf Course remains open for inside service with a maximum of 30 occupants; masks and social distancing are required. As previously agreed, the previously scheduled August was cancelled and the BOD will decide about the October Luncheon at next month's BOD meeting.

F. Legislative Liaison: CW2 (RET) Dave Garcia reported he received a letter from Susie Byrd (District Director for Congresswoman Escobar) responding to a list of bills that Congresswoman Escobar has and has not supported (with emphasis on the number and percentage of veterans related bills she has or has not supported). The response indicated Representative Escobar and her team believe the number of veterans bills she has sponsored is not a comprehensive metric and does not necessarily provide a good indicator of her support and efforts. Mr. Garcia shared that he would send a strong rebuttal letter indicating his disagreement with that statement and reiterated that participation and support of bills is a matter of national records and it is indeed a viable metric. CW2 (RET) Garcia reported her support of veterans' bills is about 10% and he believes that number should be higher, and she should in fact be doing more to support veterans.

1. COL (RET) Hester shared he had received the same letter and before CW2 (RET) Garcia responds via letter, he would like to compare the response from Ms. Byrd with CW2 (RET) Garcia's list to identify/reconcile the differences with hopes of sending a response that leads to increased engagement and interaction.
2. COL (RET) Lennie Enzel shared that she had recently sent another round down range expressing her extreme frustration with CW Escobar and her staff for not even responding or even acknowledging COL (RET) Enzel's input asking Representative Escobar to fight the planned cut of 18,000 medical positions.
3. The aforementioned topics led to a very lengthy discussion about communications with the Congresswoman and her staff and whether emails or personal letters were the best approach; our BOD has a group who believe email and electronic communications is the best mode consistent with the technological and real time social media evolution that has occurred while another group still believes a personal letter is the best approach. Regardless of the comms mode, all were encouraged to communicate with the CW asking her to increase her support for veteran priority issues.

4. CW2 (RET) Garcia stressed to the BOD that the El Paso VSOs had met and agreed to priorities at their January 2020 meeting and he will keep pushing those issues until CW Escobar supports them or at the very least provides the courtesy of a response to the inquiries. As the COVID pandemic continues, CW2 (RET) Garcia vows to continue fighting “from his garage” for veteran related legislative concerns and issues. Go Dave Go!
5. The legislative discussion closed with a BOD member reminding all that Ms. Irene Armendariz-Jackson was running against CW Escobar in the upcoming election.

G. Publications/Webmaster: No report, COL (RET) Bill Oseles was absent.

H. Public Relations: LTC (RET) Martha Caldwell restated that no PR announcements will be submitted until luncheons and Chapter activities resume.

I. JROTC/ROTC: LTC (RET) Dave Powell had nothing significant to report (NSTR).

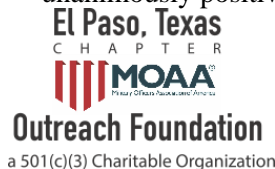
J. Auxiliary/Surviving Spouse Liaison: Ms. Sullivan reported she remains in COVID lockdown at home but otherwise had NSTR.

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. The proposed new logo (shown below) was shared on the BOD agenda; feedback was unanimously positive.



2. The Foundation did not award a scholarship this term as there was only one applicant and that applicant did not meet the established criteria. Given that reality and the lack of limited number of applicants in recent terms, LTC (RET) Robbins proposes to put together a scholarship committee that will do a Bottoms-Up Review of our scholarship program involvement.
 - a. LTC (RET) Robbins would like the committee to include a minimum of 3 members including one from the Foundation BOD, one from the Chapter BOD and at least one other member. COL (RET) Barrett volunteered to serve on the committee.
 - b. The committee will need to do a review of the eligibility and applicant criteria for our local awards with a goal of determining if we should expand the eligibility pool and modify and/or more clearly define the selection criteria and process. Targeted review completion goal is late October or November at the latest.
 - c. The review should incorporate a review of our local award process, the MOAA national process and the Ft. Bliss Spouse’s process. LTC (RET) Robbins will also reach out to the Houston Chapter for inputs as he has been told they have a very solid program.
 - d. LTC (RET) Robbins reported the Foundation has set aside \$750.00 this year for scholarship funding and has an additional 4 pledges of \$250.00 each. The goal is to increase the cumulative amount to \$5,000.00 per year to possibly increase the annual award for both our local scholarships to \$2,500.00 each.
3. As mentioned last month, the Foundation By-Laws require a long overdue review. They are too broad and need to be revised to be more applicable to support our local efforts. The Foundation requests Chapter participation in this effort with a must-do goal for completion in 2021. Since

the Foundation By-Laws can be modified without a full Chapter vote, LTC (RET) Robbins reminded the Chapter BOD that last month the Foundation BOD modified voting procedures to give voting authority to Director positions and to Chairpersons of Standing Committees.

4. The Foundation will soon have funding issues similar to the Chapter due to the lack of activities this year. Some awards have already been reprogrammed but the lack of donations is a concern. Giving Day 2021 will be a primary source of revenue and the Foundation is exploring other fundraising options in addition to Giving Day. LTC (RET) Robbins hopes to get some brochures finalized and distributed.

4. New Business:

- A. Building 452: LTC (RET) Powell visited the facility since our last meeting and now believes we should renew our agreement to use the facility; he will submit the renewal agreement to Ft. Bliss. He did state we (the BOD) need to identify a date to meet at the building and determine what items must be maintained for long term storage and what items can be disposed of.
- B. COVID-19 Updates: CW2 (RET) Garcia attended the most recent telephonic VA Town Hall and shared the following updates
 1. Dr. Murphy will become the new Chief of Staff.
 2. The new VA Westside Clinic will open soon and letters will be going out to patients living on the west side of town encouraging them to use the facility.
 3. The clothing allowance input deadline has been extended until December.
 4. If VA patients are sick, they should not immediately go to the VA but rather they should first call the VA at 564-6100, option 3, to talk with a triage nurse. The nurse will help provide an initial assessment and share guidance on whether an in-person appointment is needed or not.
 5. If submitting community incurred bills, the new inbox is ELPCLAIMSISSUES@va.gov.
- C. Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD): COL (RET) Enzel reports that nearly all RAD events around the country have been cancelled but as of now no official words have made locally. Everyone expects it to be cancelled however we are still waiting for a final determination.
- D. Alibis:
 1. Chief of Staff Army Retired Soldier Council (CSARSC): COL (RET) Enzel reported she attended the most recent CSARSC meetings this past week. Unlike prior meetings held in Washington D.C., COVID concerns resulted in these meetings being held via MS Teams. The sessions covered a significant number of topics and many general officers provided the presentations. Members are appointment to this Council on a four-year term and this is COL (RET) Enzel's final year. She strongly encourages other BOD members to apply for this great opportunity; members are called back to duty for the week of the meetings and it is truly a rare opportunity to provide advice and recommendations to the CSA regarding vital issues and concerns impacting over 1 million retired soldiers, surviving spouses and their families.
 2. CW2 (RET) Garcia stated he had reviewed a copy of the County Veteran's Service Directory and asked if others had received and reviewed it. Mr. Garcia believes it has some good resources identified that could be used by our Chapter if some of our members need assistance.

5. President's Closing Remarks:

- A. COL (RET) Hester requested he be sent the electronic versions of the membership trifold and supporting data. LTC (RET) Powell has the e-version and will forward. The goal is to update them to be more applicable at the local level vice containing primarily national level information. LTC (RET) Robbins recommended an 8x10 document as the most efficient and cost effective format which can then be folded into the tri-fold if desired; he also reminded all that Krystyle Hopper was willing to assist with the graphic support.
- B. COL (RET) Hester also shared words that there would be a virtual Q & A interview held via Zoom on August 28th with Rod Lurie, a 1984 West Point Graduate who was the Director of the movie "The Outpost." COL (RET) Hester shared that the movie tells the story of his crew and the battle in Afghanistan that resulted in the 2 surviving members earning the Medal of Honor.

The event will be sponsored by El Paso AUSA Bradley Chapter, West Point Society of El Paso, and the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA). An email will be distributed with additional specifics of the session and how to sign up and participate.

- C. COL (RET) Hester reminded everyone he is still interested in hearing new ideas on how we might increase our revenues and memberships.
- D. The prior comment led to the start of another lengthy (and many months) repeated conversation about why the Border Bulletin is now printed in black and white; this item will be placed on the BOD agenda for next month.

6. Chapter Chaplain provided the Benediction.

7. The meeting adjourned at 0936. Moving forward, all members in attendance are reminded to be cognizant of the scheduled meeting times as our meeting ran longer than scheduled and this resulted in the Outreach Foundation meeting starting later than their scheduled starting time.

Respectfully submitted by:

Col (RET) Steve Barrett, Secretary

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