



Wichita Chapter News

MILITARY OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA



October 2022

President's Corner

Dear Members, Spouses and Families of the Wichita Chapter of MOAA,

As Yogi Berra once put it, "It's Deja vu all over again". As John Hughey described in the September newsletter, we've spent a considerable amount of time looking for new blood to serve as chapter president and fill other positions on our Executive Committee. Since we had no volunteers and with the revision of our bylaws allowing previous presidents to be reelected, I volunteered to accept the nomination and subsequent reelection. We've all been around organizations that flounder if no one is trying to provide direction and coordination and I know we don't want that to happen with our chapter. So, with that as a backdrop, let me get into some thoughts about where we are and ideas about where we can look to go.

The first thing I want to review is our leadership positions for 2022-2023, that way everyone knows who's who and more importantly, who you can go to with questions or suggestions on various topics.

- President – Mike George
- VP for Programs – Paul Inman
- VP for Membership – Vacant
- Secretary – Earl Shellner
- Treasurer – Shellie Harmon
- Past President – John Hughey
- Director/McConnell Liaison – Michael Dillard
- Director/Surviving Spouse Coordinator – Roy Yenchesky
- Director – Vacant
- Legislative Liaison (Non-voting) - Vacant
- President of TROW (Non-voting) – Sue Tanner
- Chaplain (Non-voting) – Earl Shellner
- Webmaster (Non-Voting) – Walt Nelson

As you can see, a couple of positions are vacant, and a couple of our officers are dual-hatted. Several of our members expressed tentative interest in volunteering for positions,

but I don't remember any firm volunteer requests. If you are interested in helping fill one of these positions, please let me know. There is also one other position not listed, which would fall under the Finance Committee, headed by the Treasurer, is a fund-raiser coordinator. I plan to discuss this position and our need for fund raising in a future President's Corner. Please consider and keep in mind, that the new By Laws allow for spouses of military members and surviving spouses to hold positions in the chapter. If you haven't had a chance to read through the revised By Laws, please take a few minutes to take a look. The By Laws were redone in order to bring them in line with MOAA National's suggested Chapter By Laws and better tailor them to the way we operate here in Wichita.

Along those lines, I just want to review/remember MOAA National's reason for being and our reason to support it. If you haven't looked at it lately, it is under About MOAA on the MOAA website, <https://www.moaa.org/content/about-moaa/mission/>. As stated, "MOAA is the nation's largest and most influential association of military officers. It is an independent, nonprofit, politically nonpartisan organization." It advocates for a strong national defense and for legislation supporting the military's career force, the retired community, and veterans. Its motto is "Never Stop Serving". Our chapter's support for this over the past two decades has centered on providing scholarships for deserving JROTC cadets and providing financial donations to causes we want to support. Our fundraising efforts were substantial and allowed us to provide over \$142,500 in scholarships. But times and situations change, and I feel we need to look at what we're doing to support MOAA's mission and make some changes as well. We will start that process with the Executive Committee over the next several months and have a plan for the future this spring. As we come up with suggestions about what direction we might take, I will include them in the monthly newsletter for your review and comments. If you have any ideas or suggestions about what we can do better to support MOAA's, or the chapter's mission, please let me know.

On a very positive note, one thing I think we have all agreed with is the continuation of our monthly brunch. It offers a great chance to stay connected and to see great presentations about what's going on in the community. Please continue to attend. Emails will be forthcoming to make your reservations for the October 30 meeting. Since our meeting is the day before Halloween, please feel free to wear something festively appropriate. Also, if the spirits move you, bring something for our door prize drawing. Halloween food creations and bottled beverages would be very welcome.

Hope all are having a wonderful fall season, for once the weather has cooperated nicely. See you on the 30th.

Mike George, President

October Luncheon Guest Speaker -- Laura Taylor

Laura Taylor, Special Events and Volunteer Coordinator for PBS Kansas (Channel 8) will be our guest speaker Oct. 30 for our chapter business meeting at the Rolling Hills Country Club. Laura is originally from Wichita and graduated with a degree in History from Friends University. She enjoyed a career as a museum professional for over 20 years and earned an M.A. in Art History from the University of Missouri. She returned to Wichita this year to work for PBS Kansas. Her presentation will trace the history of the station; share details about the new headquarters at 32nd and Rock Road, and cover the station's efforts to honor veterans in the community. Be sure to arrive by 11 a.m. to enjoy a buffet luncheon prior to Laura's presentation.

TROW News and Information

The next TROW luncheon will be at 11:30 a.m., Oct 21 at the Rolling Hills Country Club. The guest speaker is Joe Stumpe, editor of the Active Age Newspaper. The newspaper is a non-profit publication, published monthly, that serves 55,000 readers throughout Sedgwick, Butler and Harvey Counties. Joe earned a Journalism degree from the University of Missouri-Columbia and writes for local, regional, and national publications. He has served as editor of Active Age for more than four years. Active Age was founded 40 years ago and caters to readers 55 years and older.

New TROW Officers for 2022-23

New TROW officers were elected at their May 2022 luncheon and will serve until May 2023. They are Sue Tanner, President; Cindy Rodman, Vice President; Patti Sullivan, Secretary; and Anne Tibbetts, Treasurer. Other board members include Susie Moran, Program; Jeri Shellner, Membership; Nancy Brace, Sunshine; Marilyn Beaver, Birthdays; Jeri Shellner, Newsletter,; Cindy Rodman Phone Communication; Patti Sullivan, Chaplain, and Sue Bush, Philanthropy.

Surviving Spouse Information *(by Roy Yenchsky)*

On 30 September, my wife Sandy and I traveled to Omaha, Nebraska, to participate in a two day MOAA National Leadership Workshop. Gail Joyce, a member of the Surviving Spouse Advisory Council was our guest speaker. Gail's mantra is "Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence, courage, and peace of mind"! Sandy and I attended the Surviving Spouse breakout session on Saturday. We learned the SBP/DIC offset will be completely phased out as of 1 March 2023. The VA is establishing a new unit, Surviving Spouse Office, which will be staffed to provide dedicated support to surviving spouses. Surviving spouses are entitled full membership in MOAA. Our speaker emphasized to plan ahead – don't wait! Get a credit report in your name now. If you don't have one, start establishing credit in your name. Ensure the death certificate includes contributory causes. Make sure it doesn't just say COVID. Sign on to the MOAA web site frequently and review the Surviving Spouse page, National does an excellent job of posting to it regularly.

The first afternoon the National MOAA Leadership conducted a panel discussion on key topics in MOAA today. The Senior Counsel identified areas that he is involved in to include protecting MOAA's interest with taxes, compliance, liability, and political activity. The Vice President discussed legislative actions that MOAA is currently supporting. The Vice President for Membership and Marketing reviewed our levels of membership. We currently have 350,000 members. The Vice President for Communication emphasized MOAA's mantra "NEVR STOP SERVING". He discussed all the methods MOAA is using to reach our target audience to include YouTube, Pod Casts, Web Site, Newsletters, Officer Magazine, Twitter, Face Book, and Linked-In. MOAA's Newsletter gets 7 million views per month. The Director of Government Relations stated that MOAA was instrumental in the passage of the PACT Act, burn pit and toxic exposure legislation. MOAA is the top military lobbyist on Capitol Hill. The speaker encouraged us to send in those letters in the MOAA Magazine! On average about 10,000 letters are sent in. Sounds like a lot, but from 350,000 members, we as members need to do more. MOAA has a Travel Agency! They guarantee your satisfaction and lowest price. All MOAA members and your guest, family or just friends qualify for the deal. And that's not all! Our Chapter gets 1% back on our members that use MOAA Travel Service.

The workshop was very informative, and I hope to follow up with additional information throughout the year.

The VA is Busy Working Toxic Exposures Claims for Gulf War Vets

Veterans who qualify for disability compensation under the recently signed landmark toxic exposures act, should begin filing claims. Speaking at the American Legion's national conventions in Milwaukee, Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough announced the department has retroactively designated all health conditions listed in the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics, (PACT Act), as presumed to be related to military service, effective Aug 10 --- the date the bill was signed. *(by Patricia Kima, Military.Com)*

Derby AFJROTC Starts the School Year with a Top Award

Michael Dillard is pleased to announce units at Derby High School have earned the "Silver Star" Community Service with Excellence Award for academic year 2021-2022. This prestigious award recognizes the top 5% of all AFJROTC units based on community service in support of schools and local communities. The award is earned by units with the highest per cadet average of community service hours that are planned and conducted by cadets under the supervision of our instructors. This award also recognizes the personal growth and accomplishments of the cadets, contributions of the instructors as mentors, and the support of the school and local community.

During September, 37 cadets conducted a Patriot Day Ceremony in remembrance for those who lost their lives during the terrorist attack on 9/11. Dillard also said 42 cadets participated in the Derby High School Homecoming Parade to include the COLOR GUARD leading the Parade. Other events during the month included Derby AFJROTC's partnership with active duty Recruiters to host members of the USAF Thunderbirds Demonstration Team. The Thunderbird members presented their own stories to include

the obstacles and challenges they encountered. The stories provided inspiration and motivation to the cadets and other attendees. Also, during the month, 51 cadets volunteered at the McConnell AFB Open House/Airshow. They provided supervision of the children bouncing castles, painted faces, and provided temporary tattoos to children and adults during the two-day event.

On Sept. 28, nine cadets, including the Color Guard, presented the COLORS and participated in the Derby Education Foundation Paver Rededication Ceremony. The Ceremony dedicated the new memorial Pavers that recognized the contributions of Veterans and Citizens of the City of Derby. Council members, Board of Education members, and the President of the Derby Chamber were in attendance. Fifty cadets participated in the Derby School District Kansas Kid's Fitness Day (KKFD). The district sponsors every 3rd grader who participates in fitness games and activities. Cadets set-up, and helped navigate the children through each activity station. The cadets also cleaned up the area after the activities. And 17 cadets participated in the Derby Hills Elementary School Glow Bingo Night. Cadets verified winning bingo cards, handed out gifts, served in the concession booth, and set-up and cleaned up.

Heights JROTC Cadets help Sponsor Wreaths Across America

Cadets at Heights High School will participate in the annual Wreaths Across America Day to honor those who have bravely served our country, said Shellie Harmon, Senior Aerospace Science Instructor at the school. The program will be conducted Dec. 17 at 2,800 locations throughout the U.S. Harmon said the program remembers our fallen U.S. veterans, honors those who serve, and teaches children the value of freedom. Heights will lay wreaths at Pick Ascension Cemetery, or a cemetery of your choice. To become a wreath sponsor, go to www.wreathscrossamerica.org. and sign up. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Free Meals to Honor Veterans

Many restaurants, businesses and stores will honor veterans this year with free meals, discounts and other offers during Veterans Day Nov. 11th. The tradition stretches across the country and is the nation's way of saying thanks to those who are serving, and those who have served. Go to VA/News and look for offers in this area, or any other area you may be in on that day. **HAPPY VETERANS DAY!!!**