



MOAA REPORTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

STEVEN COLE — SBCOLE@SBCGLOBAL.NET



March

March is full of military days of interest, not just college basketball. For those who keep up with dates and celebrations, the following are happening this month.

In March, we celebrate the entire month Military Caregivers. A wife, a husband, a parent, a friend, and even a child, who unselfishly help their Wounded Warrior accomplish everyday task, an ability that many of us take for granted. There are over a million Military Caregivers providing day-in and day-out, emotional and physical support to all of our American heroes. This caregivers go about their task hidden and unsung. So the month of March is the time that we spotlight, honor and recognize these precious Military Caregivers' sacrifices, service, and successes. www.elizabethdolefoundation.org.

Other dates in March:

March 3rd – US Navy Reserve Birthday

March 5th – US Navy Seabee's Birthday

March 13th – K-9 Veterans Day (The US K9 Corp started March 13, 1942. Not a real official birthday, yet, and it seems only right to annually honor their service.)

March 17th – St. Patrick's Day (not a real military date, more of an excuse I heard at Captain's Masts)

March 29th – Vietnam Veterans Day (As part of the 50th Commemoration of the Vietnam War, the VA and 29 states and territories commemorate the anniversary of the final withdrawal of U.S. troops from Vietnam with a day of appreciation celebrated on March 29.)

Our Vietnam soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines did not get the respect they so richly deserved when they came home from the war. I am thankful for these leaders, colleagues, and comrades. They deserve much better treatment and a daily continuing 'welcome home' that they should have gotten. If you know of or are a Vietnam veteran, we honor and respect your sacrifices, duty, and valor.

The planning of the celebration 50 years of the MOAA Greater Dallas Chapter is underway. The President of MOAA National, Lt. Gen. Dana Atkins, USAF (Ret) has committed to be a part of our celebration. Save the date of October 7, 2017. We are working on the raffle prizes.

MOAA-GDC receives 2016 Five-Star Level of Excellence Award



UPCOMING EVENTS:

Monday, March 13, 2017—The Honorable Pete Sessions Congressman 32nd District speaking on the "The Washington DC Experience"
See Page 4 for more details



Saturday, March 18, 2017—The Honorable Pete Sessions Congressman 32nd District Town Hall Meeting Richardson High School.
See Page 8 for more details

Saturday, March 18 — Executive Committee Meeting
See Page 8 for more details

Monday, April 24, 2017 Veterans Center of North Texas 2nd Annual Community/Veteran Fellowship Golf Tournament.



See Page 3 for more details

Tuesday, April 25. Luncheon meeting

See page 4 for more details.



PERSONAL AFFAIRS BY BEN COLE

Well, the income tax filing season is upon us again, and I am gathering all my records and receipts to start working on my return before the April deadline. For your assistance (and mine) I have found a paper written by Col. Briggs, Treasurer of MOAA Greater Dallas Chapter, which provides some really sound advice for all of us. This week Col. Briggs revised a few points in the paper which brings it up to date for filing our federal tax returns for the year 2016. I hope each of you look it over carefully and get all the refund you deserve or pay the minimum tax you owe. Following are Col. Briggs comments and advice.

Some Information on Preparing and Filing Federal Income Tax Returns You May Not Be Aware Of By Dave Briggs

As we do not give members legal advice, the following are matters for you to check with your tax advisor. First of all, if you are preparing your tax returns yourself and have a computer, use one of the commercial tax preparation software, such as TurboTax or H & R Block, etc. These can almost always be counted on to save you more money than their cost, because tax law has become so intricate that even from reading IRS' Form 1040 Instructions (106 pages!!!) it is easy to overlook obscure provisions that can save you money. Also these programs will insure you avoid arithmetic errors, saving both you and IRS time.

It is highly important that you report on your return all income you receive, as the failure to do so may be construed as tax fraud, subject to heavy penalties. The present day system of 1099's, etc., make it very likely that IRS can discover unreported income. On the other hand if you as a taxpayer believe an expense may be deductible, it is your privilege to claim it. IRS may disagree, but normally the only penalty is an assessment of additional tax plus interest.

If you have ever been audited by IRS you will know that it is a time-consuming, unpleasant process. After being audited three times, with no additional tax ever assessed because records backed-up the returns, I mentioned to a tax advisor that I was really getting tired of audits. He suggested that in the future I include on the top of my future returns a copy of the IRS audit notices that no additional tax was due, thereby warning IRS that an additional audit was likely to be a very uneconomic expenditure of their valuable audit time. So long as I followed such advice there were no further audits. In addition, although receipts for most deductions are not required to be filed with your tax return, if you have receipts for major deductions, go ahead and include them, thereby reducing the deductions for which no evidence is included with your return to a much smaller amount, unlikely to provoke an audit. Also, it may be helpful to both IRS and yourself to add non-required supplemental schedules to explain unusual entries.

In addition, you do not have to make it convenient for IRS to audit your return. Accordingly, you may choose not to file electronically, but rather file a paper return, which, if IRS wants to scan your return electronically to randomly select returns for audit, your return will have to be entered manually. Moreover, you may take full advantage of the regular time allowed and file your return shortly before the filing deadline. As your return will arrive at IRS with a mass of other returns, it is probably less likely to be selected for an audit. Furthermore, you may give yourself the benefit of the doubt upon estimating tax payments so that you will owe IRS a few hundred dollars upon filing, rather than seeking a refund. A return which concludes more money is owed seems more credible than one which seeks a refund.

If you have distributions from an IRA as part of your income, this gives you an advantage in planning when to make your tax payments, and may eliminate the need to file estimated tax statements. Regardless of when tax payments are withheld from IRA distributions, they are considered by IRS to have been evenly paid throughout the year. Consequently, this gives you the opportunity to do the following--take the exemptions to which you are entitled against your military retired pay; do not have tax deducted from Social Security as this is not required; have 10% Federal Income Tax withheld from each IRA distribution except a last one scheduled for December; and in your December distribution have 100% Federal Income Tax withheld to complete your necessary tax payments. (However, one should normally be careful not to exceed the Required Minimum Distribution.) Doing this permits you to be earning tax sheltered income on the bulk of your federal tax payments for almost the entire year.

Lastly, you may find that you will come out ahead on deductions if you itemize every other year, bunching real estate tax payments and charitable deductions for two years (to the extent practicable) in the year in which you itemize, and then take the standard deduction for the in-between years.

In conclusion, taxpayers may take all actions to which they are legally entitled to avoid taxes and difficulties with IRS, but should strictly avoid taking unlawful actions to evade taxes.

SAGE SURVIVOR BY NANCY RUTHFORD SODEMAN

In his Gettysburg Address Lincoln reminds us that democracy is of the people, for the people, and by the people. That certainly includes self government under the rule of law. We citizens cannot quit our involvement with government after electing our leaders. We need to keep involved, but how?

For example, we can help our elected officials as they struggle to pass a bill into law. The Military Officer monthly newspaper at Barksdale AFB publishes a section in their paper called "Capitol Hill Uptakes" that follows the progress of bills in the House of Representatives and the Senate. Here's one issue. For many months two bills remain in limbo, one by Representative Joe Wilson of South Carolina (HR 1594) (Military Surviving Spouses Equity Act) that would repeal the requirement to reduce survivor annuities under the Survivor Benefit Plan to offset the receipt of veteran's Dependency and Indemnity Compensation. The other bill Senator Bill Nelson of Florida presents. It eliminates the dollar for dollar offset of Survivor Benefit Plan (SBC) that many veterans have paid into. This also offsets the VA's Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC). For many months both these related bills have been **Referred to Committee** without subsequent action.

Both Representative Joe Wilson and Senator Bill Nelson continue to seek to get rid of this grave injustice. Many military widows grapple with which bills they can delay payment on each month and not make their families suffer. Senator Bill Nelson sees this injustice from a personal perspective. As a former Florida insurance commissioner, he says: "It would be illegal for any insurance company to say it wouldn't pay on a life insurance policy because the policy holder had other coverage." (See August 2016 issue of Military Officer.) This offset is only one of several injustices that need to be remedied in both bills: HR 1594 and S 976.

As fellow citizens, we need to show our support for Representative Joe Wilson and Senator Bill Nelson. We would be wise to remind them of the many military widows who have suffered trying to rear families without support. Also we can ask our own representative and senator to stand behind these two bills. We can ask their offices to provide us with the addresses and phone numbers of both Representative Joe Wilson and Senator Bill Nelson so that we can let them know that we appreciate their steadfast work and support all their efforts. Let's get both bills out of committee and into the main stream. Our vote is only the start of our involvement in the democratic process. **If we want our democracy to survive, let us be responsible citizens.**



Veterans Center of North Texas 2nd Annual Community/Veteran Fellowship Golf Tournament



Join Community Leaders and Veterans in our
2nd Annual Fellowship Golf Tournament

When: Monday, April 24, 2017

Where: Heritage Ranch Golf and Country Club, Fairview

Registration and lunch: 11 AM; **Tee Off:** 1 PM; **Dinner and awards to follow golf**

Format: 4 Player Scramble

Cost: \$150/person; \$500/Team: All inclusive (No additional costs)
Green fees, cart, lunch, dinner and prizes!

Trophies for: Top Three Teams
Putting Contest
Hole-in-One: Chance to win a new Car!



Registration: <http://www.vcont.org/2017-Golf-Tournament.htm>
Information: 214-600-2966

Join the fun! Share community and military experiences!
Sponsorship and donation opportunities available

Veterans Center of North Texas is a Volunteer, non-profit 501(c)3 organization serving North Texas Veterans and their families. EIN: 47-1465856 Guide Star rating: Gold www.vcont.org
www.facebook.com/vcont.org



Veterans Center of North Texas

2nd Annual Community/Veteran Fellowship Golf Tournament
Monday, April 24th, Heritage Ranch Golf and Country Club Fairview, TX

Sponsorship Opportunities: Call 214-600-6966

Signature Sponsor (donation amount = \$5,000)

Corporate logo on all advertising and promotional material, one foursome, space for corporate tent (either at clubhouse or on hole of choice), opportunity to speak to the group and award trophies.

Gold Sponsor (donation amount = \$1,000)

One foursome, space for tent and/or table at hole or clubhouse, hole sign and place item in ditty bag.

Silver Sponsor (donation = \$500)

Space for table or tent at hole or clubhouse, sign or banner at hole and place an item in the ditty bag.

Bronze Sponsor (donation = \$200) Small sign on hole and place item in ditty bag

Door Prize Sponsorships are available; please call 214-600-2966

Agenda: 11:45 Light lunch, 12:30 Putting Contest, 1:00 Tee Time, buffet dinner, awards ceremony, and gift drawing.

Prices are all inclusive e.g. Foursome = golf fees, cart, range balls, putting contest, ditty bag, lunch & dinner, and gift drawing.

Veterans Center of North Texas is a Volunteer, non-profit 501(c)3 organization serving North Texas Veterans and their families. EIN: 47-1465856 Guide Star rating: Gold www.vcont.org
www.facebook.com/vcont.org

PROGRAMS BY BEVERLY THOMPSON**April 25, 2016 Luncheon Meeting – Walter Coughlin**

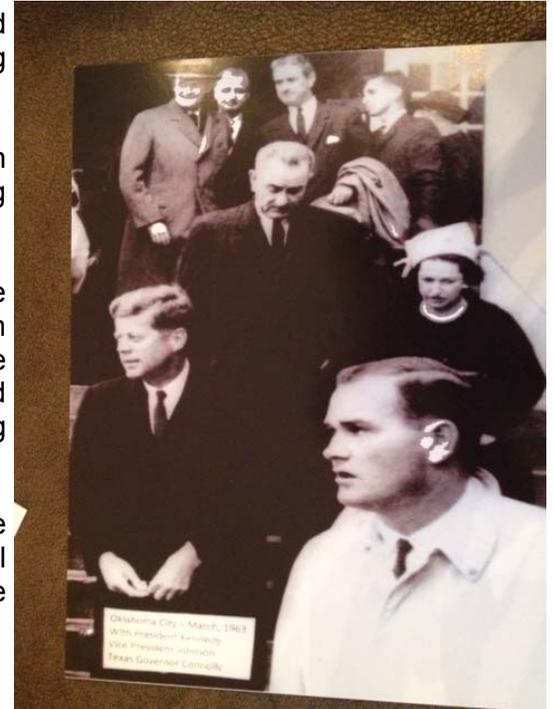
Our speaker for April is Walter Coughlin (in the forefront in the photo).

Walt was Special Agent for Kennedy, Johnson and Hubert Humphrey. He was in San Antonio preparing for the Kennedy's visit the day before the assassination in Dallas.

Walt also was Special Agent in charge of the Democratic and Republican conventions in Miami Beach in 1972. He received an Outstanding Service Award for his work.

I had the privilege of hearing him speak at a Docent Assembly at the George Bush Library and one of the stories he told was of traveling with Kennedy in a South American town and there was to be a meeting at the Embassy...as they approached the building with a circular drive he had an intuition and told the driver to go around back ... just then shots rang out from snipers in the trees on the decoy car and all inside were killed.

He was assigned to the White House for eight years. He attended the University of Maryland on a football scholarship. He has two wonderful children and five grandchildren and lovely wife named Ann that he married 52 years ago.



The Park City Club 5956 Sherry Lane, 17th Floor Dallas, Texas 75225
Social 11:00 AM — Buffet Opens 11:15 AM Meeting 12:00 Noon

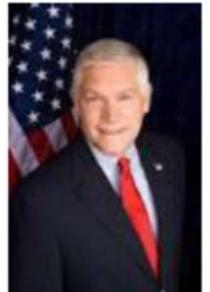
Please send your reservations early to ensure we can make an accurate and timely reservation count. Mail the reservation coupon to MOAA-GDC Programs, PO Box 515495, Dallas, TX 75251; email Dave Schafer moaschafer@att.net or reserve online at www.moagreaterdallas.org/onlinersvp.html. You may also call Dave at (214)577-4107.

Mark your calendars. On Saturday, March 18, 2017 the Honorable Pete Sessions will be holding a Town Hall Meeting at Richardson High School. During this meeting he will be providing a legislative update and discuss his current efforts to address our healthcare system, secure our borders, and create more jobs for Americans.

As your representative, Pete Sessions is looking forward to discussing important issues facing our community, state, and nation.

If you have any questions about this meeting please feel free to call his Dallas office at 972.392.0505.

DATE: Saturday, March 18, 2017 | TIME: 12:30 PM | LOCATION: Richardson High School



LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY MARCH 2017 BY JIM BROWN



Trump promises a stronger military, more money for veterans

On February 28, President Donald Trump spoke to Congress, promising to rebuild the military, boost veterans spending, defeat the Islamic State and force European allies to pay more for defense. He said:

“To keep America safe, we must provide the men and women of the U.S. military with the tools they need to prevent war and, if they must, to fight and to win,” he said. “I am sending the Congress a budget that rebuilds the military, eliminates the defense sequester, and calls for one of the largest increases in national defense spending in American history.”

His proposed budget — which includes \$54 billion more for the military than allowed under the spending caps known as sequestration — has been criticized by Democrats and Republicans on Capitol Hill. But Trump insisted the funding bump is needed for “the resources [our] brave warriors so richly deserve.”

The commander in chief also promised an increase for the Department of Veterans Affairs, whose budget has nearly quadrupled to \$180 billion since 2001. Trump argued that “our veterans have delivered for this nation and now we must deliver for them.”

Most of the budget plan's details, including proposed cuts to foreign aid and to the State Department, are expected to be unveiled in coming weeks. To avoid a government shutdown, lawmakers must approve before April a partial budget that covers the remainder of the current fiscal year.

Trump offered support for NATO but said “our partners must meet their financial obligations” in paying for Europe's defense. That includes the fight with ISIS in Iraq and Syria. He has ordered Pentagon leaders to develop a new strategy to speed that campaign, and he promised to “work with our allies, including our friends and allies in the Muslim world, to extinguish this vile enemy from our planet.”

That promise was one of the few that drew applause from both Democrats and Republicans, as did Trump's recognition of the widow of Senior Chief William “Ryan” Owens, a Navy SEAL killed in the January raid against an al-Qaida stronghold in Yemen. Owens' father has criticized Trump for mismanaging the raid.

Trump praised the armed forces in the address, calling service members an example for all Americans. “To those allies who wonder what kind of friend America will be,” he said, “look no further than the heroes who wear our uniform.”

By increasing defense and leaving Medicare and Social Security untouched, the Trump final budget plan is sure to project sizable deficits. In the campaign, Trump promised huge tax cuts, but top GOP leaders like House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin don't want this year's tax reform drive to add to the budget deficit. Trump's draft proposal for the 2018 budget year is sure to set off a huge Washington battle when it is finalized and submitted to Congress in mid-March.

VA secretary announces 10-point plan to reform his department

Leo Shane III reported in Military Times on February 28 that Veterans Affairs Secretary Dr. David Shulkin announced a 10-point plan for reforming department operations and offerings, with a heavy emphasis on VA medical improvements. This plan furthers President Trump's goal of increased employee accountability and a more customer-service focus for department employees. The plan also includes:

Extension of the Choice deadline past August

The controversial VA Choice Card program -- put in place in the wake of the 2014 wait times scandal -- is set to expire later this year. Lawmakers have complained the program has not helped as many veterans as it should, but Shulkin said he sees it as a key program for future VA reforms.

Renewing the program will require congressional appropriators to set aside several billion dollars in coming years to fund the outside medical care appointments, a demand that may be difficult to get past fiscal conservatives in the House. Shulkin has already promised to eliminate program rules that limit outside care options to veterans who live at least 40 miles away from a VA facility or face a VA clinic wait time of more than 30 days. But those changes will also require congressional cooperation.

Note: Legislative article continues on page 6.

LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY MARCH 2017 - CONTINUED

Infrastructure improvements and consolidations

Shulkin seeks more money for new VA construction projects and for closing some outdated and underused VA facilities. But lawmakers do not like to close facilities in their own districts, and have been critical of the skyrocketing cost of recent new VA hospital constructions.

Enhance foundational services in VA

While Shulkin is open to shifting more routine medical care out of the VA system, he is pledging not to have that move pull away funds from department specialties like prosthetics work, post-traumatic stress disorder care and other veteran-related research.

“There are certain services that VA does better than anybody,” he said. “I want to make sure that we continue to be on the cutting edge, and continue to invest in those.”

VA/DOD federal coordination

Shulkin is promising better coordination of VA and Pentagon records systems, transition programs and a host of other services overlapping military service and veterans' status.

Electronic medical record modernization

Efforts are already underway to move the department from mostly paper records to completely digital files, but Shulkin -- a former medical system director -- sees other areas for improvement. It is not clear whether that effort will require new funding from Congress, or if existing information technology funds can cover those changes.

Breakthrough in suicide prevention

Shulkin called suicide prevention “our top clinical priority right now” and said he is hopeful for major improvements in treatment in coming years.

Appeals modernization

Shulkin will push Congress to approve the Obama administration's appeals modernization plan, calling it an urgent improvement which cut benefits appeals wait times from years to months.

Accelerating performance on benefits claims

VA officials have brought down the veterans benefits claims backlog by more than 500,000 cases in recent years, but a substantial number of filings still take more than four months to fully process. About 99,000 cases were still backlogged as of Feb. 25.

“Although we have made tremendous progress, we still have more we can do to make faster decisions,” Shulkin said.

Hazelwood Act Legislation Expected

We expect that a bill will be introduced in March in the Texas Legislature to amend the Hazelwood Act's educational benefit to veterans and their families. We shall send a Legislative Alert to our members as soon as we get word that a bill has been filed. Our team is preparing for an immediate response.

Repeal Sequestration

Unless current law is changed, sequestration will return next year and automatically trigger deep cuts to the Defense Department. These severe cuts will exhaust our resources and capabilities in immeasurable ways—the toll on our military and their families will likewise be incalculable.

The congressional session is just getting underway. Please engage your member of Congress—encourage them to make it their priority to repeal sequestration.





APRIL 25, 2017



Reservation for the April 25, 2017 Tuesday Luncheon Meeting
The Park City Club 5956 Sherry Lane, 17th Floor Dallas, Texas 75225 Phone: (214) 373-0756
Social 11:00 AM — Buffet Opens 11:15 AM Meeting 12:00 Noon
 _____ Person's at \$25.00 each Check enclosed \$ _____
 payable to "MOAA - Greater Dallas Chapter"
Mail Reservation to: Dave Schafer
MOAA-GDC Programs, PO Box 515495, Dallas, TX 75251

 (Spouse/Guest)

Please print name's below exactly as you wish you name badge's to read:

Need a ride? _____ If yes, your ZIP code _____ Give a ride? _____ If yes, your ZIP code _____

CHAPTER OFFICERS—EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

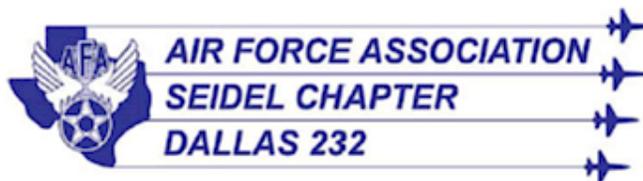
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Greater Dallas Veterans Coalition representative: OPEN	

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 The MOAA-Greater Dallas Chapter is a nonprofit organization chartered on November 28, 1967.
 Annual dues are \$20.00 for members and \$10.00 for auxiliary members.



Guest Speaker:

**The Honorable Pete Sessions
Congressman 32nd District**

“The Washington DC Experience”

1130 – 1300 March 13, 2017

Canyon Creek Country Club

625 W Lookout Dr, Richardson, Tx



Lunch: Salad, entrée, dessert: \$25

Reservations:

www.afadallas.org and click on Calendar Events

Make checks payable to: Seidel Chapter AFA 232

Mail to: Paul Hendricks

711 Glenwood Circle

Fairview, TX 75069

(469) 667-7750 or pmh1004@sbcglobal.net

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The following is the meeting schedule for the Executive Committee of the Greater Dallas Chapter of the MOAA.

Meetings are held from 9 am to 11 am at the Point Building, C.C. Young Retirement Community, 4847 West Lather Drive, Dallas, TX 75214:

2017

18 March, 20 May, 15 July, 16 September, and 18 November

All Chapter members are welcome to attend any Executive Committee meeting.